

# Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

## Ballyfacey N.S.

18257N

### **The school's vision and values in relation to attendance:**

Ballyfacey National School seeks to promote and support all aspects of the children's wellbeing as a core value of our ethos. We strive to ensure that all our students can flourish in an environment that is nurturing, supportive and progressive. We are guided by our mission statement, the aim of which is to ensure that each child, through confidence and self-belief may achieve their full potential. We believe that there is a clear and direct link between regular school attendance and pupil progress. We recognise the importance of parents/guardians and school staff working together to achieve optimal attendance for each child in our care.

### **The school's high expectations around attendance:**

Attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences. Therefore, the school places great emphasis on regular attendance in communications with parents and pupils. The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning. We expect children to have full attendance at school unless they are ill or have medical appointments. We fully understand that there may also be urgent family reasons why a child cannot attend school, especially in the case of bereavement and endeavour to offer our support in these instances.

### **Aims of the Statement of Strategy:**

The purpose of this statement is:

- To meet the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000, section 22 with regard to our school attendance strategy.
- To support and sustain the positive attitudes to learning already evident in our school and to highlight their importance for all students.
- To underpin the importance of school attendance and punctuality and their impact on children's wellbeing.
- To clarify procedures around matters relating to registration, attendance, punctuality and recording.
- To ensure awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

- Document our approaches to promoting and sustaining good attendance and addressing related matters.

### **School Roles and Responsibilities/Whole- school approach:**

All school staff members have an important role in the implementation of the school attendance policy.

Class Teachers (supported by SET and SNAs where applicable), are responsible for daily recording of attendance on the Aladdin system. It is also the responsibility of class teachers to:

- Establish a positive class environment that supports participation and engagement, being particularly mindful of pupils who may be at risk of poor attendance.
- Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy.
- Set high expectations around attendance and punctuality using supportive, inclusive and encouraging language.
- Ensure attendance and punctuality data is recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures.
- Alert relevant staff (Principal/ Deputy Principal) if there are concerns around student absences.
- Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty attending school on a regular basis.
- Support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling.

The School Secretary facilitates and monitors the Aladdin Connect system.

The Principal and Deputy Principal:

- Liaise with class teachers and parents/ guardians when issues around attendance arise and introduce attendance support strategies on a case by case basis.
- Monitor attendance through the Aladdin system
- Are responsible for making returns to Túsla Child and Family Agency (NEWB)
- Liaise with TESS personnel when necessary.

### **Role of Parents/Guardians in supporting school attendance:**

We recognise parents/ guardians as being the primary educators of their children and their important role in ensuring attendance at school. We seek to act in partnership with parents/ guardians to promote and sustain regular attendance at school.

In line with Túsula's guidelines for school (p.44), parents/ guardians are expected to:

- Display positive attitudes towards school and the school community.
- Set high standards for their children in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Engage with the school if there is an issue around attendance and work in partnership with the school to achieve a solution that supports the wellbeing of their child.
- Discuss planned absences with the school.
- Avoid taking family holidays during term time where possible.
- Arrange for non-essential appointments to take place outside of school hours in so much as possible.
- Notify the school if their child, particularly in junior classes, is to be collected by a person not known to the teacher.
- Pass on the explanation for each absence period by email or phone.

**Punctuality/ Roll Call:** Ballyfacey NS is open to receive pupils from 9:10am. Formal instruction begins at 9.20am. This period is known as Reception Time.

It is very important that children arrive in to class before 9.20am as reception time allows children to settle in, interact with their teacher, and friends, and to engage in play, drawing or reading activities.

While we recognise the challenges around punctuality and that exceptional circumstances may arise, in general the school expects that:

- Pupils and staff members are punctual for school.
- Class teachers record late arrivals through the Aladdin system.
- Class teachers contact parents/ guardians in the case of a pupil who is consistently late.
- Class teachers notify the Principal/ Deputy Principal of their concerns.

**Recording and Reporting Attendance:**

Roll call is taken by class teachers prior to 10:00am and recorded on the Aladdin system.

A child who is not present by this time will be marked absent. If a pupil arrives after roll call the teacher will record it on Aladdin.

Attendance data is monitored by the Class Teacher, Principal and Deputy Principal and submitted to the TUSLA annually.

- Parents/ Guardians are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA, particularly the bye-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per year.

- Parents/ Guardians of a child whose attendance is of concern are invited to meet with the Principal to discuss the issue and to work in partnership to find a solution which prioritises the wellbeing of the student.
- The school is obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing of any child who has been absent for 20 days or more in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a child has been removed from the school register or where a child has been expelled or suspended from school for a period of 6 days or more.
- Each child's attendance record is documented on their annual summer report.

#### **Strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality:**

The Board of Management, staff, students, parent body and wider community of Ballyfacey NS work in partnership to create a school culture that is welcoming, nurturing and inclusive.

The BOM directs energy and available resources towards maintaining and improving our school building and the general school environment. This in turn creates a positive backdrop for school attendance

The Parents' Association support the work of the school throughout the year and provide additional funding and opportunities for students which enhance their wellbeing (i.e. funding various initiatives on an annual basis).

As a staff we strive to provide a supportive learning environment in which all students are respected and valued and in which cognisance is taken of their learning needs.

Pupils in Ballyfacey NS enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Provision is made for a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. These opportunities impact positively on pupil engagement and can in turn have a positive effect on attendance.

Supportive parish and community links further enhance the experience of pupils and their families which is a positive factor in school attendance.

#### **We recognise the link between regular, punctual attendance and the wellbeing of our students and engage in positive strategies such as:**

- Providing a safe, secure, welcoming and enriching learning environment for all pupils
- Identifying early and responding to differing learning needs sensitively
- Resourcing additional learning materials and supports for some children
- Communicating openly and sensitively with parents if there are areas of concern
- Staff members available to greet students by name each morning and to facilitate any students experiencing anxiety leaving a parent/ guardian in a sensitive and needs-based manner.

- Class teachers facilitate a calm and welcoming reception time by overseeing play, reading or other activities and chatting informally to the children until formal teaching time begins.
- Class teachers, SET and SNAs where applicable, liaise to ensure that homework requirements are tailored to the capabilities of children who may struggle with independent work and therefore experience anxiety around homework.
- Positive achievements, kind behaviour and improved behaviour are noted and celebrated.
- Attendance and punctuality issues are discussed as necessary at Parent/Teacher meetings.
- The school calendar for the coming year is agreed by staff as early as possible and published on the school website. This gives parents/ guardians an opportunity to plan holidays and family breaks accordingly.

#### **Role of TUSLA:**

Túsla Child and Family agency is informed if:

- A child is expelled or suspended for 6 days or more
- A child has been absent from school for 20 days or more

#### **Communication with other schools:**

- Under section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the principal of a child's current school must inform the principal of the child's previous school, via POD (Primary Online Database), that the child is now registered in their school.
- When a principal receives notification that a student has been registered in another school they must notify the principal of the new school of any problems regarding attendance and of such matters relating to the student's educational needs as considered appropriate. This applies to students who transfer between primary schools and to those who transfer from primary to second-level education.
- When a student transfers into Ballyfacey NS, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to their previous school via POD, and appropriate records sought

#### **Communication with Parents/Guardians:**

- Parents/Guardians are made aware of the requirements of Túsla Child and Family Agency, particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year.
- Class teachers and the principal communicate directly regarding absence rates of concern
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for communicating the reason for their child's absence via email or phone call.

**Evaluation:**

The success of the Strategy for School Attendance will be measured through;

- Accurate data including absence reasons available to Administrative staff on Aladdin
- Children's positive dispositions toward attendance and punctuality
- Positive working relationships between home and school in finding solutions to problems around attendance and punctuality
- Teacher observations and reports

**Review:**

The Statement of Strategy for School Attendance will be evaluated on an on-going basis by representatives from the relevant sections of the school community and will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Management of Ballyfacey NS.

**Ratification and Communication:**

February 2025 - reviewed policy circulated to parents and published on the school website under the policies tab.

This policy was ratified at the meeting of the Board of Management on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025, and will be reviewed next in 2028 unless an earlier review is deemed necessary.

Chairperson: James O'Leary Date: 11/2/25

Principal: Tommy O'Gorman Date: 11/2/25