

The Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	St. Joseph's N.S.
Address	Arden View, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Roll Number	18797W
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>St. Joseph's wishes to promote, encourage and support regular attendance as an essential factor in the learning of all our pupils.</p> <p>St. Joseph's wishes to promote and support discussion, reflection and consultation about attendance within the school community.</p> <p>The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as The Education Act, 1998 and The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.</p>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>School attendance has traditionally been strong in St. Joseph's. Like all schools attendance has been impacted as a result of Covid and it continues to do so along with other illnesses.</p> <p>Despite this we aspire to build a culture of high expectations among all staff and with every student in relation to attendance. We are vigilant in our efforts to maintain this standard. The school expects all pupils to attend school unless they are ill or if there are urgent family reasons.</p>
How attendance will be monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically on the Aladdin System by the Class Teacher on a daily basis • Class attendance data for the whole school is then automatically recorded in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) section of the Aladdin System each day • The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded on the Primary Online Database (POD) by the school secretary. The old Clár Leabhar (Register) contained information provided in the pupils' enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Nationality and Parents' Names) The same information is now held in electronic format on POD, including their PPS number, which tracks pupils through their primary education. The Clár Leabhar is being phased out as these books are no longer being printed. Under circular 0033/2015 it states that the Primary Online Database (POD) will replace the Clár Leabhar.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 attendance is taken at 10.15am each morning. Any pupil not present by 10.15am will be marked absent for the day. Any subsequent amendments are at the discretion of the Principal or Assistant Principal. • A note, phone call or verbal message from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence and this reason is entered on the appropriate section of the Aladdin System (under Edit Absence Reasons tab) by the Class Teacher when known. Parents can also enter a reason for absence on the Aladdin Connect App. Teachers may also record punctuality under the headings late arrival and early leaving on Aladdin. • Notes received will be retained by the class teacher for the school year and may form part of the reporting procedure to the Educational Welfare Services section of the TESS – Tusla Education Support Service • If the class teacher is absent the API Ms O Sullivan will take the attendance. A template for this will be e-mailed to all teachers . • If children are departing early from school, the adult collecting him/her is requested to sign into the early departures book which is located by the door of the secretary’s office and the class teacher will also record this on Aladdin
<p>Summary of the main elements of the school’s approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target setting and targets • The whole-school approach • Promoting good attendance 	<p>Target Setting and Targets</p> <p>Attendance data is analysed regularly in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set targets for improvement in attendance and reduction of absence - implement early interventions at whole–school, class, family or individual level - identify individuals with poor attendance and intervene accordingly. <p>(see DEIS Attendance 3 Year Plan 2022-2025))</p> <p>Whole School Approach</p> <p>The entire school community, including Board of Management members, parents, staff and pupils are fully aware of their roles in relation to attendance.</p> <p>Promoting Good Attendance</p> <p>Teachers accurately maintain and actively review the attendance patterns of all children in their care and alert relevant staff if there are concerns about pupil absences.</p> <p>We endeavour to create a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians, one</p>

in which they are valued and respected and which provides for individual learning needs.

Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community.

The school promotes good attendance in that the teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils, ensuring the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible, relevant and differentiated to the needs and different learning styles of the individual child.

St. Joseph's endeavours to promote the development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children and fosters an environment that encourages children to attend school and participate fully in the life of the school.

New entrants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction process, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

St. Joseph's homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school. Homework is tailored to suit the needs of individual children with particular needs. Children in second class can also avail of the Homework Club which is facilitated by SCP. These strategies help to promote good attendance and reduce the incidents of problems with homework leading to non-attendance. Seesaw is the online platform that we use to record and share what's happening in the classroom with home. Seesaw gives students a place to document their learning, be creative and learn how to use technology. The Aladdin Connect homework feature is also enabled for use if required.

The school's policies on all subjects including Literacy and Numeracy, take into account the impact on school attendance, while the differentiation and ability grouping policies relieve pressure on children and encourage positive attitudes towards attendance.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June prior to the summer break and reminders are issued via texts and newsletters. 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.

Responding to poor attendance

St. Joseph's encourages inclusivity and therefore all pupils are expected to wear the school uniform, thus eliminating peer pressure regarding clothes style or quality as a reason for non-attendance. The uniform positively affects attendance and also reduces the pressure, financially, on parents. Every effort is made to keep uniform costs low and recycling of uniforms is facilitated by the HSCL teacher.

The school actively supports and includes pupils, who have special educational needs, in accordance with Department guidelines and quality teaching and internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils, thereby fostering regular attendance. Likewise the school values and encourages diversity and has high expectations for all children to reach their individual potential.

Classes with good and improved attendance are commended regularly. Individual and class rewards promote good attendance each month and medals and certificates are issued at the end of each term. The following scale is used when commenting on childrens' attendance on end of year report - 0 – 3 - Excellent; 3 – 6 Very Good; 7 – 15 Fair; 16+ poor.

Support programmes within the school which can enhance attendance may include - Active School Project, Homework club, Breakfast club, Music Generation, Gymnastics,dance,visiting artists, authors, Chefs, Play therapy,horse riding, Supertroopers, Zippy's friends, Friends for life, Incredible Years and Roots of Empathy.These programmes are beneficial in the areas of behaviour, confidence and self esteem.

Should children come to school without a lunch, the school will provide one from our school lunch scheme. Hot lunches are provided to all children who wish to avail of them .

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour actively promote and encourage positivity towards attendance. The school is promoted as a Bully Free Zone and attention is drawn to this during Friendship week and Anti Bullying week which takes place in Term 1 and Term 2 when children have the opportunity to explore the friendship theme in the class and playground

Responding to Poor Attendance

- The attendance rates of children will be monitored by Principal, HSCL Teacher and AP1.
- The class teacher will contact parents/guardians of children who have missed 10 or more unexplained days or if patterns of non-attendance on particular days emerge.These 10 days do not need to be consecutive .
- Parents/guardians are informed in writing if their child has missed 15 days. They may then be

	<p>invited to discuss with the school ways in which this can be improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child does not attend for 20 or more days parents/guardian are informed that the Education Welfare Officer must be notified. The school utilises the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer in order to promote good school attendance through measures such as School Attendance Clinics. <p><i>-Attendance Clinic Pre Referral:</i> These will remind parents of their obligation to have children in school and to offer help and support to achieve this.</p> <p><i>-Attendance Clinic Post Referral:</i> These will work with parents to target areas where they can improve child's attendance as an ongoing support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school complies with all requirements on bi-annual reporting to TESS of children who are absent for more than 20 days by submitting Student Absent Reports (SAR) • The school reports the total number of days lost through absence by submitting an Annual Attendance Report (AAR) at the end of the academic year to TESS • The EWO may be informed when children miss 20 days. • In addition to this, the Welfare Officer may also be informed where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more or if a child is missing in education • Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.
School roles in relation to attendance	<p>It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management. All staff are aware of the high expectations set by the school and understand that they have a role in promoting and meeting these expectations. Parents are informed in newsletters of their roles and responsibilities, including ensuring regular and punctual attendance, the need for positive attitude towards school attendance, interest in their child's school day and informing the school of reasons for absence. Pupils with good and improved attendance will be rewarded and positively affirmed.</p> <p>Role of the Principal with support from other staff</p> <p>Principal, HSCL and Post Holder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff. • Promote the development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children. • Promote the reward system for pupils. • Ensure that the Primary Online Database (POD) is maintained in accordance with regulations.

- Ensure support is in place for pupils, who have special educational needs, in accordance with Department guidelines.
- Ensure internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- Ensure the support provided by the Education Welfare Officer is utilised.
- Complete TUSLA Pre –Referral/Referral forms when applicable in conjunction with the relevant class teacher
- Include attendance matters in school newsletters
- Attendance will be promoted in special school assemblies where children with exemplary attendance and children who have significant improvements will be acknowledged.
- At the end of the year children will be presented with certificates of attendance and a treat.
- At other times during the year random prizes will be given to children who have been present for a given week.
- A special noticeboard /display area will acknowledge children who have excellent attendance or improved attendance. The noticeboard can also be used to promote school as a fun and happy place to be.
- Classes with good attendance will be commended regularly over the intercom
- Parents may be informed via text message on Aladdin that their child is absent and requested to provide an explanation for same

Role of the Teacher:

- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Promote the reward system within the existing class reward system for pupils.
- Promote the development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Maintain the school attendance records in accordance with procedure. Record absences under the correct headings and keep all notes from parents in a secure place until the end of the year. Pass any relevant notes to AP1 at the end of the school year.
- Ensure the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is interesting, flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- Support pupils, who have special educational needs.
- Inform the Principal of concerns he/she may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- Begin to fill out TUSLA Pre-Referral /Referral forms as soon as first contact is made with parents due to attendance concerns. These forms can be obtained from AP1.
- Keep paper attendance slip in a visible place and in emergency folder to allow another teacher to take attendance and pass it onto the AP1 if class teacher is absent

	<p>Role of Parents as Partners in Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow any public health advice in relation to health and attendance at school • Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance. • Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason. This can be done in writing, in person, by a phone call or by inputting the reason for absence on Aladdin Connect • Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems; • Making sure their children understand that parents support and approve of 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. • 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. • Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their Class Teacher. • Notifying ,in writing ,the school if their child/children are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher ,particularly children in Junior classes.
<p>Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)</p>	<p>The school regards parents as partners in promoting and achieving high attendance targets for pupils and parents are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality throughout the year.</p> <p>The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and senior schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a child transfers from St. Joseph's to another school, the schools records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer. • When a child transfers into St. Joseph's confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and the appropriate records are requested. • Pupils transferring from St. Joseph's to a Senior Primary school will have their records forwarded on, if requested, on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

	The school will also follow the four steps to update POD as per Circular 0033/2015.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	The Statement will be monitored <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by staff at regular staff meetings. • At each Board of Management meeting • As part of the Board of Management' s annual report on attendance
Review process and date for review	This statement was reviewed in March 2019,November 2021 ,January 2023
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	26 th September2017-First Approved
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	27 th September 2017-First submitted

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in Feb 2023

Next review date: This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis or sooner should a need arise.Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.Review Jan 2025.

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management.

Date: _____