



**Statement of Strategy for Pupil Attendance
St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe
2021 - 2024**

Rationale:

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, parents, Board of Management and Educational Welfare Officer in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe, Dublin 8, to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school. It was updated in February 2021, keeping the below statistics in mind.

Year	Total
2016-2017	92%
2017-2018	90.9%
2018-2019	91.6%
2019-2020*	92.4%

*until school closure on March 12th 2020 due to Covid-19 Pandemic.

Monthly Breakdown:

Month	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*
August	————	94.6%	93.3%	—————
September	95.4%	95.6%	94.6%	95.2%
October	94.7%	94.7%	94.2%	95.1%
November	92.6%	91.9%	91.9%	92.5%
December	89%	88.3%	88.8%	87.7%
January	91%	90.3%	91.7%	92.6%
February	91.9%	89.1%	92.7%	90.4%
March	92.7%	88.6%	92.4%	90.8%
April	92.9%	92.1%	89.7%	————

May	91.5%	91%	90.8%	-----
June	87.5%	85.3%	87.4%	-----
Total	92%	90.9%	91.6%	92.4%

*School closure from March 12th due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Measurable Targets for the Period 2021 - 2024

- To increase the number of children on excellent attendance i.e (0-3 days) from 19% to 25%
- To reduce the number of children missing 20+ days from 10% to 5%.
- To reduce the number of minutes lost to lateness from 11,546 by 2% each year for three years to circa 10,867.

All members of the school staff have high expectations with regards to attendance and punctuality. We strive to improve this on a yearly basis. We will do this through using different strategies as listed below. However, at present, we have a high proportion of children who have family/heritage in other countries and we are aware that they travel home (especially in June and in September or at holiday times e.g. Christmas). This affects our attendance levels. We must also add at this point we are cognisant that the pandemic and public health advice will impact attendance until there is mass vaccination. We work in partnership with our families and are always supportive.

Rewarding of Students with Good Attendance

As a DEIS band 1 school, targeting good attendance is part of our school action plan. Students with good attendance may be rewarded in the following ways:

- An end of year award ceremony.
- Affirmation throughout the year.
- Encouraging good punctuality.
- A school and SCP attendance programme for our core target group.

Strategies for Improving Attendance

The following strategies will be employed to improve attendance:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- St. Brigid's Primary School, will promote development of good self-esteem and self-worth in its pupils (see Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs in accordance with DES guidelines.

- Attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the HSCL teacher of any concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- The school will use regular newsletters at the end of each term and web texts to promote attendance and punctuality.
- Where concerns arise, the class teacher monitoring attendance brings the concern to the attention of the principal and the HSCL teacher.
- The principal and HSCL teacher assess each case individually at this point and a home visit may be deemed necessary.
- The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- The principal or HSCL will ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained. A standard note or meeting is used for this purpose.
- The class teacher will keep a daily record of attendance in Aladdin. HSCL will monitor this.
- Attendance figures are monitored daily by HSCL on Aladdin as part of the School Completion programme.
- HSCL attends SCP attendance meetings on a regular basis and provides relevant figures to the local SCP coordinator and also the EWO for Dublin 8.
- Class teachers will flag concerns regarding attendance to the HSCL and the principal and monitoring will take place, followed by a support programme if needs be.
- The Principal will promote the importance of good school attendance and punctuality among pupils, parents and staff.
- We will also strongly recommend to parents that written notes must be provided to explain absences.
- If a child reaches fifteen days absence in a school year, the school will inform the parents / guardians by text / phone call and when they reach twenty days absence, by letter.
- The Principal or HSCL will inform the EWO/Tusla:
 - When a pupil has been missing for twenty or more days during the course of the school year and when these days cannot be legitimately explained or accounted for.
 - When a pupil has been suspended from school for 6 days or more under the Code of Behaviour.
- The School Completion Programme operates to target pupils who are considered to be at risk of early school leaving.
- Evidence of non-attendance is a factor in including pupils in other various activities.
- Extra-curricular SICCDA club, and SCP after schools club is targeted at those at risk of non-attendance.
- Each child's attendance and punctuality record from Aladdin is sent home in June with the child's report card.

Identification of Students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems

The following strategies may be employed to identify students at risk of developing school attendance problems:

- On transfer to St Brigid's Primary School, attendance records will be sought from previous schools on pupil attendance.
- Class teachers will inform the HSCLT / Principal of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- Contact with various agencies who are involved with such students.
- Principal, Class Teacher and HSCL constantly monitor attendance and this is discussed at care team meetings with the Deputy Principal. Attendance and punctuality are also discussed at our staff meetings.

'The St. Brigid's Attendance Challenge'

When times allow and when we are not at risk during a pandemic, at the start of each term, the principal and the HSCL teacher analyse the whole school figures regarding attendance. The pupils who fall into the bottom approximately 7% of the school population take part in an attendance challenge. Parental consent is sought for participation in the programme. The programme is one of a very positive nature, where the children are rewarded on both a weekly and termly basis for full attendance. At the start of each term, there are meetings with the EWO and the parents to discuss the importance of school attendance and punctuality. The HSCL closely monitors the attendance of these children on a daily basis, regularly checking in with their parents to see how they are doing. These attendance figures are submitted to the local SCP coordinator on a termly basis as part of the cluster's attendance strategy. The core list is reviewed at the end of each term by the HSCL and the principal in preparation for the next term.

Establishment of closer contacts between the school and home

Closer home/school relations will be fostered through:

- The HSCL teacher.
- Our school's remote learning Policy accommodates for provision of remote learning when closures occur or when isolation is necessary.
- Parents' Gatherings – Coffee Mornings during the year etc. –
- Attendance at meetings (Parent/Teacher, etc).
- Parent Courses. (Virtual and face to face)
- Attendance at Prize Giving Awards & Graduation ceremonies
- Attendance at school events (eg Concerts, Masses, etc).
- Involvement in activities in the classroom.
- Regular monthly newsletters to families.
- Open-door policy in Principal's office for daily communication.

- Availability of teachers after school for appointments and phone calls.
- Texts and letters sent home regularly.
- Aladdin Connect app.
- Social Media via the school's Instagram account.

*much of the above is dependent on Public Health guidelines being open to active parental involvement and onsite inclusion.

Fostering Contacts

Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in St Brigid's Primary School:

- EWO/Tusla.
- Other primary and secondary schools in the vicinity.
- School Completion Programme.
- NEPS.
- Local soccer clubs, dance clubs etc.
- Community Gardaí.
- Primary Care at the Meath Hospital and Thomas Court.
- NEPS – National Educational Psychological Services.
- Dublin City Council community services.
- SICCDA- South Inner City Community Development Association.
- Solas
- Technological University of Dublin (TUD)
- Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI)
- The Digital Hub

Encouraging Full Participation of Students in the Life of the School

In so far as is practical, programmes will be developed with the bodies mentioned above which will encourage the full participation with students in the life of the school. Examples of these are:

- Attendance incentive scheme for the core target group.
- Counselling /Play therapy/Art therapy/Small group work with our core target group
- Summer project programmes. (SCP / Solas / SICCDA)

Identification of Aspects and Strategies

The Board of Management, teachers and whole school community will be mindful at all times of:

- The identification of aspects of the operation and management of the school and of the teaching of the school curriculum that may contribute to problems relating to school attendance on the part of certain students.
- The identification of strategies for the removal of those aspects in so far as they are not necessary or expedient for the proper and effective running of the school having regard, in particular, to the educational needs of students.
- The identification of strategies that will encourage more regular attendance at school on the part of such students.
- The need to review this strategy into the future to accommodate the changing needs of the school and of its population.

Review

The policy is due for review in September 2024.

This statement of strategy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Brigid's Primary School, on 25th March 2021.

Signed: Amanda McGarry
Chairperson, Board of Management