

# **Scoil San Treasa, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin. Board of Management**

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## **Attendance Strategy/Policy**

### **Rationale**

*“At Scoil San Treasa, our mission is the provision of primary education of the highest quality for all our pupils in a happy, safe, Christian environment. While we value high academic achievement, the social, personal and moral development of our pupils is of primary importance and we view the school as a learning organisation which is open to change and innovation while it cherishes the best educational, cultural and religious traditions of our society. Acknowledging that their parents are the primary educators of our children, we are inspired by a shared vision of excellence and we espouse a partnership approach in its pursuit.”*

*(Scoil San Treasa's Mission Statement)*

As regular attendance at school is an important factor in enabling our pupils to derive maximum benefit from school, promoting good attendance supports our Mission Statement. The purpose of this Attendance Policy is to

- Summarise our approaches to promoting good attendance and addressing attendance-related matters
- Meet the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 22 with regard to our school's Attendance Strategy.

### **Formulation of this policy**

This policy was devised by the teaching staff of Scoil San Treasa in consultation with the parents of pupils in the school, and with reference to relevant circulars from the Department of Education and Skills. It was ratified by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and will be reviewed when deemed necessary by the Board of Management.

### **Aims**

Through having this Attendance Policy we aim:

- To support and sustain the appreciation of learning that is currently in evidence in our school and to highlight its importance for all
- To heighten awareness of the importance of school attendance and punctuality
- To clarify procedures around matters relating to attendance

### **Strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality**

- Scoil San Treasa - St. Theresa's Primary School - was established to provide primary education to the parishioners of Mount Merrion. However, pupils of different persuasions attend and their religious outlook is respected. The Catholic ethos of the school is inclusive and all pupils are equally welcome. We strive to provide a welcoming and supportive learning environment for our pupils, one in which they are valued and respected and in which cognisance is taken of their learning needs.
- Scoil San Treasa's Parents' Association supports the work of the school and parent volunteers assist in a variety of ways e.g. library volunteers, orchestra coordinators. This, combined with supportive parish and community links enhances the level of pupil,

family and parish/community engagement with the school. The Board of Management directs energy and available resources towards maintaining and improving the school building and the general school environment. All of this generates a positive backdrop for school attendance.

- Pupils in Scoil San Treasa enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Provision is made for a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Such opportunities enhance pupils' engagement with school life and can directly and positively influence attendance.
- Positive achievements are emphasised and celebrated throughout the school in a range of ways, including, for example, assemblies, displays, awards, announcements, website mention and praise.
- Pupils needing additional support in their overall learning are identified as early as possible and available resources are used to put appropriate supports in place.
- Our Mission Statement underpins our various school policies – for example, our Code of Behaviour and our Anti-Bullying Policy. These policies support a positive and respectful atmosphere in our school.
- In line with Department of Education and Skills (DES) requirements, systems are in place to register pupils accurately and efficiently, and to record attendance, absences (and matters re punctuality, as warranted), and transfer to other schools.
- School hours of opening and matters relating to attendance and punctuality are addressed in the induction materials for parents of incoming junior infants and are also referenced in the pupil's homework journal. The school calendar is made available on the school website.
- Punctuality and good attendance is encouraged and positively reinforced by teachers informally in their classes.
- Parents are encouraged, insofar as is possible, to arrange children's appointments (e.g. dental check-ups) for times outside of school hours. A note from the parent should be given to the teacher in advance of any occasion on which their child needs to be taken from school early.
- If a child is absent, a note stating the reason for absence must be given to the teacher on the child's return to school. Scoil San Treasa has a very good record for regular attendance of pupils. It is understandable that it is not always appropriate or possible for a child to attend school (for example, for reasons of ill health or a family bereavement) However, the school authorities discourage taking children out of school for holidays and parents are reminded that, in line with the Education Act, the Principal is obliged to report absences exceeding 20 days in the school year to TÚSLA.
- Concerns relating to punctuality and/or attendance are communicated to/discussed with parents by the relevant teacher/s and/or principal as the need arises, with a view to improving overall outcomes for the pupil. Teachers alert the principal to significant punctuality and/or attendance concerns. The end-of-year report includes reference to attendance and punctuality.

Approved by Board of Management, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015