



ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

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Scope:

Board of Management, Teaching Staff, Administration Staff, Parents Council, Student Council.

This strategy is developed in the context of NEWS / Tusla / NEPS guidelines for the management of attendance and absence and in the context of Looking at Our Schools and the 2017 Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools. This strategy comprises part of our Child Safeguarding Statement.

Relationship to School's Mission Statement:

Good attendance is promoted in Salesian Secondary College by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class.

Without such a pattern of regular attendance, it is not possible to provide an *“education that promotes the active involvement both within and outside the classroom”*. (Ref: School Mission Statement)

Rationale:

- To work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and welfare of the students.
- To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process.
- To ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them.
- To ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance.
- To ensure the school fulfils its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant acts. Under the Act, Education Welfare Boards have been established to oversee school attendance nationwide and each school has been assigned an Education Welfare Officer whose duty it is to liaise with the school in relation to any attendance problems which may emerge. The Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:
 - i. A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days
 - ii. The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than twenty
 - iii. A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the Principal
 - iv. A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school in which he/she is registered, not attending school regularly

This strategy exists within the framework provided by the 2016 Looking at our Schools 2016 document, our Child Safeguarding Statement and the 2017 Child Protection Guidelines.

Goals:

- To develop a positive approach to attendance and punctuality.

- Keep accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours.
- Students learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance.
- Parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance.
- Reduce the rate of absenteeism and encourage full attendance where possible.
- The early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.

A positive approach to attendance and punctuality:

- The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance. This is also promoted through the Pastoral Care programme.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Year Head of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Records of attendance and punctuality are available to parents to view on VsWare by logging in using the unique password for that student.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.
- The school's reward system acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality
- Campaign regarding the importance of attendance- Attendance Tree-name went on the tree in the central area if you had full attendance for the month or 'top ten' board. Top 5 attenders and top 5 most improved every month

Strategy Content

Roles and responsibility:

Student:

- i. Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- ii. Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

- iii. Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- iv. Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.
- v. Each pupil has a mentor(Class Tutor) and this teacher would link in with the student should attendance become an issue

Parent/Guardian

- i. To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities. (Education Welfare Act 2000)
- ii. To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unnecessary absences. Where possible, to arrange appointments outside of school time.
- iii. To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school.
- iv. To inform the school in advance of any planned absences from school.
- v. To provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers.
- vi. To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
- vii. To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.
- viii. To arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays.
- ix. Signing in and out of school: Any student who needs to leave school early must be collected by a parent / guardian. A parent or guardian must accompany the student to reception if that student is returning to school following an appointment.
- x. Any student who arrives late for school must be either accompanied by a parent/guardian or provided with an explanatory note.
- xi. Student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises: In the event of a student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises the school must be notified immediately by Parent / Guardian.

Principal:

- I. To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- II. To monitor attendance records regularly.
- III. To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- IV. To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences withdrawal of students from the School.

- V. To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.
- VI. To forge ties with local businesses, where they agree to report students

Deputy Principal:

- I. To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Tutors , Administration Staff and Attendance Officer to implement the School Policy.
- II. To liaise with the Year Head and Pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance.
- III. To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.

Class teacher:

- I. To record the attendance of every class every day. When substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave, the teacher will take a list of the names of every student in the classroom (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school.)
- II. To input the attendance for the all classes on the VsWare system. If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually on paper and input at a time when the VsWare system is back online.
- III. To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.
- IV. Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- V. Inform the Year Head of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil
- VI. Reward good attendance not just perfect attendance.

Year Head:

- I. To monitor regularly the attendance records on the VsWare system for the given year.
- II. To liaise with the Pastoral Care / SEN teams to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance.
- III. To meet, along with the Deputy Principal, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue.
- IV. To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/ or when patterns of absences are developing and to notify the Deputy Principal of same.

Attendance Officer: (should such an officer be in place.)

- I. To liaise with and assist class teachers in matters relating to the recording and inputting of the attendance into VsWare.
- II. To work in conjunction with the Administrator in the School Office in submitting reports to the NEWB.
- III. To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance.
- IV. To attend meetings with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads, to discuss matters relating to attendance.
- V. Help deliver programmes such as Retracking, The Alert Programme, Crucial Skills and Social Skills Training encourage attendance/punctuality where needed
- VI. To monitor absence notes
- VII. To notify staff of Approved School Absence (students)
- VIII. To work with the Pastoral Care Team and Senior Management Team to support students with poor attendance
- IX. To assist in the preparation of onward referrals to Tusla (NEWB).

Administrative Staff:

- I. To input attendance data from Class Teachers when required.
- II. To work in conjunction with the Attendance Officer to submit the four reports to the NEWB
- III. To administer the signing in and out of students. (hard copy and VsWare)
- IV. To provide students who sign late (after 9.20am) with a late note.

Day to day implementation:

- I. All students attend Roll Call at 9.00am class. The roll is recorded electronically on VsWare or manually into teacher roll Book.
- II. The attendance will be recorded into VsWare at 9.20am. Those arriving after the start of class are recorded as late.
- III. Students who arrive at school after 9.20 am are required to sign in at the School Reception. The Administrator on duty will amend to record from absence unexplained to late explained/unexplained. The student will be given a late note from the School Reception confirming that signing in has taken place.
- IV. Students who leave the school during the day due to illness or appointments must be collected by a parent/guardian at School Reception and must then sign out. The signing out is inputted to VsWare by the Admin Staff.
- V. The attendance is also entered into VsWare at 2.00pm by the relevant Class Teacher.
- VI. Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by Admin staff as school activity. The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names and, prior to departure, posts this on the Staff Notice Board and provides a copy of the list to Reception. If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Admin Staff of same.

Evaluation and review of this policy.

This policy will be developed, monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the staff and ratified by the Board of Management.

School Management will accept feedback from staff, students and Parents / Guardians made through the proper use of the appropriate channels ie staff meetings, student committees and PSAC. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by Management.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. This policy was drawn up in March 2018.

This policy is incorporated into the body of School Policy from the date of review.

Proposed date of further review: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____