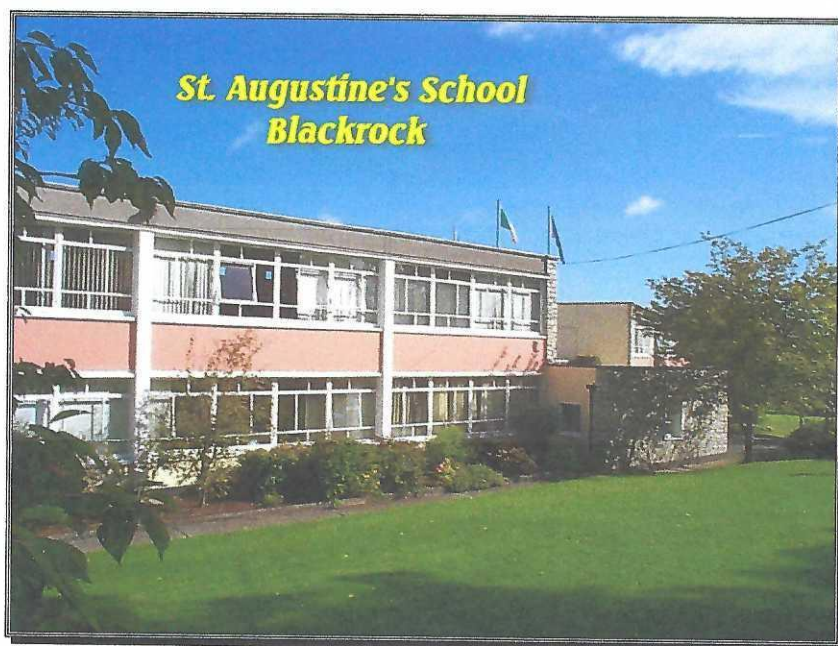


## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



# Attendance Policy

## Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarised as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our students' learning.
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998.
- The role of Tusla.
- Levels of disadvantage.
- Changing attitudes to education.

## Aims and Objectives

The revised policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Ensuring that student attendance is recorded daily.
- Encouraging full attendance where possible.
- Identifying students at risk.
- Promoting a positive learning environment.
- Enabling potential learning opportunities.
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Fostering an appreciation of learning.
- Identifying students at risk of leaving school early.
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation.
- Developing, subject to available resources, links between our school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- Identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

## Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of students is paramount.

## Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record attendance on Aladdin and the school secretarial staff make returns to Tusla.

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of St. Augustine's School Board of Management.

## Punctuality

School begins at 9 a.m., although students are permitted from 8.50 a.m. at which time supervision is in place. All students and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of students being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board. In St. Augustine's School, over 90% of our students arrive by school transport. A small percentage walk, cycle, take public transport or are accompanied to school by their parents.

## Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual students is recorded daily, by class teacher, on Aladdin. Class attendance data is updated automatically in the Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil (Attendance Book).

The annual attendance of each individual student can be recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register), in hard copy, but this is not a mandatory requirement since the introduction of the Primary Online Database (POD) – see Circular 0033/2015. However, POD does not record the number of days a pupil was present. On Aladdin, a search for a given year will show days attended in any school year.

If a student does not attend on a day when the school is open, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. Any student not present will be marked absent, but this can be amended on Aladdin if a student arrives late. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. If there is no note or message regarding absence, it is listed as 'F' (unexplained). See absence reasons below:

- A. Illness
- B. Urgent family reason
- C. Expelled
- D. Suspended
- E. Other e.g. appointment
- F. Unexplained
- G. Transfer to another school
- H. Holiday

Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher. See Tusla leaflet 'Don't Let Your Child Miss Out' – [Appendix 1](#).

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of Tusla particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of the student's attendance during the school year. Students whose non-attendance is a concern are contacted by the principal/social worker and are informed of the school's concerns.

- Letter 1 is sent to parents of new entrants, with information pack, during the summer before they start in St. Augustine's.
- Letter 2 is sent after the first reporting period, in January, to parents of students who have missed >20 days, and again before year end as necessary - see [Appendix 2](#).

Tusla, Education Welfare Services (EWS), Child and Family Agency, requires two **Student Absence** reports annually. All students who exceed 20 days cumulative absence *must* be included in the absence reports. These reports can be submitted automatically using Aladdin.

- The first report for Period 1, from school re-opening to December 31<sup>st</sup> should have been submitted, online, on or before March 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The second report for Period 2, from January 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of the school year, should be submitted online on or before October 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **Attendance Referrals**

These should only be made where the school principal has a concern in relation to a student's non-attendance at school. Such referrals should be submitted by May 31<sup>st</sup>. This date will facilitate intervention where necessary before the end of the school year. Should it be necessary to make a referral after this date, schools are asked to hold off on submitting this referral until the following September (if the concern still exists) – see Tusla letter from Director of EWS – [Appendix 3](#). The school must also inform Tusla where a student is removed from the school register, suspended for more than 6 days or expelled.

## **Promoting Attendance**

The school promotes good attendance by:

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment.
- Ensuring children are happy.
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding.
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying, etc. are identified early.
- Rewarding good attendance with certificates; for unbroken school attendance, for consistent and regular school attendance and for improvement in attendance record – [Appendix 4](#).

## **Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

St. Augustine's School endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our students and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum and Junior Cycle, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all students.

Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school. However, staff remain vigilant so that 'risk' students are identified early. Risk students can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter, a phone call or a note in the homework diary when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary.

Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Weekly attendance is recorded on the communication card sent home each Friday (up to pre-vocational). Individual Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) targets and strategies are set for students with a poor attendance record.

There is regular communication, between parents and teachers, in a variety of forms:

- The communication card is sent home weekly (for classes up to pre-vocational), signed by parents and returned.
- Electronically by Class Dojo, Zoom, Seesaw or email.
- Phone calls.
- Notes in homework journal.
- Face to face meetings (not during Covid-19 pandemic).

The calendar for the next school year is sent home to parents as early as possible, is published on our website and is posted home during the summer. 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.

Students are expected to wear the correct school uniform (no uniform in vocational). All students can wear their own casual clothes during the month of June each year.

Staff are vigilant at break and lunch times, noting if a student is coming to school hungry or with little or no lunch. There is a breakfast club and we currently have funding for 40 students in the Department of Social Protection's 'School Meals Programme'. These 40 students are reviewed on a continuous basis, based on feedback from staff and families (and families changing circumstances).

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's Admissions Policy.

### **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 Tusla twice during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

### **Transfer to Another School**

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the student's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the student's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate.

Any transfers of students also need to be updated on POD.

### **Communication with other Schools**

- When a child transfers from St. Augustine's School to another school, the schools records of attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into St. Augustine's School, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.

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 good school attendance.
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
- Showing an interest in their child's school day and their child's homework.
- Participating in the compilation of the student's Personal Pupil Plan by completing *Parent/Guardian Views* form.
- Encouraging them to participate in a range of school activities e.g. swimming, sport, music, etc.
- 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 in writing 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.
- Notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

#### Covid-19

See Appendix 5.

#### Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- High attendance levels as measured through the online Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil.
- Happy, confident, well-adjusted students.
- Positive parental feedback.
- Parents aware of their obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- Teacher vigilance.

This policy was reviewed and updated in March 2021.

Adopted by the Board of Management:

*Maíra Coughlan*

*D. O'Brien*

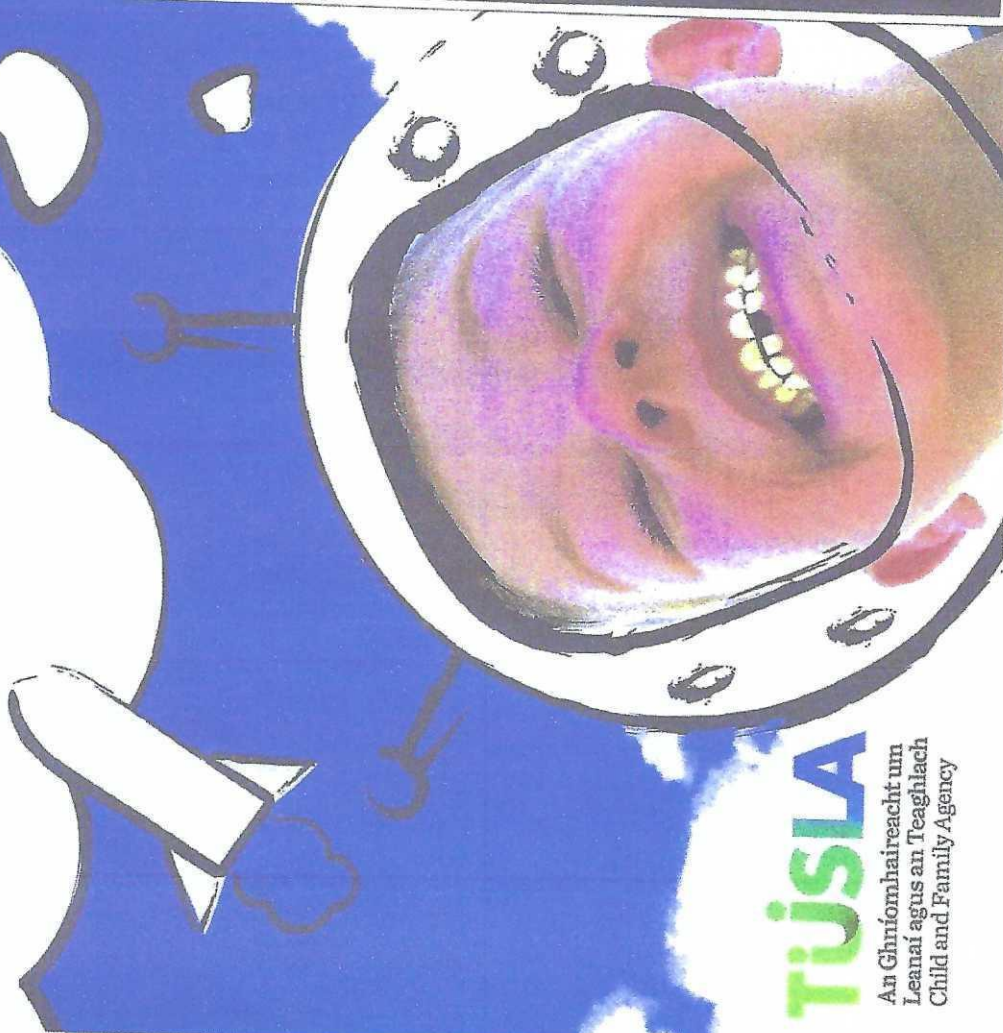
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School Attendance  
information for parents

**Don't let your  
child miss out**  
(on a good start in life!)

**TÚSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanai agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency



## Appendix 1

**Every child aged  
between 6 and 16  
must receive an  
education.**

If you are a parent or guardian\* of a child aged between 6 and 16 this leaflet outlines the special role you play in ensuring that your child doesn't miss out on his or her education.

It also gives you information about the Child and Family Agency which supports regular school attendance and the education of children and young people through Educational Welfare Officers.

The job of the Child and Family Agency is to support families and make sure that every child receives an education as required by law. Almost all children do this by attending school.

\* Guardian – a person who has the legal authority and duty to take care of a child or minor

# What you can do

## How you can help your child to attend school regularly

- Make education important in your home and let your child know it is not okay to miss school.
- Listen to your child. Be interested in his or her news about school and ask about what he or she is doing.
- Help your child to be proud of a good attendance record.
- Build your child's confidence by praising him or her when he or she does well.
- Read letters and reports from the school and know the school rules.
- Go to school meetings and get to know the teacher, staff and your child's friends.
- Don't take family holidays during school term.
- Be alert for reasons why your child may not want to go to school. If your child finds school work hard, talk to the school right away.
- Encourage your child not to take on a part-time job during school term. A tired teenager will not be able to keep up at school.

## Home Education and Private Schools

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 you have a right to educate your child outside of a recognised school, for example, in a private school or in your home.

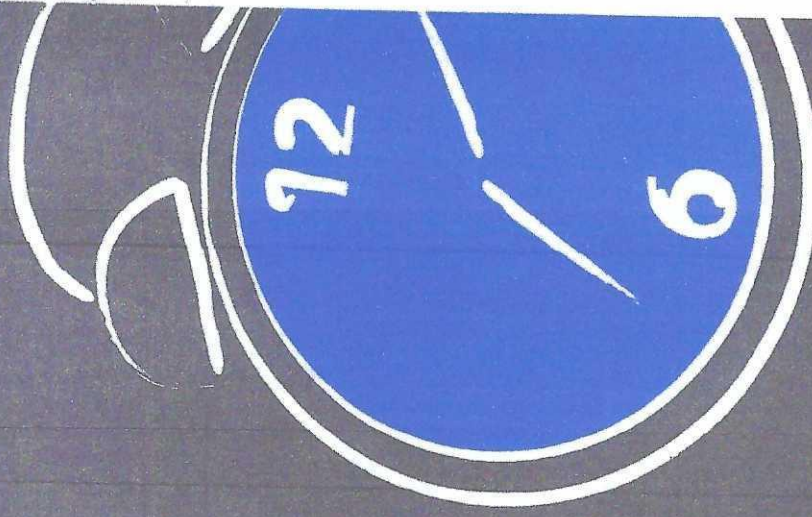
If you decide to do this you must apply to register your child with the Child and Family Agency who will then carry out an assessment of the education being provided. For more information contact us on (01) 873 8700.

## Top Tips from parents!

- ✓ *"Get your child to bed in good time on school days and Sunday nights. Plenty of sleep and rest will help a child stay alert."*
- ✓ *"Remember to set the alarm clock in good time so that you can get your child to school on time."*
- ✓ *"Help your child pack his or her schoolbag and prepare your child's lunch the night before so you and your child have more time to get ready in the morning."*

## What to do if you need support

Contact the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency by email at [ewsinfo@tusla.ie](mailto:ewsinfo@tusla.ie) or check out contact details of your local office on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie).



# Your child has a right to an education.

A good education, combined with loving care and encouragement, will give your child a great start in life.

*"Having a good education means I will be more likely to learn more, develop skills and talents, make and keep friends, have more confidence, do better at exams, avoid getting involved in crime, have a wider choice of job options when I start working..."*

## What you need to know

### What you must do if your child cannot be at school

You must tell the school that your child cannot attend and say why. The school will tell you how to give them this information – usually, the school will ask for a note.

Very often, there will be good reasons for a child not being in school and these will be taken into account if they are explained to the school.

### What the school must do if your child misses a lot of school

The school must tell us, if your child has missed 20 days or more in the school year or if it is concerned that your child is missing too much school.

### What we must do if your child misses a lot of school

If a school tells us that your child is missing too much school, an Educational Welfare Officer of the Child and Family Agency may visit you to see how we can help to make sure that your child attends school more often.

### Protecting your child's right to an education

We will help you in whatever way we can to ensure your child gets an education. However, you can be taken to court and fined or imprisoned if you do not co-operate with the Educational Welfare Officer.

Legal action will be taken in exceptional cases if it is the only way a child's right to an education can be safeguarded.

## **Saint Augustine's School**

**Date**

**Dear Parent/Guardian**

I am writing to you regarding student's attendance at school (see list of days missed).

In our school's Absence Report, we are obliged to report to the Educational Welfare Service of Tusla - Child and Family Agency any student who has been absent for 20 or more days. An Educational Welfare Officer may be in contact with you to discuss the matter further. If, however, the absence was through illness, the school will report the absence in the normal way but will not be informing Tusla that it is concerned about your child's educational welfare.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary education whichever comes later. When a child is absent, you as parent/guardian must let the school know the reason for the absence each time.

If you wish to discuss student's attendance, please contact the school to arrange an appointment to meet with Mr. O'Brien, Principal or Ms. Cotter, Deputy Principal.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

David O'Brien  
School Principal



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

## Educational Welfare Services (EWS), Child and Family Agency

April 2019

### Update regarding School Absence Reports and Attendance Referrals

Dear Principal,

I would like to take a few minutes of your time to update you and remind you of the deadlines for submitting school attendance referrals and absence reports. Firstly I want to remind you that there is a difference between school absence reports and attendance referrals.

**Student Absence Reports:** Schools are required to make two reports annually. All students who exceed 20 days cumulative absence *must* be included in the absence reports.

The first report for Period 1, from school re-opening to December 31 should have been submitted online on or before March 31.

The second report for Period 2 from January 1 to the end of the school year should be submitted online on or before October 31.

*For schools using either Aladdin or VSWare software these reports can now be submitted automatically.*

**Attendance Referrals:** Attendance referrals should only be made where you, as school principal, have a concern in relation to a pupil's non-attendance at school.

I am aware that schools experience frustration when Tusla EWS are unable to respond promptly to school attendance referrals. We currently have 89 Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) serving 3,952 schools across the country (an average of 45 schools per EWO) which gives a sense of the challenge we face. On a positive note Tusla has committed extra resources annually which has enabled us to employ an extra 25 EWOs since 2016 and a further 8 EWOs will be recruited in 2019.

During the 2017/2018 academic year schools submitted 6,670 referrals to Tusla related to school attendance concerns. All referrals are screened by a Senior Educational Welfare Officer with referrals then being prioritised according to need. As demand regularly exceeds the capacity of the service to respond, some referrals are placed on a waiting list. With increased staff numbers in the coming years we are confident that our ability to respond to referrals will be enhanced.

In 2017/2018 Tusla EWS received 2,135 referrals from schools in the months of May, June and July often leaving no time to respond before the end of the school year. This led to a significant build-up of cases on our waiting list over the summer months, which in turn impacted our capacity when the new school year started.

This year in an effort to better manage referrals, schools are requested to submit attendance referrals by the following dates:

- *Post-Primary Schools by Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup>.*
- *Primary Schools by Friday May 31<sup>st</sup>.*

These dates will facilitate intervention where necessary before the end of the school year. Should it be necessary to make a referral after the dates outlined, schools are asked to hold off on submitting this referral until September 2019 and if the attendance concern still exists in the new school year to make that referral in September 2019.

Best wishes and thank you for your ongoing positive engagement with Tusla EWS.

Yours sincerely,

*Noel Kelly*

Noel Kelly,  
Director of Educational Welfare Services.

An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach / Child and Family Agency

Urláir 2-5, Foirneamh Brunel, An Ceantar Theas, Baile Átha Cliath 8

Floors 2-5, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8

t. +353 (0) 1 771 8500 f. +353 (0) 1 771 8610 / [info@tusla.ie](mailto:info@tusla.ie)

[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

Educational Welfare Services,  
Child and Family Agency

**TÚSLA**

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Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

## Certificate of Merit

**This certificate  
is awarded to**

\_\_\_\_\_

in recognition of the improvement in your school  
attendance record

for the period \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

at \_\_\_\_\_

this day \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

*Patricia S. C.*

Educational Welfare Services



## Covid-19 Pandemic

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, schools closed due to Covid-19. To facilitate re-opening, schools needed to implement several measures, such as:

- Staggered breaks and lunch times.
- Time-table for using certain areas.
- Increased hand washing facilities.
- Sanitising stations.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes.
- Wearing of face masks.
- Use of Zoom and Seesaw for communicating with parents.
- Formulating a Covid-19 Response Plan.
- Updating relevant policies re Covid
- Purchase of masks, disinfectants, sanitizer, gloves, bins, refuse sacks, thermometers, etc.
- Sourcing relief staff.
- Preparation of 4 isolation rooms.
- Setting up 'bubbles', where students and staff engage with the same people each day.
- School transport precautions.
- Circulating self-declaration form to all staff in advance of returning to school.
- Circulating student declaration form to parents (for students returning to school having presented with symptoms of illness) – see Appendix C1.

We sent resources and information home to families e.g.

- Talking to Children and Young People about Covid-19 – Advice for parents and schools (DES).
- Letter to parents and guardians, dated 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020, from Norma Foley, Minister for Education.
- Open letter from Dr. Ronan Glynn, acting Chief Medical Officer to parents and guardians of school children, dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.
- Detailed information for parents and guardians from Board of Management, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020.
- Addendum to St. Augustine's School Code of Behaviour with regard to Covid-19 risks.
- Covid-19 Advice for Parents, August 2020.
- Email attaching
  - Patient information for self-isolation at home.
  - How to handwash.
  - A parent's guide to close contacts.
  - Advice for people who share a home with someone who has Covid-19.
  - Parent self-declaration form (for students returning to school following illness).
- Email giving general Covid information and attaching an Isolation quick guide.
- Covid-19 Response Plan was shared with all families.

At St. Augustine's School, the Board of Management felt it was important to have students attend the July Provision as soon as it was deemed safe. Thirty seven students attended for two weeks from 13<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> July and the feedback was very positive.

School reopened for the 2020-21 school year on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. Statistics show that attendance for September and October were only slightly down on the previous year:

2019 September 94.4% and October 93.9%

2020 September 89.6% and October 92%

### **Covid-19-Related Appendices**

- C1 Parent self-declaration form (St. Augustine's School)
- C2 A parent's guide to close contacts (HSE) – October 2020
- C3 Operation of SEN school transport scheme services for the 2020-21 school year (including guidance for parents) (DES) – August 2020
- C4 Supporting collaboration with parents (DES) – November 2020

## Saint Augustine's School

Return to school after presenting with symptoms of illness in school or at home

### Parent Self-Declaration Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date child was taken to isolation room in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been in contact with your GP to discuss  
your child's symptoms?

Yes ☐ No ☐

What advice did your GP offer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What date (if any) did your GP advise for a return to school? \_\_\_\_\_

Was your child sent for a Covid-19 test?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what was the test date? \_\_\_\_\_ and results date? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the Covid test positive or negative: \_\_\_\_\_

What advice was given: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration:** I have no reason to believe that my child has infectious disease and I have followed all medical and public health guidance with respect to exclusion of my child from school.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

BLOCK CAPITALS

SIGNATURE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## A parent's guide to close contacts

**This guide sets out what to expect when your child has been told they are a close contact of Covid-19 in school.**

The HSE is working closely with schools to make sure the health of all children and staff in the school is protected. If a person has been diagnosed with Covid-19, the HSE will identify everyone who has been in close contact with the person with Covid-19. This includes the parents/guardians of all children as well as any staff who were in close contact with the person.

### Close contact

If your child has been identified as a close contact, it means they have been in contact with someone who has Covid-19. Please try not to worry. The risk of your child becoming infected with Covid-19 from this close contact is small. Less than 2 children in 100 children tested as close contacts are found to have Covid-19 too. Even if your child does become infected with the virus, most children don't get any symptoms, or have a very mild illness.

### My child is a close contact

The school will contact you to bring your child home from school, if they are identified as a close contact. Please make sure the school has your most up-to-date contact information so they can call you if your child needs to be picked up.

You will naturally be concerned, but if your child has no symptoms of Covid-19, please follow the advice below. If your child has symptoms of Covid-19, please immediately isolate your child and ring your GP.

### My child's COVID-19 test

Keep your phone close to you and make sure it is switched on. The HSE will contact you to organise coronavirus testing for your child free of charge. You will receive a text message with details of the test appointment location, date and time. Most people receive their test result within 2 days.

The HSE will arrange a free COVID-19 test for your child and contact you with the appointment. Do not ring your GP, unless your child developed symptoms.

### Restricting your child's movements

Your child must restrict their movements for 14 days, since they were last in close contact with the person who has tested positive for Covid-19. The HSE will tell you the date the 14 days of restricted movements will finish.

Restricting movements means avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. During the 14 days restricted movements your child cannot:

- attend school, childcare or any group activities
- use public transport
- visit other people's homes or have visitors to your home

Your child can go outside to attend a medical appointment or to exercise as long as they keep 2 metres distance from other people.

### **The rest of the household**

If your child who is a close contact is feeling well, with no symptoms of COVID-19, other people in the household do not need to restrict their movements. They can continue to go to work, school, preschool or childcare. But, if they have also been told they are also a close contact of COVID-19, they would then need to restrict their movements.

### **If your child tests negative (COVID-19 virus not found)**

If your child, who is a close contact with no symptoms of COVID-19, receives a negative result, they still need to restrict their movements:

- for 14 days, or
- until the date you were told to restrict their movements until

This is because it can take up to 2 weeks to develop infection of COVID-19.

### **If your child tests positive (COVID-19 virus found)**

Your child will need to self-isolate (stay in their room) if their test result is positive (COVID-19 virus found).

People in your household will need to restrict their movements (stay at home) for 14 days. Household siblings cannot attend school and adults at home should not go to work.

You, or whoever is the main carer of the child in self-isolation, will need to restrict your movements for 17 days. This includes the 10 days that your child is in isolation and for 7 days after your child's isolation period ends.

Your child must self-isolate until:

- they have not had a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or over) for 5 days  
**AND**
- it has been 10 days since they first developed symptoms

If your child has no symptoms, they can stop self-isolating 10 days from the date of their test.

## **If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 after a negative result**

If your child had a negative (COVID-19 virus was not detected) test result but later goes on to develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), isolate your child and phone your GP.

Explain to your GP that your child was tested as a close contact of a case of COVID-19 and they have now developed symptoms of COVID-19. The GP will discuss referring your child for another free coronavirus test.

If your child develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), people in your household need to restrict their movements now and stay at home. This includes not attending school or work.

## **If your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 after a positive result**

If your child develops [symptoms of COVID-19](#), but has already had a positive result from their close contact test, then they do not need to be tested again. The symptoms for COVID-19 can start after the positive/'detected' test result.

You must keep your child isolated (you may need to isolate with them) and use all infection control measures possible to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the house e.g. distancing as much as physically possible, hand washing, covering your mouth and nose if you cough, keeping surfaces clean and avoiding touching your face.

People in the household need to restrict their movements and stay at home. This includes not attending school or work.

## **If your child's symptoms get worse**

Phone your GP or GP out of hours service immediately if your child's symptoms of COVID-19 get worse.

## **Privacy**

The school cannot share the name of the child or staff member who tested positive (COVID-19 detected). This information is private and confidential. Close contacts will not be told the name of the person with COVID-19 unless the parent or guardian of the child or member of staff gives permission.

## **Where do I go for more information?**

Up to date information and advice on COVID-19 (coronavirus) is available on [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie). If you have any queries you can call HSELive on 1850 24 1850 from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 5pm on Saturday. You can also contact the HSE by email on [hselive@hse.ie](mailto:hselive@hse.ie)

## **Useful websites**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/child-close-contact-covid-19-school.html>

An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills



**Operation of Primary and Special Educational Needs School Transport Scheme Services for the 2020/2021 School Year**

*(If you have children who use Post-Primary School Transport Scheme Services please read the separate guidance that has issued in regard to those services)*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We recently contacted you to advise that School Transport Scheme services for the 2020/2021 school year will fully operate as normal, but with additional measures and hygiene requirements in place.

**Please read this letter and the attached guidance carefully. Please talk to your child or children about how they should use school transport services for the coming school year so that they know what to expect and what will be different from previous years.**

**We all have a role to play in keeping the school community safe. Please make sure your child knows of these guidelines and knows that they need to adhere to these and play their part, so as ensure the safety of their friends, classmates, transport and school staff, and the wider school community, to the greatest extent possible.**

**There is more detailed information in the document enclosed overleaf: Guidance for Parents and Children the Operation of Primary and Special Educational Needs School Transport Scheme Services for the 2020/2021 School Year**

We continue to ensure every effort is made in our attempts to prevent the spread of Covid-19. It is important that every child observes hygiene requirements and that children observe the rules on limiting interaction while travelling on school transport services.

As previously advised, the plan to run school transport services fully and as normal takes account of the fact that school transport is different from public transport in that each transport service carries the same children on a daily basis to their school. Because of this, the number of people using the service and their identities are known. This would facilitate contact tracing if it were required.

Please ensure that your children know about the following guidelines, and that they are expected to comply with these when using the school transport service.

- Do not use school transport if they are displaying obvious symptoms.
- Maintain physical distancing while waiting for transport.
- Always sit in their pre-assigned seating which will be next to a sibling or a child from their class group where possible (this should be the same child at all times).
- Use hand sanitiser prior to or on boarding the bus.



- Observe respiratory etiquette at all times – cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of it properly, or by coughing or sneezing into their elbow while waiting for and on-board transport services.
- Disembark the bus one by one in an orderly fashion.
- All children aged 13 years and over are required to wear facemasks while waiting for and on-board transport services (with the exception of children who for medical or special educational needs reasons are not in a position to wear a facemask or face covering).

Further information on the Roadmap for Re-opening our schools can be found at [gov.ie/backtoschool](https://www.gov.ie/backtoschool).

**School Transport Section**  
**21 August 2020**



However, repeated non-compliance with wearing of masks may result in a child's travel facilities being reviewed and/or withdrawn. We cannot compromise the safety of transport staff or children on board our school transport services as this has to remain a key priority at all times.

Therefore, we stress the importance of each child wearing a mask and ask that you talk to your child about ensuring they have their mask with them when they leave for school and keeping it in a safe place during the school day when not in use.

#### **8. Wearing a facemask/visor for school transport staff**

School transport staff (the bus driver and the school bus escort in the case of SEN transport services) will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as required.

Drivers will wear face masks and face visors when children are boarding and alighting or when they are in situations where social distancing may not be possible.

School bus escorts will wear face masks or face visors, as appropriate bearing in mind the SEN needs of the child/children on the service.

#### **9. Additional cleaning of buses/services**

All school transport services will be required to carry out additional cleaning regimes in the 2020/21 school year.

Bus Éireann is working with contractors and drivers, to provide information on the protocols for additional cleaning required (in addition to the normal daily end of day cleaning), including the requirements for touchpoint cleaning, the use of suitable disinfectant and guidance on waste collection and disposal.

#### **10. How suspected cases on board transport services will be dealt with**

Before the start of the new school year, school transport staff will receive guidance and training on how to deal with a suspected case of Covid 19 on school transport services.

In circumstances where there is a suspected case on board a transport service, school transport staff will contact parents/guardians immediately to make arrangements to have the child collected.

Measures will be taken where possible to distance the child from other children on board the service and school transport staff will assist the child as required and reassure the child that help is on the way. School transport staff will issue the child with a face mask if the 2 metre distancing is not possible and if they are able to wear a face mask.

Following a suspected case incident, vehicles will be fully cleaned and internally disinfected before being used again.

The HSE will inform anyone who has come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process.



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education


November 2020


# Supporting collaboration with parents in primary schools


Schools have always recognised the need for effective communication and collaboration with parents and, since March 2020, they have been very creative and adaptable in facilitating this. As the 2020/2021 school year progresses, it remains important that schools continue to work in partnership with parents. In particular, schools will need to be ready to provide alternative means of conducting parent-teacher meetings, including meetings with parents of children with special educational needs (SEN). They may also adapt their usual methods for open days and parental involvement in education. The details below provide some ideas for supporting schools in these endeavours and are based on practice that has already been developed in schools in the past six months. Special schools may choose to use the approaches outlined in either the Primary or Post-Primary school guidance documents on collaborating with parents/guardians or a combination of both.

## Parent-teacher meetings, including support plan meetings for children with SEN

Yearly parent-teacher meetings are important to update parents on pupil progress, to share successes and concerns and to support parents in helping their children to learn. Regular meetings with parents about support plans for children with SEN will also continue to be important this year. Relevant information, including draft plans and samples of work, can be sent to parents in advance of meetings using email or the school's digital platform in order to facilitate discussion. Schools may choose to schedule their regular parent-teacher meetings for later in the school year this year. As public health advice recommends reducing social contacts, the following methods could be used in place of the usual face-to-face meetings:

 Video-conferencing facilities can be used in place of face-to-face meetings, where available.

 Parent-teacher meetings can be conducted by phone if video-conferencing facilities are not suitable.

 A written report in addition to the end-of-year report could be provided mid-year, with a follow-up call offered.

## Open days



Some schools provide open days during the school year. Instead of inviting parents into the school building, the following ideas could be used to give current and prospective parents an insight into school life:



Short videos celebrating the work of the school



Information booklets outlining various aspects of school life



The school website to showcase the work of the school

## Facilitating parental involvement



Schools can use digital platforms such as Seesaw, Google Classroom, emails to communicate with parents.



Parents can be supported in helping their children to learn from home, with resources and guidance provided by the school.



Parents can be invited to contribute to learning via video link, for example, show and tell, story time demonstrations.

## Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

St. Augustine's School, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94X8K7 – Roll No. 18499 O

### The school's vision and value in relation to attendance:

St. Augustine's School has a high expectation of good attendance. Each student will attend school as often as their health allows. Each student will be encouraged to attend by their parents and by the school. The Tusla leaflet 'Don't let your child miss out' and Tusla letter re regular attendance are sent to parents.

Attendance is monitored by the class teacher on the Aladdin system. Attendance is entered daily and a reason is entered in the event of absence. Monthly statistics are updated automatically on the Daily Attendance Book (Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil), giving a percentage rate for each month's attendance. Tusla, Education Welfare Services (EWS), Child & Family Agency, is notified when a student has missed 20 days. There are two absence reports annually – before the end of March for the first quarter and before the end of October for the remainder of the school year.

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

- Targets and strategies are listed in the Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) of students with poor attendance.
- A school calendar is sent to each family and published, as soon as available, on the website.
- NCSE applications for school transport are submitted early for new entrants to avoid delays in allocating transport the following September.
- Details of students with >20 days absence are forwarded to Tusla.
- Staff and parents encourage good attendance.
- Tusla certificates for *good* attendance and *improved* attendance.
- Encouraging students to participate in all school activities, including swimming, sports, music, etc.
- Staff engaging with students at their level and being interested in their progress and achievements.
- Contacting families of students with poor attendance and offering support.

### School roles in relation to attendance:

- St. Augustine's School devises their school calendar, in conjunction with Benincasa School, with whom they share school transport. Circular 0005/2020 outlines set holiday periods for the years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- The deputy principal has responsibility for ensuring any necessary medication is to-hand while students are in school or on transport to and from school.
- Bus drivers/escorts are responsible for the safe and timely transport of students to and from school and to report and medical or behavioural issues they encounter.
- The deputy principal has responsibility for ensuring all students attending St. Augustine's School have 'minibus' transport or a 'bus pass' for use on public transport.
- The principal, deputy principal (and parents) have responsibility for ensuring that St. Augustine's School is a safe environment for students and that, when bullying happens, it is addressed and dealt with.
- The principal and deputy principal have a responsibility to contact parents/guardians to collect a student if they are a danger to themselves or others, are unwell, or lethargic or unable to participate in their daily programme of activities deemed normal for that pupil.

- St. Augustine's School requests that students who present with symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting in school be collected and remain at home until 48 hours after their last bowel movement and/or episode of vomiting. This is to reduce the risk of transmission of possible infection to other children who may be vulnerable.
- St Augustine's School requests families and staff to follow all HSE/Medical advice during this current Covid-19 pandemic and contact school principal in relation to any Covid-19 absences.
- St. Augustine's School uses Textaparent.ie to contact parents/guardians on a regular basis. In the event of unforeseen circumstances e.g. snow, a text will be sent to parents/guardians and drivers/escorts to inform them of the closure.

#### Communication with parents:

- Parents/guardians are requested to contact the school (and notify bus driver/escort) if their child is not attending school on a particular day or if the child will arrive late or leave early. A reason is then entered on Aladdin for the student's absence e.g. hospital appointment, sick, dentist, etc.
- If the student has a specific infectious disease, there are sample notification letters to parents in the HSE publication Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools – October 2014. The diseases currently covered are Chicken Pox, Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, Head Lice/Nits, Impetigo, MRSA, Ringworm, Rubella, Scabies, Scarlet Fever, Slapped Cheek Syndrome (Parvovirus B19) and Winter Vomiting Disease (Norovirus)/General Gastroenteritis.
- Parents/guardians must contact the school, in advance, if somebody who does not normally collect their child from school is collecting them.
- Parents/guardians must contact the school if contact details change e.g. address, phone number, email, etc.
- Parents/guardians must contact the school if custody arrangements and/or barring orders are in place.

Evaluation – the success of the attendance statement will be monitored by a high rate of attendance and a low rate of students with absences greater than 20 days being reported to Tusla.

This statement will be reviewed by staff, parents and Board of Management in 2020 and every 2 years thereafter.

Statement approved by Board of Management: 04/03/21

Statement re-submitted to Tusla:

Chairperson signature: Marian Coughlan

Principal signature: David O' Brien