

# Saint Brigid's Girls' National School.

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## Attendance policy

### Aims of Policy:

- To encourage pupils to attend school regularly;
- To encourage pupils to arrive at school on time;
- To develop a culture of good attendance among all in the school community;
- To ensure parents are informed of their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Education Act 2000, regarding compulsory school attendance;
- To develop strategies and interventions, to improve attendance of targeted pupils;
- To promote a system of awards for good attendance;
- To outline the school's responsibility in reporting absences to Tusla – Child and Family Agency.

### Role of the School:

- To promote the importance of good attendance throughout the school;
- To ensure pupils are registered accurately and efficiently;
- To ensure pupil attendance is recorded daily, accurately and in a uniform agreed format;
- To identify and engage with pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems;
- To inform Tusla – Child and Family Agency of pupils with absences of 20 days or more in the school year; to inform Tusla – Child and Family Agency of any concerns about specific pupil attendance;
- To record pupil unpunctuality and monitor if a pattern emerges so that appropriate action may be taken;
- To record pupils leaving early and note if a pattern emerges so that appropriate action may be taken;
- To ensure parents know the importance of informing the school when their daughter will be or has been absent;
- To report school attendance to parents;
- To report school attendance to Tusla- Child and Family agency,

The Education Welfare Officer,  
The Board of Management,

### **Role of Parents/Guardians:**

- ❖ To ensure their daughter attends school daily;
- ❖ To ensure their daughter comes to school on time;
- ❖ To ensure that the school is informed of a child's late arrival and early departure.
- ❖ To ensure their daughter completes a full school day, does not leave early unless for a genuine explained reason;
- ❖ To notify the school in writing or via Aladdin when their daughter is absent, giving details of the dates of the absence and the reason for the absence;
- ❖ To co-operate with the school authorities to resolve any attendance problems;
- ❖ To develop a positive culture in the home re school attendance;
- ❖ To refrain from taking extended holidays during the school year;
- ❖ To co-operate with the Educational Welfare Officer and the staff of Tusla.
- ❖

### **Role of pupils:**

- To attend school daily;
- To come to school on time;
- To inform staff of an impending absence ;
- To pass school correspondence from staff to parents.

### **Role of Class Teacher:**

- To record pupil attendance/absence in class Rolla by 9.50 a.m. each morning on Aladdin;
- In the event of a class teacher being absent, the teacher splitting the class should record the attendance before the class is split. Details of attendance should be sent immediately to the school secretary to allow the class attendance to be entered into the Aladdin system by the school secretary;

- To follow the guidelines in Rules for National Schools, (Rule 56(10)) when a pupil leaves before school officially finishes – i.e. that the attendance is documented on the Aladdin System as an incomplete attendance (Late arriver/Early Leaver);
- To discuss the child’s attendance with parents/guardians at Parent Teacher meetings in February. Including details of the amount of school time missed by the child due to regular lateness in the mornings or by the child regularly being taken early from school;
- To report number of absences to parents at Parent/Teacher meetings and in the end of year report;
- To record reasons for absences as per Tusla guidelines;
- To make every reasonable effort to ensure that reasons for absences are received for all absences and recorded by parent/guardian on Aladdin or where information regarding absences is received in writing from parents other than through Aladdin (e.g. email), it is transferred onto Aladdin as soon as possible. Emails should be printed and kept in the child’s file by the class teacher;
- To record unpunctuality on the Aladdin system and note if patterns occur so that appropriate action may be taken. Children arriving after 9am are deemed to be late for school. Details of the time the child arrives late to school should be entered into the Aladdin system for all children arriving after 9am by the class teacher. Expected time and reason for late arrival can be completed by the parents/guardians on Aladdin.  
Where information regarding absences is received in writing from parents other than through Aladdin (e.g. email), it is transferred onto Aladdin as soon as possible. Emails should be printed and kept in the child’s file by the class teacher;
- To note if pupils leave early and if patterns emerge so that appropriate action may be taken; Time of any child leaving school early should be recorded into the Aladdin system by the teacher. Information should include the time the child leaves at and the reason given for the child leaving early. Expected

time and reason for late arrival can be completed by the parents/guardians on Aladdin.

Where information regarding absences is received in writing from parents other than through Aladdin (e.g. email), it is transferred onto Aladdin as soon as possible. Emails should be printed and kept in the child's file by the class teacher;

- To endeavor to identify key factors in a pupil's repeated absenteeism and take action to intervene and try to prevent them;
- To inform Principal of teacher concerns re pupil absences and develop a strategy with her to improve attendance;
- To request written explanations for absences from parents & to ensure that all information contained in the absence form is transferred into the Aladdin system. On occasions where an absence reason has not been received for a child's absence despite every effort having been made by the class teacher to secure a completed absence form, the teacher should note the child's absence as "unexplained" on the Aladdin system;
- To encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually by striving to create a pleasant and unthreatening atmosphere in the classroom;
- To encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually by ensuring work in the class is relevant to them and the curriculum is flexible to respond to the individual needs of the pupils;
- To communicate regularly with teachers of other classes which siblings attend to ascertain if non-attendance is a family or individual pupil problem;
- To verbally praise children with good attendance as the opportunity arises.

### **Role of Principal:**

- To promote good attendance and punctuality in the school by e.g. using School assemblies to praise class/pupil good attendance;
- To ensure the school register of pupil attendance is maintained in accordance with Department of Education and Skills guidelines;
- To co-operate with the Educational Welfare Officer and Tusla by:
  1. Providing attendance/absence statistics at the end of the school year;
  2. Inform Tusla if a pupil has missed 20 days or more;

3. Inform the Tusla if a pupil has been suspended or expelled.
- To inform parents of concerns re pupil attendance/ unpunctuality;
  - To reward good attendance at regular intervals throughout the year;
  - To note good/poor attendance in end of year reports;
  - To inform the Board of Management of attendance concerns;
  - To seek approval from the Board if a suspension or expulsion is proposed;
  - To work with the Educational Welfare Officer to develop strategies to improve/maintain school attendance;
  - To target pupils with poor attendance history for extra support.

**Strategies to encourage regular attendance:**

- ❖ To award pupils who have good attendance records with rewards and/or certificates, termly awards and end of year awards to be given at whole school assembly;
- ❖ To award a “Whole class homework pass” for the class with the best attendance for the month;
- ❖ To identify, as early as possible, pupils at risk of developing school attendance problems;
- ❖ To establish close contacts with the families of pupils with attendance problems. To be nonjudgmental in approach;
- ❖ Text messages are sent automatically from Aladdin at set intervals of absenteeism. Text messages to parents/guardians will inform them when their child has missed 10, 15 and 20 days of school;
- ❖ To foster contact with other local schools and ensure school closures/openings are coordinated as often as possible. To inform parents accordingly;
- ❖ To ensure 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils are well informed about secondary school and all the changes in structure, curriculum etc.;
- ❖ To communicate concerns re attendance to the Principals of secondary schools that the pupils will attend;
- ❖ To develop an individual attendance strategy to cater for the needs of individual pupils where required, e.g. staggered entry/individual attendance reward plan, to involve all interested parties in developing this strategy, to have rewards and sanctions built into the strategy;

- ❖ To identify and rectify any aspects of the management of the school and of the curriculum that may contribute to absenteeism;
- ❖ To report clearly to parents in end of year reports and at Parent/Teacher meetings, the number of school days missed, and to show clearly what proportion this is of the school year as a whole;
- ❖ To report clearly to parents at Parent Teacher meetings, the amount of school time missed by the child due to late arrival or early leaving from school;
- ❖ To promote punctuality while nevertheless accepting that it is better to come to school late than never.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Glossary of terms**

**(a) Aladdin –**

Aladdin is a comprehensive computer/cloud based school administration, communication and attendance package.

**(b) Education Welfare Act 2000 –**

The legislation that provides for the entitlement of every child in the State to receive a certain minimum education, the establishment of Tusla, the regulation of school attendance and other related matters.

**(d) Tusla –**

The Child and Family Agency is the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. It represents the most comprehensive reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services ever undertaken in Ireland.

The Agency operates under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, a progressive piece of legislation with children at its heart, and families viewed as the foundation of a strong healthy community where children can flourish. Partnership and co-operation in the delivery of seamless services to children and families are also central to the Act.

Further information is available at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**(e) Categories of absences to be reported on Aladdin**

- A. Illness
- B. Urgent Family Reasons e.g. bereavement
- C. Expelled
- D. Suspended
- E. Other (Use comment column to explain)
- F. Unexplained-the school has not received a written explanation for absences.
- G. Transfer to another school
- H. Holidays

Parents/Guardians should complete sections A, B, E or H as appropriate.

The school will complete sections C, D, F or G where appropriate.





