



Presentation Primary School

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Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

The Board of Management, parents and staff of the Presentation Primary School are committed to working together to ensure maximum attendance of pupils.

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

The mission of Presentation Primary School is to provide a welcoming, caring, nurturing and safe environment in our school. We take a holistic approach to the development of children and encourage a positive approach to learning. We give pride of place to the development of the social qualities of honesty, sincerity and courtesy. We aim to promote the fullest possible development of every child as a whole person.

To help achieve this, Presentation Primary School provides a broad education in line with the curriculum guidelines for Primary Schools, including coherent and practical planning for the inclusion of children with special needs, allowing each child to reach the highest level of academic attainment consistent with his or her abilities or talents, so that the school community is enriched by the unique gifts and talents of all its students.

Presentation Primary School recognises that the parents/guardians are the primary educators and that it is only through cooperation between them and the school that our vision can be realised. As a school community, we recognise the importance of school attendance. Presentation Primary School is aware of its responsibilities to those pupils who experience difficulties and through encouragement and support will assist those pupils to reach their full potential.

School starts at 8:50am for all children and ends at 1.30pm for Infant classes and 2.30pm for pupils in First to Sixth Class. Presentation Primary School follows the standardised school year as laid out by the Department of Education and Skills.

The school's high expectations around attendance

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, parents are responsible for making sure their child receives an education. In this regard, the Board of Management of Presentation Primary

School has high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality. Children are encouraged to come to school every day and the school's approach to, and promotion of, attendance is outlined in this statement.

The Board of Management of Presentation Primary School strongly advises that parents do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. Holidays should be taken during the allocated holiday time as outlined in the school calendar.

The Board of Management acknowledges that there are cases where a child has a genuine reason for absenteeism, including; illness, urgent family reasons, expulsion, suspension, or transfer to another school.

Presentation Primary School's strategy on attendance and the DEIS Attendance Plan complements the school ethos.

Presentation Primary School's strategy aims to:

- Promote a positive learning environment
- Promote a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected
- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Encourage punctuality
- Foster an appreciation of learning
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensure awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Identify pupils at risk
- Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- Identifying and removing, in so far as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance
- Reward good attendance and improvements in attendance
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines from NEWB

How attendance will be monitored

All class teachers take a daily roll call which is recorded on the school's data software programme 'Aladdin'. This Database also acts as the Register of Pupils and holds information from September 2013. Clár Leabhar, Leabhair Rollaí and Leabhar Tinreamh were maintained prior to this.

- If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open, their absence will be recorded by the class teacher on the Aladdin system.
- If the teacher has been made aware of the reason for absence, this is also recorded on the Aladdin system.

- If a teacher is concerned about pupil absences, they alert the Deputy Principal as Attendance Coordinator.
- The roll call is taken at 10.00am each morning and a bell rings to remind teachers to take the roll at this time.
- If a child arrives after 8.50am and before 10.00 a.m. the teacher marks them present but records the number of minutes they were late and a reason if it is given.
- The classroom teacher will record all absences daily on Aladdin with the reason for the absence if provided.
- Parents/guardians will be asked for a reason for the absence on the child's return.
- If a parent/guardian does not inform the school that their child is absent they will be contacted by the office after 3 consecutive days of an unexplained absence.
- If a child arrives after 10.00 a.m the classroom teacher will change the child's attendance status from absent to present and record the minutes late on Aladdin.
- If no formal reason for this lateness is given, the classroom teacher will note this against the number of late minutes.
- If the child was attending an explained medical appointment this should be recorded on Aladdin.
- The classroom teacher will record early departures from school due to illness or appointments.
- Parents/Guardians will be discouraged from collecting children early without a valid reason.
- Parents/Guardians will receive a text from Aladdin when their child has missed 10 days, 15 days and 20 days.
- Attendance for all children will be monitored by the Attendance Coordinator and the HSCL and referrals will be made through the TUSLA portal when all other options have been exhausted and is deemed necessary.
- The annual attendance of each pupil is recorded on Aladdin and will be printed and sent home with the end of year Report for each child.
- Bi Yearly attendance returns are issued to TUSLA via the online portal.

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

Target and Target Setting:

Targets and actions for Attendance are prioritised by completing a School Improvement Plan as part of the DEIS Initiative Annually. The targets are monitored during the school year and are reviewed at the end of the school year.

Target 1: To increase the overall attendance in the school by more than 2%

Target 2: To reduce the number of unexplained absences by 50%

Target 3: To reduce the number of children with unexplained absences by 25%

The Whole School Approach:

Presentation Primary School promotes whole school attendance by:

- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Promoting a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected facilitating children to have a voice in school matters
- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Encouraging punctuality
- Fostering an appreciation of learning
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Raising everyone's expectations of our school attendance
- Ensuring that child attendance is recorded daily
- Ensuring that children are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Identifying children at risk
- Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of attendance problems
- Identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance
- Rewarding good attendance and improvements in attendance throughout the school year

Promoting Good Attendance

The following are strategies employed by the school to promote good school attendance:

- Promoting a positive learning environment
- HSCL meet and greet with families in the yard every morning
- Principal meets and greets children and parents at the front entrance door
- Classroom teachers will discuss attendance at the annual parent-teacher meetings
- The Principal and HSCL will stress the importance of good attendance and punctuality at class meetings at the start of each new academic year
- The Principal and HSCL will stress the importance of good attendance and punctuality with prospective parents at the annual Open Day event for new pupils
- The Attendance Coordinator will provide the staff with regular updates on the school's attendance strategy
- Teachers will praise good attendance when the roll is being taken and children will be welcomed into the classrooms at any arrival time
- The Principal will highlight the importance of attendance during school assemblies
- The Attendance Coordinator and HSCL teacher will organise monthly Attendance trophies which will be given on the final Friday of each month at assembly. Children will be photographed and displayed on the school's Attendance Noticeboard and on Instagram

- The Attendance Coordinator will organise “A Full Attendance” initiative each term. Each child will receive their own calendar where they will record their attendance daily and each child who makes full attendance for that month will be invited to a pizza party and disco in the hall which will be organised by the Attendance Coordinator and the HSCL teacher
- The attendance Coordinator will organise other initiatives such as “Come to School Wednesday” etc throughout the school year
- The classroom teacher will include a record of attendance for each child in the annual school report
- Parents/guardians are asked to ring the school office to explain a child’s absence and are asked to hand a doctor’s certificate into the office if they have one. All reasonable and valid explanations will be recorded on Aladdin by the classroom teacher or the secretary
- Parents are encouraged to speak with the HSCL for support and advice around absenteeism but are required to ring the office with an explanation for each absence
- Parents will receive a text from Aladdin once their child has missed 10 days, 15 days and 20 days
- If a child is absent from school for 3 consecutive days without any contact from parent/guardian the principal/secretary will ring the parent/guardian to check up on the child. Parents will be asked to explain the absence and this will be recorded on Aladdin
- Educational Welfare Services’ information will be distributed to parents
- The school facilitates an After School Facility within the school
- Teachers provide a selection of extra-curricular activities after school such as art/lego/music/chess/basketball at different times throughout the school year
- Children get the opportunity to take part in swimming, basketball and athletics events throughout the school year
- The school calendar for each academic year is put on the website in advance of the academic year to make parents/guardians aware of school holidays

Responding to Poor Attendance

The Board of Management of Presentation Primary School acknowledges that despite the best efforts of the school and of families, some children will need extra support to prevent patterns of poor attendance developing.

The following are strategies used by the school to respond to poor attendance:

- The HSCL teacher will work with families, groups or individuals who may need additional support
- Whole-school approaches to attendance will be tailored to group or individual needs
- The principal/attendance coordinator will engage in early dialogue with parents and students
- Referral to Tusla’s Educational Welfare Services will be made by the attendance coordinator when deemed appropriate

- Texts will be sent automatically from Aladdin when pupils miss 10, 15 and 20 days. The text states that absences will be reported to Tusla when a child has missed 20 days or more
- Reminder texts will be sent to all parents reminding them to let the school know the reason for any absence
- If a child misses 3 consecutive days without a parent/guardian contacting the school, the parent/guardian will be contacted by the principal/secretary

Where there is a concern regarding a child's level of attendance or pattern of absenteeism, the school will speak to the parents/carers.

The school must notify Tusla if a child is absent for 20 days or more, or where absences/patterns of absence give rise to concern. If a child is sick or is absent for another explained reason, no action is likely to be taken by Tusla. However if there is a concern about a child's attendance at school or about the reasons given for absenteeism, families may be visited by an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss the situation. This will be after the school has sent a referral to Tusla.

Unexplained absences are of particular concern to the school and to Tusla. The school is obliged to report regularly to Tusla regarding attendance. The report is generated by the school database system, based on the guidelines provided by Tusla. Any child who has missed 20 days or more, or any children about whom there are absenteeism concerns, must be reported to Tusla in these periodic reports. Tusla Child and Family Agency is also informed if a child is suspended for 6 days or more, or in the case of the expulsion of a child.

School Roles in Relation to Attendance

The Board of Management acknowledges a collective responsibility for the promotion of attendance. It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of people within the school community regarding attendance:

Principal/Deputy Principal (Attendance Coordinator)

The school principal will provide leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance. It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy Principal to lead the development and implementation of this policy, under the guidance of the Board of Management.

The Principal, with the Deputy Principal who has been given responsibility of attendance as part of the leadership team, will undertake the following responsibilities in relation to this plan:

- Engage with parents/guardians regarding attendance concerns

- Provide opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school's Attendance Strategy. Each teacher inputs their daily class attendance on the Aladdin system before 10.00am
- View the attendance statistics on the Aladdin system (the Principal and Deputy Principal have access to all classes on the Aladdin system)
- Initiate links with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues
- Make periodic returns to Tusla and notify Tusla's Educational Welfare Services and the relevant EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance
- Furnish pertinent attendance documentation to officers of relevant government departments
- The Attendance Coordinator will lead the annual review of the 3 year DEIS Attendance Plan and targets in June

HSCL Coordinator

The HSCL Coordinator will undertake the following responsibilities in relation to this plan:

- Responsibility for attendance assemblies, including certificates and prizes
- Ensure support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties
- Working with families, groups or individuals who may need additional support
- HSCL meet and greet with families in the yard every morning
- Engaging in early dialogue with parents and students

Staff

All staff have input into the implementation of this attendance policy

Teachers

It is the responsibility of teachers to:

- Record daily attendance on time and to input explanations for absenteeism on the Aladdin system
- Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance
- Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy to promote attendance
- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality in their classrooms
- Engage with the attendance coordinator to implement attendance initiatives in a positive and enthusiastic way
- Use their own attendance and punctuality to lead by example
- Ensure attendance data is recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures, as set out above
- Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about student absences
- Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis
- Support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling

Parents/Guardians

The Board of Management acknowledges the important role of parents/guardians in the attendance of their children at school. Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality
- Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem
- Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time
- Ensure reasons for absence/lateness are sent or given to the class teacher/office by phone or email
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason
- Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time

Partnership Arrangements

The Board of Management acknowledges the importance of partnership arrangements and a multi-disciplinary approach, where relevant, in supporting the attendance and punctuality of children at school. In relation to attendance, the school community may involve staff members, parents/carers, pupils, other school, community groups and Tusla. The partnership list is not exhaustive and partnership arrangements may vary according to individual pupils' needs.

Monitoring the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

The Board of Management and the principal/deputy principal will monitor the implementation of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance on an ongoing basis. Opportunities will be provided for staff to share experiences about how the strategy is working and to set and review progress of attendance targets

Communication

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate.

Review Process

This policy will be subjected to regular review in conjunction with the School Improvement Plan as part of the DEIS Initiative.

Reviewed & Ratified by the Board of Management, Presentation Primary School, Sexton Street, Limerick.

Signed 
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date 20/3/24

Presentation Primary School

Signed Barbara McNamara
Principal

Date 25/3/24

Presentation Primary School

Scheduled for review March 2025.

