



Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Springdale National School, Lough Derg Road, Raheny, Dublin 5 (18646B)

Introduction

This Policy was reviewed and updated in line with the National School Attendance Campaign 2023/2024 led by TESS in partnership with the Department of Education. In Springdale National School we believe that promoting good attendance habits from the very beginning of a child's time at school is very important. This statement outlines how we propose to do this.

Rationale

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000 (amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013) schools are obliged to:

- Maintain a record of students attending school
- Record school attendance and notify the relevant Educational Welfare Officer of particular problems relating to attendance
- Support students with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis
- Prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school
- Liaise with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues

Aims

Through our Strategy for School Attendance we aim to:

- Raise an awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Promote punctuality in the school using the tagline, 'Every minute counts'.
- Promote a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected
- Promote a stimulating, positive learning environment
- Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Targets

- To reduce the percentage of children who have missed 20 days or more in 2022/2023 from 20% to < 15% over the next two years.
- To reduce the overall percentage of absenteeism in 2022/2023 from 7% to ≤ 5% over the next two years.
(See Appendix 1 for data regarding attendance)

Springdale National School's Approach to Attendance:

Whole-School Approach:

- Encourage punctuality by displaying posters in the school hallway
- Use posters to create an awareness that poor punctuality and minutes lost impact learning time (See Appendix 4)
- Parents are requested to phone the school before roll call or record their child's absence on Aladdin if their child will be absent.
- When recording their child's absence on Aladdin, parents are asked to indicate the reason for absence.
- The roll is taken and recorded before 9.30 am each morning by the class teacher.
- The secretary monitors students who arrive late and records the time they arrive and reason for late arrival.
- The school secretary checks the roll has been recorded on Aladdin each morning by 9.30am.
- The BOM are informed of the number of cases reported to Tusla after 20 days of absences.
- The Students Council, as a focus group, are provided with the opportunity to voice ideas initiatives which can be used to encourage good attendance.
- The In-School Management Team map absence rates once a term.

Promoting Good Attendance:

- Good attendance is promoted through fostering a stimulating, positive learning environment where every child feels valued, trusted and respected.
- Attendance is encouraged even if the student is late.
- Parents are discouraged from taking holidays during the school term. Under no circumstances will work be set or corrected for children who are taken away during term time on holidays.
- Children who miss standardised tests due to holidays will not be tested on their return.
- Pupils are greeted in person each morning by the principal and an SNA as they arrive to school.
- Class teachers encourage punctuality by greeting pupils personally in the classroom each morning.

Responding to Poor Attendance:

- Aladdin automatically sends an absence text 10 minutes after the roll is taken if a reason for absence hasn't been recorded.
- Aladdin automatically sends a text message to parents when their children have missed 10, 15 & 20 days of school.
- Parents are asked to indicate reasons for absences on Aladdin.
- Parents are contacted by the class teacher when children are absent regularly, especially if there is an obvious pattern in their absences, e.g., Mondays or Fridays.
- Parents of children who are consistently late are contacted by the class teacher.
- Parents who find it difficult to encourage reluctant children to come to school are offered support.
- Teachers will complete the Educational Welfare Services Pre-Referral Checklist to help address Poor Attendance (See Appendix 2).
- Using the Educational Welfare Services Referral Form, the Principal will notify Tusla of children who miss more than 20 days in the school year, in certain cases (See Appendix 3).

Implementation

The class teacher will:

- Take the roll call by 9.30 am each day
- Regularly discuss the importance of full attendance and punctuality at class level

- Inform the Principal of his/her concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil
- Complete the Educational Welfare Services Pre-Referral Checklist to help address Poor Attendance (See Appendix 2)
- Routinely discuss attendance at parent teacher meetings
- Record each child's number of absences on his/her school report.
- Be mindful of children who may not always have homework completed, due to challenging home circumstances. This can be a deterrent to attendance and understanding can be very encouraging and help to ease anxiety.
- Plan fun activities for after school breaks to create a positive interaction to the start of the school day.

The school secretary will:

- Check that the roll has been recorded on Aladdin for all classes each morning by 9.30 am.
- Phone parents if they have not contacted the school on the first morning of their child's absence.
- Monitor students who arrive late (after 8.45am) and record the time they arrive and, if informed, the reason for late arrival.

The principal will:

- Personally greet children and parents at the school gate to create a positive interaction to start the school day.
- Host school assembly three times a week. While it is part of the RE curriculum, assembly promotes a sense of school community and is an opportunity for all to share achievements, learning and to celebrate special occasions.
- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations
- Submit Quarterly Returns to Tusla
- In some cases, inform Tusla of children who miss more than 20 days in the school year using the Educational Welfare Services Referral Form (See Appendix 3)

Communication with Parents/Guardians

- Springdale National School promotes an 'Open Door Policy' whereby parents are encouraged to inform teachers/the Principal of concerns they may have regarding their children. It is hoped that regular communication will help to prevent/resolve any issues which could lead to poor attendance.
- The calendar for each coming school year is published annually in June on the school website and a copy is published in the homework journal. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- At the end of the school year, each teacher will review the attendance patterns of the class for the year. The attendance of each pupil will be reported to parents/guardians on their child's report card.

Success Criteria

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar rolla records and statistical returns
- Happy, confident children who enjoy being in school
- Positive parental feedback

Review

This policy will be reviewed as necessary.

Ratification

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in February 2024.

Signed _____

Chairperson, Board of Management.

Submission to Tusla

A Statement of Strategy for School Attendance was first submitted to Tusla in October 2017.

Appendix 1: School Attendance figures from 2017/2018 to 2022/2023

	30/08/2017 to 27/06/2018, All classes ()				27/08/2020 to 25/06/2021, All classes ()				30/08/2021 to 29/06/2022, All classes ()				30/08/2022 to 28/06/2023, All classes ()			
	Days present	Present %	Days absent	Absent %	Days present	Present %	Days absent	Absent %	Days present	Present %	Days absent	Absent %	Days present	Present %	Days absent	Absent %
Total	38726	94.7%	2184	5.3%	33163	95.3%	1637	4.7%	37005	91.1%	3593	8.9%	35953	93%	2717	7%
Girls	20293	94.3%	1220	5.7%	16960	95.3%	834	4.7%	19587	90.7%	2012	9.3%	18882	92.3%	1582	7.7%
Boys	18433	95%	964	5%	16203	95.3%	803	4.7%	17418	91.7%	1581	8.3%	17071	93.8%	1135	6.2%

Year	% of children who missed > 20 days
2017/2018	12%
2020/2021	6%
2021/2022	30%
2022/2023	22%

Appendix 2

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES PRE-REFERRAL CHECKLIST

For School Referrals please complete pre-referral checklist and Sections 1 and 2

Prior to submitting a referral form to the statutory educational welfare service, it is expected that the school has made attempts to resolve attendance issues. The purpose of this checklist is to note the actions taken prior to referral to the EWS. **This checklist should always accompany a referral form.**

To be completed in discussion with the Class Teacher (Primary)/ Year Head (Post Primary) or a nominated teacher/principal.

Child's Name	*	Gender	Male ☐	Female ☐
Home Address	*			
Date of Birth	*	PPSN	*	
Ethnicity	*	Language Spoken at Home	*	
School Name	*	School Roll No.	*	
School Telephone No.	*			
Class/Year e.g. 1st class or 1 st year	*			
Number of school days absent this school year out of a possible number of school days open	_____ days absent out of _____ school days to date			
Number of unexplained absences year to date	*			
What is the presenting issue for this child	*			
Checklist actions to address poor attendance	Date of Action Taken	By whom		
In-school discussion with pupil (where appropriate)				
Contact between school and parent/guardian to express concern e.g.				

phone call, letter, discuss at parents evening		
Specific meeting in school with parent/guardian to identify problems and agree interventions		
Concerns and agreements communicated in writing to parent/guardian		
Implementation of any appropriate in-school measures (e.g. change of class, 'contact person' in school, support in class etc.)		
Use of appropriate interventions with pupil (e.g. attendance charts/ attendance report, incentives, rewards etc.)		
Other school interventions (e.g. care team, Pastoral care team, student support team etc.)		
Previous EWS involvement in this case		

Does the school have....	
.....Home School Community Liaison Yes ☐ No ☐	If yes please attach any additional supports given other than outlined above (on a separate sheet if necessary)
.....School Completion Programme Yes ☐ No ☐	

Signature of Principal: _____

Name of Principal (Capitals) _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES REFERRAL FORM

Section 2

SCHOOL DETAILS

Child's Name	*		
School Name	*	Roll No.	*
School Address	*	Tel No.	*
School Email	*		

No. of school days absent this school year to date	*		
Total no. of school days absent last school year	*		
Date parents/guardian were informed of referral to EWS?	*		
If Post Primary – Year group of pupil	*	If Primary – Class group of pupil	*
Date pupil entered the school	*		
Summary or reason for referral to EWS	*		

Previous school/s	*
Does this child have special educational needs?	*
Has the child been assessed (or is assessment pending) by the National Educational Psychological Service?	*
What resources (if any) have been allocated to meet the child's needs?	*
Does the child have any health issues?	*

Does the school have knowledge of other agencies involved with the child or family? If so which?	*
Has the school referred the child or family to another agency? If so what agency?	*
Has the school made a referral to the Social Work Department of the Child and Family Agency in respect of child protection or welfare concerns?	*
Is there any additional information that you feel is relevant for this referral?	*

Note:

A referral received by the statutory educational welfare service does not replace the responsibility of the referring school continually to support the child as required and to work in collaboration with the service in that regard.

Signature of Principal: _____

**Name of Principal
(Capitals)** _____

Date: _____

Referral forms, once completed and signed (and copied for school records), must be forwarded to EWS by post (**clearly marked 'EWS REFERRALS'**), to the appropriate EWS office. Details below: Referrals should not be sent directly to your EWO.

Southern Area: Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, East Wicklow.
Post: Referrals Region 1, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Block C, Heritage Business Park, Bessboro Road, Blackrock, Cork

South Dublin, Kildare, West Wicklow

Post: Referrals Region 2, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Floor 2, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

North Dublin, Louth, Meath, Cavan, Monaghan

Post: Referrals Region 3, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Ground Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

West/North-West: Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Donegal, Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath.

Post: Referrals Region 4, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Unit 19, Sandyfort Business Centre, Grealishtown, Bohermore, Galway

NOTE: For reasons of data protection, you are requested NOT to send Referral Forms by email under any circumstances.

For EWS Office use only			
Referral Reference No:			
Allocated for Assessment?	YES ☐	NO ☐	
Case to open?	YES ☐	NO ☐	
Reason for decision			
Signature of EWO		Date	
Signature of SEWO		Date	
Date Stamp	Date Stamp	Date Stamp	

Appendix 4- Posters to Promote Attendance and Punctuality



Attendance Matters in Springdale NS



Be here and be on time!



Lost Minutes
= Lost Learning



Be on
time!

Every School Day Counts

Attendance Matters in Springdale NS



Be here and be on time!



Every School Day Counts!