



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	St Mary's Primary School
Address	St Mary's Road, Edenderry, Co. Offaly
Roll Number	16013V
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	St Mary's Primary school's vision is to promote the full and harmonious development of all pupils: cognitive, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. It aims to promote positive school experiences with high attendance levels. The school's vision is to ensure that all pupils experience success. The school aims to work together with parents and guardians to foster positive attitudes to regular school attendance and learning.
The school's high expectations around attendance	St Mary's Primary School recognises that consistent attendance is a vital element in education. Targeting good attendance is part of our school action plan. Attendance is therefore an area of high priority for the school. We endeavour to support and foster good attendance patterns from a young age by ensuring that school staff and families are continually informed and assisted in relation to attendance matters. The school will work closely with all partners to ensure that the attendance rate within the school will rise by three to five percent.
How attendance will be monitored	• Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance regularly by the class teacher and in assemblies by the Principal. • Daily record of attendance on Aladdin system by each teacher. • Record of late arrivals and early leaving on Aladdin system. • Parental sign-out form to record early removal from class stating reason. • At the start of each school year, the Attendance Coordinator identifies pupils with a history of poor attendance who may be at risk of continued absence. These pupils are flagged to the class teacher and monitored closely throughout the year. • Teachers will discuss concerns re attendance at parent teacher meetings.

	• Alert Principal and Attendance Coordinator about concerns. • Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems. • Principal/Attendance Coordinator will inform the Board of Management about attendance at each meeting. • Class teacher will inform parents, by letter, when absences of 15 days or over accrue. • Class teacher will inform parents by letter, when absences of 20 days accrue. • Attendance Coordinator will make referrals to Tusla in any case of children absent for a significant amount of time or deemed missing in education, as advised by the EWO. • Class teacher will send updated letters every month where necessary. • Attendance Coordinator will complete on-line report forms with TUSLA and will complete annual attendance report. • Notes explaining reasons for absence will be retained in the pupil's file on Aladdin. • Early removal from class will be monitored. • Ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance: • Target setting and targets • The whole-school approach • Promoting good attendance • Responding to poor attendance	Targets: ○ To improve attendance rates year on year based on annual returns to TUSLA. ○ To reduce the number of children who are absent for more than 20 days. Whole-School Approach: ○ Staff and Board of Management are committed to providing a positive school atmosphere, which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child. All teachers will take responsibility in promoting good attendance and being vigilant for children who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems. ○ Managing Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour: A Good Practice Guide for Primary Schools document will be utilised

	in instances of reluctant school attenders/ school refusal. ○ Attendance File created on Staff Drive containing reviews and pertinent support documents. Promoting Good Attendance: ○ The school curriculum is designed to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to experience success and to enjoy a positive, enriching school experience. ○ St Mary's Primary School will promote development of good self-esteem and self-worth in its pupils (according to the Code of Behaviour and Bí Cineálta policy). ○ Support for pupils who have special educational needs in accordance with DES guidelines. ○ Attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the Attendance Coordinator or the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil. ○ Class teacher will phone home if they are concerned about poor attendance. If unsuccessful with the phone call a message will be sent on Aladdin. ○ The school will use regular newsletters, assemblies and Aladdin texts to promote attendance and punctuality. ○ The Principal/Attendance Coordinator will assess each case individually and at this point a phone call to a parent/guardian may be deemed necessary. ○ The class teacher will keep a daily record of attendance on Aladdin. ○ The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually. ○ The class teacher will ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained. A n explanation on Aladdin or a standard note is to be used for this purpose. ○ Attendance figures are monitored daily by the Principal/Attendance Coordinator on Aladdin. ○ The Principal/Attendance Coordinator will also bring details of continued absences and
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patterns of absences to the attention of the class teachers as necessary.

- The Principal/Attendance Coordinator will promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
- Attendance will be featured as part of school assemblies/announcements etc.
- The Principal/Attendance Coordinator will inform TUSLA:
 - When a pupil has been missing for a significant amount of time during the course of the school year or deemed missing in education, as advised by the EWO.
 - When a pupil has been suspended from school more than once under the Code of Behaviour.

• Extra-curricular activities, such as hurling, Gaelic football, camogie, soccer and choir will be encouraged for all pupils, specifically those at risk of non-attendance.

- Providing opportunities for all pupils to have a voice in school via 'Active Schools', 'Green Schools', 'Amber Flag and other committees and groups.
- Continue to inform parents regularly at parent-teacher meetings and infant induction day about the importance of attendance.
- Talk to the children regularly about attendance during assemblies.
- Record attendance on school reports.
- Encourage parental involvement in the Parents' Association and in activities within the school.

Responding to Poor Attendance:

The following strategies may be employed to identify students at risk of developing school attendance problems:

- On transfer to St Mary's Primary School attendance records will be sought from previous schools on pupil attendance.
- Class teachers will inform the Principal/Attendance Coordinator of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

	○ Contact between school and parent/guardian to express concern re attendance, late arrival or early removal e.g. phone call, letter, discuss at parent teacher meeting. ○ Parents will be informed by letter when a pupil has been absent for 15 days and then 20 days enclosing a letter outlining their role in ensuring good attendance and also explaining the role of Tusla. ○ Specific meeting in school with parent/guardian to identify problems and agree interventions. ○ Concerns and agreements communicated in writing to parent/guardian. ○ Implementation of any appropriate in-school measures (e.g. 'contact person' in school, support in class etc.). ○ Use of appropriate interventions with pupil (e.g. attendance charts/ attendance report, incentives, rewards etc.). ○ Principal/Attendance Coordinator will work closely with various agencies who are involved with such students. ○ Contact EWO to assist with issues that arise. ○ Contact TUSLA to assist with issues, where necessary.
School roles in relation to attendance	<u>The class teacher will:</u> ● Take attendance daily on Aladdin, where they can also see a record of absences and absence notes. ● Inform the Principal/ Attendance Coordinator of any concerns regarding the attendance of pupils. ● Inform parents via Aladdin Connect when a pupil has been absent for 15 days, and then 20 days, enclosing a letter outlining their role in ensuring good attendance and also explaining the role of TUSLA.

	<u>The Principal will:</u> ● Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations. <u>The teacher, who has special responsibility for the area of school attendance will:</u> ● Submit quarterly and annual returns to TUSLA. ● Inform the Education Welfare Officer, if a pupil is not attending school regularly, if a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days. ● Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil. <u>The Board of Management, teachers and whole school community will be mindful at all times of:</u> ● Support staff members with funding and training if required to support initiatives that encourage regular attendance. ● The identification of strategies that will encourage more regular attendance at school on the part of such students. ● The need to review this strategy into the future to accommodate the changing needs of the school and its population.
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	Closer home/school relations will be fostered through: ○ Attendance at meetings (Parent/Teacher, etc.). ○ Attendance at Special Occasions e.g. Grandparents Day, sponsored walk ○ Attendance at school events (e.g., Concerts, Masses, etc.). ○ Regular newsletters to families. ○ Open-door policy in Principal's office for daily communication. ○ Maintaining & supporting our Parents' Association

Parents can promote attendance by

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems.
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining from taking holidays during school time
- Informing the school via Aladdin of the reasons for absence from school.
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.

Students can promote attendance by

- Participating in school activities, such as Cumann na mBunscol, soccer, camogie, musical, cross country, etc.
- Taking an active role in the 'Green Schools' committee.
- Taking an active role in the 'Active Schools' committee.
- Taking an active role in the school Garden
- Taking an active role in the Amber Flag committee
- Participating in any future 'Student Council committee'.
- Participating in the school choir.

Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in our school:

- TUSLA.
- Other schools in the vicinity.
- NEPS.
- Local GAA clubs, soccer clubs, etc.
- Community Gardaí.
- Local interest groups such as the Barnardos, Vincent de Paul.
- ACORN Project.

	Local Organisations • Board of Management has fostered links with local GAA club and actively promotes pupil involvement. • Pupils are encouraged to participate in local organisations outside school. • Providing rewards of achievement in pupil's chosen activity. • School encourages pupils to bring in any awards.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	St Mary's Primary School will monitor the strategy by discussing attendance at staff meetings and during Croke Park hours. Principal and the Attendance Coordinator will discuss children at risk and possible solutions. The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through: • Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin database. • Happy, confident, well- adjusted children. • Positive parental feedback. ○ Teacher vigilance. ○ Teachers will be responsible for the attendance within their own classes ○ Teachers will remind parents about the importance of good attendance. ○ Teachers will keep parents informed on the number of school days their child has missed. ○ Parents will update the reasons for their missed days on Aladdin Connect. • A satisfactory level of accountability for all absences.
Review process and date for review	The strategy will be reviewed annually in the first term of the school year.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	8/10/25
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	9/10/25