



St George's National School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

The Education Welfare Act 2000 promotes school attendance and Section 17 of the legislation states that there is a statutory obligation on parents to ensure their child attends a recognised school once registered. Furthermore, where a child is absent from the school, the parent is required under the Act to notify the Principal of the school of the reason for the child's absence. At St. George's we ask for those reasons in writing. The Act states that the relevant authorities will be informed of pupils who have been absent for twenty school days or more (this includes illness, holidays outside school holidays etc.) Children deemed at risk will be referred to TUSLA, The Child and Family Agency in line with legal requirements.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in September 2009, November 2011 and May 2023.

Ethos

The school, under the patronage of the Church of Ireland, will preserve and develop the religious character in accordance with the Church. It aims to serve the community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all.

Aims

- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Identify pupils at risk
- Promote a positive learning environment
- Enable learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Foster an appreciation of learning

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

creating a safe and welcoming environment

ensuring children are happy

developing mutual trust and respect with students

facilitating children to have a voice in school matters via the Student Council

listening to students' concerns
having high expectations of students' attendance
displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
collaborating in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils
being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early for individual children
inviting parents/guardians of new entrants to engage in an induction process, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained
reminding Parents/Guardians of the importance of regular school attendance from Junior Infants onwards
publishing the calendar for the coming school year annually in June and posting it on the school website (it is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term)
involving parents in discussion and reflection about attendance in company of educational welfare Service officers.
awarding half-termly certificates for students with full attendance and annual prizes for students with excellent attendance
escalating the response by the school in proportion to the complexity of the child's needs.
monitoring progress or lack of and noting when the threshold is met for a referral to TUSLA's Educational Welfare Services

Role of the teacher

- Call the roll daily and record attendances and absences on Aladdin.
- Teachers record absences in one of the following categories:
 - A - illness
 - B - urgent family reason
 - C - expelled
 - D - suspended
 - E - other
 - G - transfer to another school
 - H - holiday
- If an explanation is provided via phone call, teachers will update

- Aladdin accordingly. If particular details are provided re illness or family bereavement etc., teachers record this in the explanation/note box on Aladdin.
- Teachers provide Deputy Principal with the numbers & names of absent pupils daily (using Aladdin).
 - When explanations are not provided, the class teacher will seek clarification from the parents/guardians.
 - Keep all letters from parents relating to pupil attendance for the given academic year, which are filed by the secretary at the end of the school year.

Role of the Deputy Principal

To monitor pupils' attendance on Aladdin and the reasons for any failure to attend.

To inform the parents in writing when they have missed fifteen days or more.

One of the following letters will be sent:

Fifteen-day letter - reason given for absences

Fifteen-day letter - no reasons given for absences

Twenty-day letter - TUSLA notified and school is concerned.

To encourage parents/guardians to explain these absences by one of the following means:

1. School email: office@stgeorgesns.com FAO your child's teacher { teacher name }.
2. School phone number: 01 8410107
3. School website: www.stgeorgesns.com Click on the 'Parents' tab and then scroll down to 'Notification of Pupil Absences' and complete form. This explanation is then inputted into the Aladdin software by the class teacher.

To inform the relevant authorities in writing, as per circular 0033/2015, where a student is absent in excess of twenty school days in a school year and where a student is suspended for a period in excess of 6 school days.

Informs the BOM of any school attendance issues.

Communicates to a school to which a student is transferring any problem relating to school attendance and other appropriate matters relating to the child's educational progress.

Ensure that the Aladdin system is kept up to date.

Role of Parents

The parent of a child should enable the child to attend school on each school day when the child is well enough to do so.

Please note that letters from parents concerning illness and doctor's certificates will be kept on file in the school for one year. Written permission from a parent is necessary for a pupil to leave the school for any reason during school hours. In that case the pupil must be collected from the classroom.

ensuring regular and punctual school attendance

working with the School and TUSLA Child and Family Agency to resolve any attendance problems

making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance

discussing planned absences with the school

refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time

showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework

encouraging them to participate in school activities

praising and encouraging their children's achievements

instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth

informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school

ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.) are arranged for times outside of school hours

contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters

notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher

Communication with other schools

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school, via P.O.D. (Primary Online Database) that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere, he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school

of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

When a child transfers into St. George's NS confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school via P.O.D., a letter of transfer will be sent to the Principal, and appropriate records sought.

TUSLA/The Education Welfare Officer are informed if:

- Teachers and the Principal are concerned about a child's attendance.
- A child is suspended for 6 days or more
- A child has missed more than 20 days. Student absence reports are returned twice yearly at the end of December and the end of June.

Students with a concerning level of absenteeism will be referred to TUSLA. The referral form will be completed by the Deputy Principal with the class teacher's input. Completed referral forms will be approved by the principal. TUSLA Child and Family Agency is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

Recording Attendance/Lateness

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on Aladdin school administration software, on a daily basis. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken by 10.50 am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A child that presents to school after this time will be recorded as absent unless there was prior communication relating to the lateness from parents/guardians.

School begins at 9.00 am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. A child will be recorded on Aladdin as late to school if they arrive after 9.20am, including the amount of school time missed.

Covid - 19/Challenging Health Issues

Covid-19 related absences will be noted by the school as explained absences.

As per department guidelines, the school will use its discretion in determining whether a pupil's explained absence warrants a referral to the

EWS. A pupil's absence may be satisfactorily explained by certified illness, bereavement or other valid reasons such as those related to Covid-19.

Parents who deem their children medically vulnerable and withdraw them from formal schooling, must have a doctor's certificate sanctioning such a withdrawal. The school is aware that parents who decide to home school their children must register with TUSLA.

Revised May 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson of BOM