

# **School Attendance Strategy – St. Brogan’s College**

## **Scope**

This strategy applies to the students, staff and parents of St. Brogan’s College and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality. This strategy is drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, including the Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

## **Aim**

The aim of the School Attendance Strategy is to provide an environment that encourages all students to attend regularly and punctually. The best gift that anybody can give a child is to offer a child the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school whichever comes later.

## **The policy aims to**

- Encourage full attendance at school.
- Highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents.
- Ensure that adequate records of attendances and absences are maintained by the school as per the Education Act 2000 in respect of each individual student.
- Report on student attendance to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).
- Implement suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.

## **Policy Content**

Progress at school requires the best level of attendance and punctuality because both are essential to optimise educational outcomes.

## **Roles in implementing the attendance policy**

### **School Principal**

- Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance;
- Leads the review and implementation of the school’s Attendance Strategy;
- Puts arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school’s Attendance Strategy;
- Initiates links with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues;
- Notifies Tusla’s Education Welfare Services and the EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensures support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.

### **Teachers**

- 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 punctuality and attendance in their classrooms;
- Ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures;
- 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;

### **The role of the Parent/Guardian**

- Set high standards of 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;
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason;
- Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time;

### **Procedures to be followed if a student is absent from School**

1. If a student is marked absent on the roll first thing in the morning parents/guardians will receive a text from the school noting that he/she is absent. If a parent/guardian believes that their son/daughter is actually in school they are asked to contact the office immediately.
2. Following a student's absence from school, parents/guardians are obliged by the Education Welfare Act (2000) to provide a note explaining the absence. **This note is to be written on the 'Explanation for Absence' slips in the journal and presented to the class tutor in the morning on return.**

### **Procedures to be followed if a student is late**

1. The school day runs from 8:57 until 3:20 each day except Tuesday when school finishes at 4:00.
2. If students are late they must report to the office.
3. If the student has a written note from a parent/guardian explaining the lateness or is accompanied by a parent/guardian who provides an explanation, then the student will get a permission slip to enter class and be marked present on the roll.
4. If a student does not have a written note from a parent/guardian or is not accompanied by their parent/guardian then they will be put on lunch time detention. Notes received the next day will not be accepted. The student will then get a permission slip to enter class and be marked present on the roll by the admin staff.

### **Procedures for Leaving School Early**

**It is essential that wherever possible appointments are made for outside of school time and students should only leave early in unavoidable circumstances.** Should a student need to leave school early there are three steps to be followed:

1. He/she must present written consent from a parent/guardian to the class tutor at tutorial. The tutor will sign the note.
2. **Parents must collect students from the office if they are leaving early.** The student will present the note to the admin staff and the parent will sign them out. **A student who leaves school without permission from management may be suspended from school.**
3. On return from an appointment the student must sign in at the office again.

### **Recording and reporting procedures to promote Attendance and Retention**

1. Roll call will be taken on VSware in every class.
2. A text will be sent to parents by 10:00 a.m. approximately if a student is marked absent on VSware.
3. If any teacher is taking students out of their normal class for any activity they will mark that student as being on a school activity on VSware system. This means that when a teacher takes the roll call on VSware they will see who has a legitimate reason to be out.
4. If a student arrives late into school in the morning the office will mark them present but late on the VSware system.
5. If a student signs out early then the office staff will put this into the system and teachers will be able to see that they left early with permission.
6. An attendance tracker will deal with any alerts generated by a student not being accounted for. Only parents can sign students out from the office.
7. Class tutors will request notes from students on their return from absence. They will follow up on any notes not received. Class tutors will update vsware if there is a note.
8. Class tutors/year heads will inform the HSCL teacher if there is a pattern emerging or a concern regarding attendance.
9. The principal will compile a report at the end of each month showing number of late mornings, attendance and the number of times they left early for every student. This will be analysed by the year heads, HSCL teacher and class tutors.
10. Once students have missed ten days in school the Year Head/HSCL teacher will make a phone call home.
11. Once students have missed 15 days the year head will send home a standard warning letter that students will soon have missed 20 days and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.
12. If any student misses 20 days the year head will arrange a meeting with parents in conjunction with the HSCL teacher. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.
13. If any student misses 25 days or more the principal will make an appointment with parents to discuss attendance.
14. The school accepts that there is a big difference between a student missing 10 days by the end of October and a student missing 10 days by the end of March. This procedure is for obvious problems.

### **Interventions to Promote attendance**

The school provides universal interventions to all students and targeted interventions to certain students.

The school recognises that certain groups or individuals may need additional support with

attendance and this is provided through targeted and intensive interventions. These groups include:

- Students with special educational needs
- Students with health needs
- Students who have experienced bullying
- Students experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties
- Students disengaged from the curriculum
- Students from the Traveller or Roma communities
- Students who are experiencing homelessness
- Students who are asylum seekers or living in direct provision centres
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students
- Students in foster care
- Young carers or young parents
- Students whose parents have not had a positive school experience
- Students from families where there has been a history of poor school attendance
- Students from socio-economically deprived family or community.

## **1. Universal Interventions**

- a. The school will endeavour to provide a safe and orderly environment for students in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
- b. The school will deal with all bullying related matters in accordance with the anti-bullying policy.
- c. First years will be provided with an induction programme.
- d. Students who have excellent attendance are presented with awards at the annual awards night.
- e. All students are provided with a SPHE programme to assist them throughout their schooling.
- f. All students are offered the support of a class tutor and year head every morning as part of the pastoral care system.
- g. A breakfast club is offered to all students each morning by the SCP.
- h. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities to all students in sport, music, drama, art etc.
- i. All parents will receive details on days absent and days late in reports home four times a year.
- j. All parents are provided with a unique username and password which allows them to go look at their son/daughter(s) attendance information on VShare.
- k. Students are provided with a broad curriculum with subjects that suit talents of all students.
- l. All parents get a text home if their son/daughter is absent.

## **2. Targeted Interventions**

- a. The school offers the Big Brother, Big Sister programme to targeted students.
- b. The SCP provides school meals for targeted students.
- c. The school provides a homework club for targeted students.
- d. JCSP students are offered rewards for good attendance.
- e. The guidance counsellor may work with targeted students who are having anxiety or

mental health based absenteeism.

- f. Families may be supported by the Home School Community Liaison Teacher.
- g. Meetings may be held with the year head/class tutor/deputy principal/principal, the parents/guardians and the student(s) concerned.
- h. The HSCL may provide activities/courses for the parents of targeted children.
- i. The SCP project worker and co-ordinator may work with targeted students.
- j. The school works closely with projects such as the Youth Diversion Projects, Foroige, disability organisations, support groups, Drugs Awareness groups etc. to assist targeted students.
- k. The school may offer a differentiated curriculum to certain targeted students.
- l. The school may seek the assistance of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Barnardos, Tusla – The Child and Family Agency and any other organisation that may be of assistance.

### **3. Intensive Intervention**

- a. Students may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for support and will work closely with the EWO to support the student.
- b. Students may with the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer be offered reduced timetables or alternative educational programmes.
- c. Students who are out of school will be offered the assistance of the School Completion Programme Co-ordinator.

Ratified by the BOM on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
Policy to be reviewed in September 2018

## Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	St. Brogan's College
Address	Kilbrogan, Bandon, Co. Cork
Roll Number	70910L
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	The school aims to provide an environment that encourages all students to attend regularly and punctually.
The school's high expectations around attendance	The school expects the highest level of punctuality and attendance for all students to ensure students reach their potential.
How attendance will be monitored	<p><b>Recording and reporting procedures to promote Attendance and Retention</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roll call will be taken on VSware in every class.</li> <li>2. A text will be sent to parents by 10:00 a.m. approximately if a student is marked absent on VSware.</li> <li>3. If any teacher is taking students out of their normal class for any activity they will mark that student as being on a school activity on VSware system. This means that when a teacher takes the roll call on VSware they will see who has a legitimate reason to be out.</li> <li>4. If a student arrives late into school in the morning the office will mark them present but late on the VSware system.</li> <li>5. If a student signs out early then the office staff will put this into the system and teachers will be able to see that they left early with permission.</li> <li>6. An attendance tracker will deal with any alerts generated by a student not being accounted for. Only parents can sign students out from the office.</li> <li>7. Class tutors will request notes from students on their return from absence. They will follow up on any notes not received. Class tutors will update vsware if there is a note.</li> <li>8. Class tutors/year heads will inform the HSCL teacher if there is a pattern emerging or a concern regarding attendance.</li> <li>9. The principal will compile a report at the end of each month showing number of late mornings, attendance and the number of times they left early for every student. This will be analysed by the year heads, HSCL teacher and class tutors.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Once students have missed ten days in school the Year Head/HSCL teacher will make a phone call home.</li> <li>11. Once students have missed 15 days the year head will send home a standard warning letter that students will soon have missed 20 days and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.</li> <li>12. If any student misses 20 days the year head will arrange a meeting with parents in conjunction with the HSCL teacher. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.</li> <li>13. If any student misses 25 days or more the principal will make an appointment with parents to discuss attendance.</li> <li>14. The school accepts that there is a big difference between a student missing 10 days by the end of October and a student missing 10 days by the end of March. This procedure is for obvious problems.</li> </ol>
<p>Summary of the main elements of the school’s approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target setting and targets</li> <li>• The whole-school approach</li> <li>• Promoting good attendance</li> <li>• Responding to poor attendance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Target</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce the number of students missing 20 days or more from 85 in 2016-17 to 80 or less in 2017-18.</li> </ol> <p><b>Interventions to Promote attendance</b></p> <p>The school provides universal interventions to all students and targeted interventions to certain students.</p> <p>The school recognises that certain groups or individuals may need additional support with attendance and this is provided through targeted and intensive interventions. These groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with special educational needs</li> <li>• Students with health needs</li> <li>• Students who have experienced bullying</li> <li>• Students experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties</li> <li>• Students disengaged from the curriculum</li> <li>• Students from the Traveller or Roma communities</li> <li>• Students who are experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Students who are asylum seekers or living in direct provision centres</li> <li>• Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students</li> </ul>

- Students in foster care
- Young carers or young parents
- Students whose parents have not had a positive school experience
- Students from families where there has been a history of poor school attendance
- Students from socio-economically deprived family or community.

#### **4. Universal Interventions**

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	Programme Co-ordinator.
School roles in relation to attendance	<p><b>School Principal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance;</li> <li>• Leads the review and implementation of the school’s Attendance Strategy;</li> <li>• Puts arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school’s Attendance Strategy;</li> <li>• Initiates links with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues;</li> <li>• Notifies Tusla’s Education Welfare Services and the EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensures support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance;</li> <li>• Actively use the school’s Attendance Strategy to promote attendance;</li> <li>• Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms;</li> <li>• Ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures;</li> <li>• Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about student absences;</li> <li>• Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis;</li> </ul> <p><b>The role of the Parent/Guardian</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set high standards of their child in relation to attendance and punctuality;</li> <li>• Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child’s attendance and support plans to address the problem;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time;</li> <li>• Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason;</li> <li>• Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time;</li> </ul>
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families may be supported by the Home School Community Liaison Teacher.</li> <li>• The HSCL may provide activities/courses for the parents of targeted children.</li> <li>• The SCP project worker and co-ordinator may work with targeted students.</li> <li>• The school works closely with projects such as the Youth Diversion Projects, Foroige, disability organisations, support groups, Drugs Awareness groups etc. to assist targeted students.</li> <li>• The school may seek the assistance of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Barnardos, Tusla – The Child and Family Agency and any other organisation that may be of assistance.</li> </ul>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	The principal will compile a report at the end of each month showing number of late mornings, attendance and the number of times they left early for every student. This will be analysed by school management, year heads, HSCL teacher, SCP and class tutors.
Review process and date for review	Strategy will be reviewed at the end of each academic year.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	27 <sup>th</sup> October 2017