



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

This policy was adopted by the board on

To be reviewed by June 2025

Chairperson of the BOM \_\_\_\_\_

Principal & Secretary of the BOM \_\_\_\_\_

Date set for Review \_\_\_\_\_



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

St. Augustine's School is one of five Youth Encounter Projects (YEP) in the country, under the direction of the High Support Special Schools Section, Social Inclusion Unit of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The school is under the Patronage of the Diocese of Limerick and promotes the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil and operates through co-operation between pupils, parents, staff, board, diocesan office and DES.

### **1. Introduction**

The following policy and procedures have been drafted to promote and emphasise the importance of student attendance in St. Augustine's School and to outline the structures that are in place to support and ensure that each student attends school on a very regular and consistent basis.

### **2. Relationship to Mission Statement**

St Augustine's is a school under the trusteeship of the Dioceses of Limerick.

We endeavour to:

- provide a comprehensive, high quality education to address the personal, social and emotional needs of our school community.
- Holistically empower learners to fully participate in society and realise their unique potential.
- Provide a supportive, safe, and healthy teaching and learning environment for our students and staff.
- Promote and enhance the wellbeing, resilience and self-mastery of our students.
- Facilitate our student's self-development and transition to further education.

In order for a student to be "assisted to reach full potential", student's consistent attendance and participation in school is vital.



### **3. School Procedures for Dealing with Absenteeism**

a) School procedures for dealing with absenteeism

- Students must attend school in accordance with the school calendar. In the case of a necessary absence, which must be reported to the Wellbeing and Welfare team on the day of the absence.
- If a student wishes to leave school for any purpose he/she must provide a note of permission from his/her parents/guardian.
- During school hours students are not permitted to leave the school premises without permission-(see Lunchtime policy and Absconding policy.)
- Students arriving late in the morning will be marked late and their time of arrival recorded by the Wellbeing and Welfare Team.
- All notes received are kept on file for each student.

b) Wellbeing and Welfare Team and /or the principal inform TUSLA and parents of all absences over 20 days.

c) Phone calls are made and text a parent message sent to check/verify student absenteeism.

d) The Wellbeing and Welfare Team contact parents/guardians following unexplained student absences.

e) All records of student absences and lateness are recorded by the Wellbeing and Welfare Team and overseen by school Principal

Frequent / Regular contact with TUSLA to monitor and promote attendance where possible.

### **4. Recent Legislation**

The staff of St Augustine's School is committed to the successful implementation of recent education legislation, in particular the 1998 Education Act, The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

#### **Our Statutory Duties**

- The legislation governing school attendance in Ireland is the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Under the Act the minimum school leaving age is raised to 16 years or the completion of three years of post-primary education, whichever is the later.
- Parents are required to ensure that their children from the age of 6 to the age of 16 attend a recognised school or receive a certain minimum education.

### **5. Roles and Responsibilities in Relation to Developing and Implementing Policy and Procedures**



### **Board of Management**

- To ensure policy is developed and evaluated on a regular basis.
- To receive reports from the principal on implementation of the policy.

### **Principal and the Wellbeing and Welfare Team**

- To monitor the implementation of policy.
- The Wellbeing and Welfare Team are to inform parents and pupils of procedures and any absenteeism.

### **Communicating with Parents and Carers**

- The school gives high priority to advising all parents, carers and pupils of the importance of regular and punctual school attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, not least because these are extremely important when there is a problem regarding attendance.
- It is the parents duty and responsibility to follow and support school procedures in relation to absenteeism.

### **Communicating with Children**

- It is the pupils' responsibility to attend school regularly and to be on time with support if needed.
- To follow the school procedures in relation to absences, lateness and appointments.

### **The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

Education Welfare Officer Monitor's school attendance registers, holds consultation meetings with the Wellbeing and Welfare Team and Principal.

The EWO may meet parents/carers and children in school, write to parents/carers, arrange home visits and refer to other professional agencies. The results of these interventions are reported to the school, and in many cases the interventions are carried out alongside school staff in a supportive manner.

## **6. Strategies in Place to Promote School Attendance:**



- Daily attendance taken by the Wellbeing and Welfare Team and shared with the school principal.
- Roll book maintained by School Principal
- Early am absenteeism texts sent to those parents whose children are not in attendance
- Attendance rewards
- Home visits
- Positive postcards
- Whole School or Class Assemblies
- Regular analysis of attendance logs to ascertain those whose absenteeism is becoming an issue (as per EWS guidelines)
- Attendance figures form part of the termly report cards (bi-annual) distributed to all parents
- Bi-annual returns to [www.schoolreturns.ie](http://www.schoolreturns.ie)
- Regular Meetings ie Individual Behaviour Meetings where all challenges are. attendance is addressed.
- Breakfast club is in place from 8.30am to 9.30am, breakfast is provided for all pupils daily.

## **7. Review and Audit**

The situation is constantly monitored and reviewed by:

- Principal
- The Wellbeing and Welfare Team at weekly meeting

### **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
- Dedicated full-time the Wellbeing and Welfare Team and pastoral care package in place
- Awards for best monthly and annual attendance (highlighted in termly school magazine)
- Whole class award for full weekly attendance by all students in that class (highlighted in termly school magazine)
- Bespoke Transition Year in place where necessary/ (Individualised/ Child Centered) where the need arises.
- Use of Care Referrals to communicate staff concerns relating to absenteeism



- Interesting and relevant extra-curricular and co-curricular package in place
- Three weekly the Wellbeing and Welfare Team meetings in place
- Create a sense of “belongingness” amongst the students for the school
- Sustain a safe, healthy and happy environment conducive to learning holistically.