



# **St. Joseph's Special School**

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Registered Charity Number: 20140210 Roll Number: 19520H

## **Statement of Attendance Strategy**

Name of school	St. Joseph's Special School
Address	Castletymon Road, Balrothery, Tallaght. Dublin 24
Roll Number	19520H
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>St. Joseph's School is a happy child centred friendly and caring school, where pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability. The staff is committed to the development and education of each pupil to reach their full potential.</p> <p>The school provides a supportive environment, for pupils, parents/carers and staff. St. Joseph's Special School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils and the school strives to promote cooperation among pupils, parents/carers and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.</p> <p>We believe that children can learn most effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too that children arrive to school punctually. It is equally important that children should not attend school if they are unwell.</p>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on regular attendance in communications with parents/carers. The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.</p>

	<p>Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, parents/carers are responsible for making sure their child receives an education. In this regard, the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Special School expects a high level of pupil attendance. Children are encouraged to come to school every day and the school's approach to, and promotion of, attendance is outlined below. Tusla and the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Special School strongly advise that parents/carers do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. Holidays should be taken during the allocated holiday time as outlined in the school calendar.</p>
<p>How attendance will be monitored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual attendance is recorded daily on the school administration system (Aladdin) and reasons for absences are noted.</li> <li>• Parents/carers should phone or provide a note with reason for absence should their child be absent from school.</li> <li>• A Doctor's note may be requested</li> <li>• If a teacher is concerned about student absences, he/she will alert relevant staff; i.e. the Principal.</li> <li>• The annual attendance of each child is recorded by Aladdin and is printed in the end of year school reports.</li> <li>• Late arrivals and early departures are discouraged unless absolutely necessary. All late arrivals will be recorded on the Aladdin system.</li> <li>• Attendance is included in school reports</li> <li>• Board of Management is informed of monthly attendance percentage.</li> <li>• Attendance letters sent at 10,15 and 20 days for unexplained absences.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly and annual returns are forwarded to Tusla as required.</li> </ul>
<p>Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target setting and targets</li> <li>The whole-school approach</li> <li>Promoting good attendance</li> <li>Responding to poor attendance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Target setting and targets</b></p> <p>The average attendance in the 2019/20 year so far is 83%. Upon reflection on this we have set the following targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued high level (90%+) of attendance among 42% of the pupils.</li> <li>Improvement in attendance in the remaining 58%</li> <li>Improve frequency of contact for students with frequent absences</li> </ul> <p>(It is understood that children with complex special needs and medical needs may sometimes be absent due to their medical condition or to attend appointments with medical and multidisciplinary professionals. Students with complex needs including ASD are also sometimes absent due to anxiety/behaviour).</p> <p><b>Whole school strategies to promote attendance may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continuing to create a safe welcoming environment in the classroom for our pupils, even in the eventuality of arriving late.</li> <li>Inform all parents/carers upon enrolment and at the beginning of the school year of the importance of good attendance and procedures in relation to absences. As St. Joseph's is a school for children with special educational needs, sometimes it is necessary to begin children's attendance on a shortened day for medical, physical, emotional or behavioural reasons. A child who had been attending for full school days</li> </ul>

	<p>may from time to time have their school day reduced for similar reasons. The decision would always be based on the best interests of the child in consultation with their parents/carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating the importance of being at school on time and notifying the school if their child is absent</li> <li>• Encouraging parents/carers to communicate frequently with class teachers and to share any worries their child might have in school.</li> <li>• Maintaining a good working relationship with the Educational Welfare Officer.</li> </ul> <p>School and classroom climate play an important role in promoting positive attendance. St Joseph's aims to give all pupils positive interactions throughout the school day as this promotes the adult/pupil relationship of mutual respect and trust. We have high expectations of our pupils. These positive interactions and expectations have been proven to have a strong influence on pupil engagement and attendance.</p> <p><b>Promoting Good Attendance</b></p> <p>We recognise the importance of identifying the individual needs of the individual child. We appreciate and understand diversity within the school community. These factors involve adopting appropriate strategies for individual children, early intervention to prevent absenteeism which involves the child, the school, parents/carers and community where applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greeting pupils by name every morning and throughout the day.</li> <li>• Showing respect to our colleagues and the pupils in our care.</li> </ul>
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- Making our classrooms bright and colourful areas where pupils are encouraged.
- St. Joseph's Special School. run many activities and initiatives to promote good attendance. These
- activities are varied and cater for a wide range of interests. They include gaelic football and soccer, FAI coaching, Basketball, Green Schools, Irish Dancing
- Celebrating occasions with the pupils e.g. Halloween, Christmas, Easter, Grandparents Day, Science Week, Tree Day, World Book Day etc.
- Attendance Awards are presented at the end of the year to those who have been absent for fewer than five days.

**Responding to poor attendance**

- Improvements in attendance of previous poor attenders are acknowledged.
- Parents/carers receive quarterly statements of attendance.
- Parents/carers are given notice of 10,15 and 20 day of unexplained absences.
- Principal keeps in regular contact with parents/carers where there is a concern regarding attendance.
- Parents/carers are invited to meeting to discuss any issues regarding attendance.

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'. Section 21 of the Act obliges schools to inform the Educational Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any

	<p>school year, or if the child does not attend school on a regular basis.</p> <p>In such cases the EWO (following all reasonable efforts) may serve a ‘School Attendance Notice’ on any parent/carer who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school.</p> <p>Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the NEWB five times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during the school year.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School roles in relation to attendance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Principal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance.</li> <li>• Leads on the implementation and review of the school’s Attendance Strategy.</li> <li>• Promotes good attendance at school assemblies and parent/carer meetings.</li> <li>• Updates Board of Management about school attendance.</li> <li>• Ensures that the electronic version of the Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil is filled, printed and filed on a monthly basis.</li> <li>• Keeps in regular contact with parents/carers where attendance is a concern.</li> <li>• Sends letters of 15 and 20 day absences to parents/carers.</li> <li>• Makes the quarterly and annual statistical return to Tusla</li> <li>• Makes referrals to Tusla when necessary.</li> <li>• Ensures children are rewarded for</li> </ul>

	<p>excellent attendance and for improving attendance.</p> <p><b>Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance.</li> <li>• Encourage and commend good attendance.</li> <li>• Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.</li> <li>• Set examples by their own punctuality.</li> <li>• Record roll-call electronically using Aladdin administration system.</li> <li>• Collect and file any notes regarding absence.</li> <li>• Consult with parents/carers regarding concerns around attendance or punctuality.</li> <li>• Alert Principal of any concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.</li> <li>• Distribute quarterly attendance report sheets to parents/carers.</li> <li>• Collect and file quarterly attendance report sheets which have been signed by parents/carers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Board of Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board work to provide and support a positive, welcoming environment by maintaining and resourcing the school to a high standard, which in turn promotes good attendance.</li> <li>• The Board ensure that an end of year review of the Attendance Strategy is carried out.</li> <li>• Monthly attendance percentages are recorded at Board meetings.</li> </ul>
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Partnership arrangements (parents/carers, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/carers have a huge influence on their child's school attendance. Parents/carers who are engaged with the school have a greater commitment to their child's education and attendance at school. Parents/carers have an important role to play in setting high standards for their child around attendance.</li> <li>• Parents/carers must inform the school the reason of their child's absence. Parents/carers may use notes, phone, text, homework journal, email.</li> <li>• Engage with the school if there are problems regarding their child's attendance or punctuality and support plans to address the problem.</li> <li>• Ensure that child regularly attends school and arrives at school on time.</li> <li>• Avoid taking child out of class unless there is a serious reason.</li> <li>• Avoid taking their child on holiday during term time.</li> <li>• Pupil's will make every effort to attend school on a regular basis and arrive punctually.</li> <li>• The principal will foster, promote and liaise with TUSLA, NEPS, NCSE, Youth and Community groups, other schools to support pupil's attendance.</li> </ul>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review of attendance records and patterns.</li> <li>• Review of attendance targets.</li> <li>• Feedback from parents/carers, pupils and staff.</li> <li>• Success of implementation of attendance strategies.</li> </ul>
Review process and date for review	Strategy to be reviewed by Staff and Board of Management annually.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	13 May 2019
Date the Statement of Strategy	20 June 2019



submitted to Tusla	
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