

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE 2019

Name of School: *St Corbans BNS – Scoil Chorbáin Naofa*

Address: *Fairgreen, Naas, Co. Kildare*

Roll Number: *17254C*

Rationale

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, parents, and the Board of Management in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in St Corban's BNS to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school. This strategy brings together all of our practices and interventions aimed at promoting and supporting school attendance.

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

St Corbans expects each pupil to attend school every day unless there is a legitimate reason why he should not attend. Every child has a right to education and parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The school will support parents in any way it can to develop, maintain and improve attendance. A child cannot benefit from the positive effects of school if he is not there.

The school's high expectations around attendance

St Corbans BNS expects parents to make every effort to ensure that their child attends school regularly. All pupils should attend school on school days unless there is a legitimate reason why the child cannot attend. However we appreciate that some parents may need our support and help at times to overcome obstacles to full attendance. We will support parents and pupils and work in partnership with them and other agencies to encourage and promote excellent attendance. We discourage parents from taking pupils on holidays during term-time and we encourage them to be positive and conscientious with regard to attendance.

How attendance will be monitored

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

Schools have a requirement to maintain accurate pupil enrolment and attendance records. In September 2016 the old Roll Book, Leabhar Tinrimh and Clárleabhar were replaced by a digital system on Aladdin School Management Systems and the Primary Online Database. (Circular 28/2013 & Circular 33/2015). The old Leabhar Rolla has been replaced by the digital roll on Aladdin and this records the pupils' attendance each day. The Clárleabhar (a record of registered pupil enrolments) is replaced by the Primary Online Database (POD) which records all the pupils enrolled in the school and the relevant background, history and specific details. POD is now regarded as the school register. The Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil is replaced by the Aladdin System and records the total number of pupils present in each class each day, a summary of the class attendance for each day, week, term and year. Roll books and registers are kept in digital form on the Aladdin School Administration System for recording pupil attendance as part of the school records. Each school month the Digital Roll Book and Attendance Log is printed from the Aladdin system and filed in hard copy in the school's filing system. At the end of each school year the Digital Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil is printed from Aladdin and filed in hard copy in the school's filing system.

Guidelines on Recording Attendance

Each classroom teacher is responsible for recording his/her class attendance on a daily basis by inputting the details on Aladdin. The roll is normally taken each morning between 09:45

and 09:50. On Swimming days the roll may be taken up to before the class leaves for swimming at 09:05 or at 10:30 when they return. The cut-off time for entering information is 11:00 am. If for some reason the roll has not been taken at the designated time, the teacher may still enter the information up to the cut-off point of 11:00 am. When a late input/amendment (after 11:00) is required, the system will ask for a reason. All changes/amendments to rolls appear on the attendance log that is printed each school month and filed in the school filing system.

Teachers record if the pupil is present or absent. They also record reasons for any absences, notes received and information in the notes, attempts to get notes from parents who fail to supply notes and refusal of parents to provide notes. Teachers also record a child's punctuality by recording "Lates". This shows the number of minutes late a child is on a particular day. They also record early leavers and the time involved.

As stated in Circular 33/2015, the Primary Online Database replaces the Clárleabhar. We can now print a hardcopy of our registered pupil enrolment data from POD for our own records. A school's pupil enrolment records on POD will be regarded as the register for the purposes of Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Attendance is monitored at an individual, class and whole school level. Teachers record pupil attendance each day on the Aladdin system by marking pupils present or absent. If a pupil is absent, his parents must supply a note explaining the reason for his absence on the day he returns to school. This will normally be a note in his Homework Diary.

If a pupil misses 20 days cumulatively, the Aladdin System alerts the teacher and his parents are informed of the total by letter and/or text. They are also informed that the school must notify TUSLA. TUSLA is notified on the Student Absence Report every three months on the dates specified by TUSLA. The classroom teacher initially addresses poor attendance issues with the parents with a view to supporting them and their child in improving attendance. Teachers inform the Principal if attendance issues persist. It may be necessary for the Principal to be involved if there is no improvement. The Principal monitors class level attendance and whole school trends.

Pupil attendance levels are addressed at parent teacher meetings. On the end of year report a pupil's attendance is recorded and teachers may highlight attendance levels as a factor in the pupil's school experience and achievement levels.

Classroom teachers also record pupil punctuality on Aladdin, recording the number of minutes late a pupil is, on a particular day.

Pupils who arrive late in the morning or must leave early during the day are signed out by an authorized adult at the main Office. This constitutes another record of pupil attendance.

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Punctuality

School begins at 08:45 for Assembly Time and all pupils are expected to be in class before 09:00 to be on time. Pupils should be in school in their line at 09:0 where their teacher will be waiting to receive them from 08:45. The teacher will contact parents/guardians in the event of

pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged to report children who are persistently late, to Tusla. If a pupil arrives a few minutes late, he can go to class and the late is recorded on Aladdin by the teacher along with the number of minutes late. If a pupil is significantly late or is late due to an appointment outside school he must be signed in at the Main Office by an adult and brought to his classroom teacher by the adult. The teacher also records the late and number of minutes on Aladdin. If he is in school before 11:00 he will be marked present but his tardiness noted. If he arrives after 11:00 he is marked absent.

Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance

The school records attendance on Aladdin and in the Pupil Sign-in/Sign-Out Book in the Main Office.

We record and monitor attendance and punctuality accurately each day.

We create a positive school and classroom climate to promote positive interactions and ensure a welcoming environment.

Classroom teachers develop positive pupil teacher relationships of mutual trust and respect with their pupils and have high expectations of their pupils.

We work hard to create a sense of belonging and community in our school.

We support parents and pupils who are experiencing difficulties with attendance.

Targets and Target Setting

Attendance for the vast majority of boys in our school is very good. During the 2017-2018 school year, there were 23 boys with perfect attendance and 23 boys who had only missed one day. However we also had 50 boys who were absent for 20 days or more (a reduction of 8 from the previous year). Some of these were serious illnesses requiring hospital stays and careful monitoring but some could be improved. Many were parents taking pupils out for holidays during term-time. In the latter cases we will try to reduce the numbers this year by reminding parents of the importance of excellent attendance.

The whole school approach

Our school ethos, policies and practices support good attendance.

Attendance will be part of school planning and evaluation.

We implement consistent school-wide approaches to attendance.

Through extra-curricular activities and events we create a sense of community and belonging. Staff is encouraged to speak about attendance and to share expertise and experience.

We work closely with the EWO and support services to support pupils and families in relation to attendance.

We reward excellent attendance with Certificates of Perfect Attendance each June.

The roll is taken by the classroom teacher between 09:45 and 09:50 each morning. On swimming days the roll will be called after swimming at 09:05 or 10:30. The cut-off time for entering information is 11:30 am. If for some reason the roll has not been taken at the designated time, the teacher may still enter the information up to the cut-off point of 11:00 am. When a late input/amendment (after 11:00) is required, the system will ask for a reason. All changes/amendments to rolls appear on the attendance log that is printed each school term and filed in the school filing system.

However, if he arrives after 11:00 am, he will be marked absent.

We work with parents and pupils to address any issues which may be an obstacle to the pupil attending school.

Guidance for Parents

The primary responsibility for ensuring a child's attendance at school rests with the child's

parents. 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) (9)] of the Act states that: "a pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved". The school Principal cannot authorise a child's absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated, by parents/guardians to the school and a record of same will be retained by the school. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when an explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school. After two attempts to get the note prove unsuccessful the teacher will note the facts on Aladdin and inform the Principal.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is 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.
- The school will promote the development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Skills guidelines and resources.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- The school will positively acknowledge students with good attendance during the school year.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

Promoting good attendance

Parents/guardians can promote good school 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;
- Making sure their children understand that parents support/ approve of school attendance;
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- Encouraging them to participate in school activities.

- Praising and encouraging their children's achievements.
- Instilling in their children, a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- Informing the school of the reasons for absence from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.

Pupils

Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.

Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the TUSLA/Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - Of the date when a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the TUSLA/ Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure (the roll is usually taken each morning between 09:45 and 09:50 and recorded on the Aladdin System.)
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences on Aladdin.
- Keep a record of attempts to get notes from parents on Aladdin.
- Keep a record of "lates" by recording the number of minutes late a pupil is on any morning.
- Keep a record of "early leaving" by recording the number of minutes a pupil has missed due to leaving early.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained and seek an explanation. A record will be kept of communications with parents regarding absences.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal/ Assistant Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

Board of Management

- The Board of Management has overall responsibility for the preparation of the school's Statement of Strategy.
- The Board will take all of the measures required to promote and support attendance.
- The Board ratifies the policy and has overall responsibility for its implementation.
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Record/Communication with other schools

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, as soon as we receive notification of transfer and registration in the next school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school on the official forms, once enrolment has been confirmed.

Strategies in the Event of Non-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 Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the TUSLA four times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted - not later than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year. This information may be communicated to the school community through the school's newsletter.

If a parent is experiencing difficulty in getting his/her son to attend school we will support the parent in every way possible. The classroom teacher and/or the Principal will meet with the parents and the child to create a plan to address any issues and take all possible steps to improve the pupil's attendance.

How this statement will be monitored

The classroom teacher will monitor his/her own class, identify pupils with poor attendance and any barriers to attendance that pupils might experience and report to the Principal. The Principal will monitor the whole school attendance and speak with parents of pupils with poor attendance. The Principal will monitor the numbers of pupils with absences of 20 days or more with a view to reducing these numbers.

The classroom teacher will promote attendance and report to Principal pupils with perfect attendance which we intend will increase.

Aladdin system will be used to identify/highlight pupils who have poor attendance so that we can address the issue with parents.

Review

This statement will be reviewed in June 2020 and updated when required.

Ratification

This statement was ratified by the Board of Management in 2019.

Signed: 
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 2/5/19

Communication to all stakeholders

A copy of this statement has been given to each teacher.

It is available for parents to view in the school.

A copy was sent to TUSLA on 10/05/2019

A copy was sent to the Patron on 10/05/2019