

# Scoil Bhríde, Ráth Chormaic

## School Attendance Strategy

(Reviewed/Updated January 2023)

Name of school	Scoil Bhríde
Address	Rathcormac, Co.Cork
Roll Number	17609N
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child is at school on every day the school is open unless there is a genuine reason for Absence, (The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000- Section 17)</p> <p>In Scoil Bhríde we endeavour to provide a welcoming, safe, happy, inclusive learning environment where everyone is valued, respected and listened to; a school where we take pride in ourselves and our achievements. This strategy complements the school ethos of nurturing the potential of every child in a caring school community where children actively participate, achieve their potential and are proud of their achievements. The Board of Management believe that regular attendance is critical for active participation in learning and the achievement of potential. This strategy aims to build a culture of high expectations amongst the school community in relation to attendance.</p>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have high expectations for student attendance as we believe it is an essential factor in pupil learning and the achievement of potential.</li> <li>• We expect pupils to have full attendance at school unless they are ill, incapacitated, have medical appointments or another genuine reason for absence.</li> <li>• Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of attendance and punctuality in our school newsletter.</li> <li>• Parents are required to explain pupil absence from school in writing as outlined in the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 18.</li> <li>• At the annual information evening for parents of Junior Infants the principal will review the attendance policy and communicate the importance of regular attendance.</li> <li>• Attendance/punctuality will be discussed with parents/guardians at the annual parent teacher meeting.</li> </ul>
How attendance will be monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance and punctuality levels are recorded electronically on Aladdin daily by class teachers and any concern regarding an individual's attendance/punctuality is reported to the Principal/ Deputy.</li> <li>• Parents supply an explanation for absence on Aladdin and the reason for absence is recorded daily on Aladdin.</li> <li>• Daily class data is then recorded in An Leabhar Tinrimh (Aladdin, electronic version)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents will be informed when pupil has been absent for 15 days (absence alert)</li> <li>• In the event of a pupil being absent for 20 days or more, for any reason in the school year, this absence is reported to Tusla. (Section 21 of Education Welfare Act) Parents are made aware of this requirement in a Newsletter at the start of each year and at the Parent Information meeting for new Junior Infants.</li> <li>• Biennial and annual statistical returns will be submitted to Tusla.</li> <li>• Principal and Deputy Principal will regularly review attendance issues.</li> <li>• Parents/guardians are informed of the total number of absences for their child during the year in their child's Progress Report</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> </ul> <p>A whole-school approach to promoting good attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the four-year period prior to Covid the average annual attendance was 95%. Attendance decreased significantly during the Covid 19 Pandemic due to illness and the national health and safety requirements around self- isolation and restricting movement. While the school will continue to be guided by Public Health advice and guidelines, parents /guardians will be encouraged to limit pupil absences as much as possible.</li> <li>• Using the school year 2018/2019 as a baseline we aim to maintain an annual total average attendance of not less than 95%.</li> <li>• Having analysed the statistics for the children with the greatest number of absence days during Term 1 (September - December 2022) we will work with parents to increase attendance among these children.</li> <li>• Monitor and improve punctuality amongst a small number of students who are regularly late for school.</li> </ul> <p>The whole school approach involves creating general awareness and setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality. This will include the involvement of pupils, parents, staff, and Board of Management.</p> <p>We promote good attendance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a safe and welcoming learning environment and by doing our utmost to ensure every child is happy in school.</li> <li>• being vigilant so that risks to good attendance (bullying etc.) are identified early and dealt with</li> <li>• publishing the school calendar in May on the school's website for the following year thus enabling parents to plan vacations outside of term time.</li> <li>• informing parents about the importance of full attendance and the school's attendance policy and strategy at school induction meetings</li> <li>• promoting positive attendance at school assemblies</li> </ul>

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- positive affirmation of attendance when taking the roll
- school attendance is recorded on students' school reports.
- the Principal/Deputy will keep in regular contact with parents where there is a concern regarding attendance.

### **Absence due to illness**

- Parent/Guardian must provide a written note on Aladdin to explain the child was absent due to illness. The note should state the nature of the illness and the date in which the absence started and ended.

### **Absence due to term-time holidays**

- As per Section 17 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child is at school on every day the school is open unless there is a genuine reason for absence,
- As per section 21(9) of the Education Welfare Act 2000, only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal. Therefore, the school cannot legally give "permission" for holiday absences during term time.
- The school **strongly discourages parents** taking students on holiday during term-time and this will be communicated to parents at the start of each school year via the newsletter.
- In line with advice from Tusla, parents who wish to take their child out of school for holidays during term time should forward a letter to the principal in advance of the absence, stating that the child will be absent and specifying the dates and reason for absence and that the parents are aware of the implications.
- Where there are **regular holiday absences**, the school as recommended by Tusla, will remind parents/guardians of the educational and potential legal impact of removing pupils from school for periods of time.

### **Absence due to medical/ dental/healthcare appointments**

- Parents should ensure, if possible that children's appointments are arranged for **outside** school hours.
- Parents should advise the class teacher via a note on Aladdin if a pupil is going to be late. If the pupil is not in school by **10.20 a.m.**, the time of arrival will be recorded but as the pupil was absent when roll call was taken the pupil will be marked absent for that day.

### **School response to absence**

- an information letter "absence alert" will be sent to parents when child has been absent for c.15 days.
- parents will receive a letter from the school when pupil has missed 20 days for any reason and advised that this absence

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	<p>will be reported to Tusla. If absence is due to illness or other genuine reason/s, no action will be taken by Tusla (Child and Family Agency). However, if there is a concern about a child's attendance or about the reasons given, you may be contacted by an Education Welfare Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● a pupil's name will be taken off the Roll when-             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the school is informed that the pupil has left/ enrolled in another school</li> <li>- on the first Monday following an absence of 20 <i>consecutive</i> days</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Parents of pupils who arrive late or who wish to remove their child from class before school official finishing time, for whatever reason are required to notify the school, ideally through Aladdin.</li> <li>● Parents may be invited to a meeting with the class teacher/Principal/ Deputy Principal to discuss concerns about attendance or punctuality.</li> <li>● Contact will be made with the Education Welfare Officer, if necessary, in accordance with the Education Welfare Act</li> </ul>
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p><b>Class teachers will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● take attendance each day at <b>10.20 am</b> and record on Aladdin data system. If a pupil arrives at school later than <b>10.20 a.m.</b> their time of arrival will be recorded as "arrived late" on the Aladdin system but they will be marked absent on the official Department of Education Roll book. If a pupil leaves the school before official end of school time this time will be recorded as "Leaving early" on Aladdin,</li> <li>● check that a reason for absence is given by parent/guardian on Aladdin,</li> <li>● create a safe, stimulating, caring, inclusive, happy, learning environment where children feel valued,</li> <li>● encourage and commend good attendance,</li> <li>● implement this whole school plan to promote attendance and punctuality,</li> <li>● consult with parents when parents have not provided written explanation for absence,</li> <li>● be vigilant so that obstacles to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc, are identified early and dealt with</li> <li>● record any concerns about attendance,</li> <li>● make Principal/Deputy aware of any concerns regarding attendance or punctuality,</li> <li>● class teachers, along with principal will meet with parents of children in danger of poor attendance to discuss a plan for improving attendance and removing any barriers to attendance.</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>Principal/ Deputy Principal will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitors attendance and reports attendance data to the whole school community,</li> <li>• build a shared commitment to the values and ethos of the school,</li> <li>• give all the partners in the school community a sense of responsibility for school attendance,</li> <li>• promote and acknowledge good attendance and punctuality at school assemblies, meetings with parents, newsletters etc.</li> <li>• ensures that daily attendance and explanation for absence is recorded on Aladdin by class teachers,</li> <li>• follow up on issues regarding attendance/punctuality raised by class teachers,</li> <li>• keep in regular contact with parents where attendance is a concern,</li> <li>• make referral to Tusla if deemed necessary,</li> <li>• ensure that biennial and annual statistical returns are submitted to Tusla</li> <li>• keep the Board of Management informed of attendance matters.</li> </ul> <p><b>Board of Management will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain and resource the school to a high standard and endeavour to create safe, caring, inclusive learning and teaching environment,</li> <li>• support the principal and teachers in the implementation of this strategy</li> </ul>
<p>Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)</p>	<p>Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring regular and punctual school attendance (children should be in school before 9.20a.m)</li> <li>• explaining absence (give reason) on Aladdin.</li> <li>• avoiding the removal of a child from class unless there is a serious /genuine reason.</li> <li>• refraining from taking holidays during school time</li> <li>• encouraging children to participate in school activities.</li> <li>• praising and encouraging children’s efforts</li> <li>• contacting the class teacher/Principal/Deputy if they have any concerns about their child’s learning or school related issues.</li> <li>• ensuring, if possible that children’s appointments are arranged for outside school hours.</li> <li>• working with school staff and or Education Welfare Officer to resolve any attendance issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication with other schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a pupil transfers <i>from</i> Scoil Bhríde to another school, records on that pupil’s attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer/request for such information.</li> </ul>

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	<p>When a pupil transfers <i>into</i> Scoil Bhríde from another school, confirmation of the enrolment will be communicated to the other school and relevant records -sought.</p> <p>Records for pupils moving from Scoil Bhríde to post-primary will be forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment / request for information</p>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<p><b>At staff level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regular communication between class teachers and principal/deputy re attendance issues</li> <li>● Monthly review of attendance statistics by Principal/Deputy</li> </ul> <p><b>At Board of Management level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implementation of this attendance strategy will be discussed at board meetings.</li> <li>● Board will be informed of monthly attendance statistics.</li> </ul> <p><b>At Parents' Association level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents will be regularly reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters.</li> </ul> <p><b>Contact with Tusla</b> Tusla is informed if</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) a pupil has missed 20 days or more for any reason in a school year.</li> <li>(2) a pupil is suspended/expelled for 6 days or more.</li> <li>(3) a pupil has irregular attendance, (but not necessarily missing a total of 20 days or more)</li> </ol> <p>Tusla is furnished with the total absences for each school year through the annual attendance report.</p>
Review process and date for review	This strategy will be reviewed by the Board of Management each September. New targets will be set as appropriate.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	13/02/2023
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	Original statement submitted 27/10/2017

Signed: Marie Walsh (Chairperson) 13-02-2023

Mairéad Uí Íomhair (Príomhoide)

Signed; \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_