



**ROSEMONT
SCHOOL**

**Statement of Strategy For School Attendance
Rosemont Secondary School
Roll Number 60930L**

Date of policy: 2017

Date for review: 2019

Mission Statement

Rosemont School strives for excellence by creating an environment which fosters the development of each student in all aspects of the human person – spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social. Students are encouraged to set personal goals, take ownership of their learning and to initiate positive change. A sense of values and a commitment to the service of others together with a deep understanding of the Catholic faith is central to the mission at Rosemont.

Introduction

A meaningful education provides every student with the best possible start in life and it helps them to mature and develop into conscientious young adults. The purpose of this policy on attendance, punctuality and participation is to encourage regular school attendance, full participation in the education system and gives students good preparation for the responsibilities of third level and employment. Moreover, it endeavours to promote self-discipline, commitment and responsibility.

Expectations

Rosemont has high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality as poor attendance and punctuality by some students negatively impacts the teaching and learning of all students through the disruption caused by students arriving late and hinders the progression of the class through the curriculum. Rosemont is aware of its responsibilities to those students who experience difficulties and through encouragement and support will assist those students to reach their full potential.

Scope

This Attendance, Punctuality and Participation Strategy applies to all the stakeholders at Rosemont. Our philosophy of teamwork underpins our approach. Students, parents and staff contribute to the strategy by working together to maximise attendance and participation.

Board of Management

The Board of Management of Rosemont recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning. It believes that children should attend school regularly and punctually because school is where they learn and school is where they are safe.

The Board of Management is, therefore, committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. It aims to do this by:

- a) promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance;
- b) reducing all forms of unexplained absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism (a child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 20 or more days in a school year).

The Board of Management is obliged under the Education Act to make written reports to the Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA during the school year regarding school absences.

Goals

This policy aims to reduce absenteeism and to motivate students to take an active part in their education. Parents, students and staff are expected to co-operate in the successful implementation of this strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Rosemont has a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourages parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children.

The roles and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers and the board of management are explained fully in the Strategy for Attendance and Participation.

It is a legal requirement that schools will:

- a) be open for 167 sessions each school year;
- b) maintain attendance registers;
- c) accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness;
- d) clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised;
- e) submit, absence returns to the National Educational Welfare Board;
- f) liaise with the National Educational Welfare Officer regarding absence issues and meet with relevant families;
- g) inform the National Educational Welfare Board of students who are suspended from school for six days or more.

The following is a summary of the procedures that are used by the school:

- a) Parents are given attendance information through letters, telephone calls, text, student reports;
- b) Class teachers keep records of absence and punctuality for each student in their year.
- c) If any student has any unexplained absences – this will be communicated to parents.
- d) Registers are taken every morning at Class Teacher Assembly Time.
- e) The coach, class teacher and management team are alerted if a student is at risk.

The school aims to create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance by creating an engaging and interesting teaching and learning environment.

Monitoring Procedures

Principal, Deputy Principal, and Class teachers will monitor the implementation of this policy. The Principal will report to the B.O.M. regarding Attendance and Participation.

Success Criteria

- Improved attendance over a sustained period.
- Reduced disruption to classes.
- VSware will provide statistics on late arrivals and absences regularly.

Review Procedure

The staff will review the effectiveness of the monitoring and procedures every 2 years.

All records regarding attendance will be kept in the school for 7 years (legal record)

Rosemont Secondary School Attendance Strategy

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2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. How attendance is monitored
4. Participation
5. Target setting and targets
6. Strategies to achieve targets
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1. Goals

This policy aims to reduce absenteeism and to motivate students to take an active part in their education. Parents, students and staff are expected to co-operate in the successful implementation of this strategy.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Rosemont has a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourages parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children.

2.1 Responsibilities of Students

- Students are expected to be in school by 08:40 and remain for all classes. First year to fifth year students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day.
- Students are responsible for bringing in and showing notes of explanation from their parents/guardians regarding punctuality and attendance to their Class Teacher. The student should then submit the note to the Office for archiving.
- Students who have a medical/dental appointment during the school day, must have a note from their parents/guardians, separate from the school journal, authorising the student to leave school early. The student must show the note to their class teacher, who will initial it, and then the student submits the note to the office for archiving. This will be recorded on VShare.
- All students are expected to comply with this policy.

2.2 Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 parents must inform the school if their children will be absent from school on a school day and the reason for the absence, for example, illness. Parents/guardian must inform the school in writing (*separate from the Journal*) or by calling the school or sending a text or an email.

The Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA strongly advises against taking children out of school to go on holiday during term-time.

Parents and guardians have a legal obligation to ensure that their child attends a school or otherwise receives an education. If the Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA considers that a parent is failing in his or her obligation, it must send the parent a School Attendance Notice warning that legal action will follow if the child does not attend school regularly. Before doing this, it must make reasonable efforts to consult with the parents and the child. If the parent fails to comply, he or she may be

prosecuted. If convicted, the parent may be fined and/or imprisoned for a month and fined for each subsequent day that he or she fails to send the child to school. If the parent claims that suitable alternative education is being provided, he or she must prove this. It will be a defence for the parents to show that they have made all reasonable efforts to send the child to school - in such cases, the Health Service Executive (HSE) must be informed.

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- Ensure that all contact details are up to date
- Take an active interest in their child's school life and work
- Check and sign the school journal each week
- Attend parents' evenings and other school events;
- Ensure that their child completes their homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time
- Be aware of letters from school which their child brings home
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day, dressed in school uniform and fit to learn.
- Make all appointments for their children outside of class time where possible
- Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness
- Always notify the school early on the morning of any absence
- Avoid booking family holidays during the school term – examinations will not be rescheduled if they are missed due to holidays
- Talk to the school if they are concerned that their child seems reluctant to attend
- Avoid collecting their child unexpectedly from school as this causes significant disruption to teaching and learning

2.3 Responsibilities of Class Teachers:

- To operate the attendance system effectively and efficiently using Vsware
- Liaising with Principal and Deputy Principal
- To give particular attention to children whose families are experiencing difficulties
- Communication (telephone call/letter/ note in journal) with parents.
- Early identification of "at risk" students
- Reasoning with the students and advice on how to improve
- Contacting parents when their child has reached 15 days of cumulative absences reminding them of the twenty day rule
- Notifying the Principal or Deputy Principals to contact the Education Welfare Officer once a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- To encourage students to aim for full attendance

- Liaising with the Principal/Deputy Principal in preparing the annual report for the Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA
- To monitor student attendance and liaise with management to improve attendance where necessary

Teachers

- To take all assembly and class registers effectively using VShare.
- To mark students doing extra-curricular work or sport appropriately
- To regularly remind students about the importance of full and punctual attendance for effective learning to occur in the classroom.

2.4 Responsibilities of Management

- To regularly monitor attendance and participation
- To co-ordinate the identification of students who may need assistance to fully participate or attend school regularly
- To support students who are have poor attendance or participation
- To report to the board of management regarding attendance levels and set targets for attendance and participation

2.5 Responsibilities of Board of Management

- To prepare a school attendance strategy
- To review the attendance and participation report

3. How attendance is monitored

3.1 Procedure – Daily morning registration

- Students are required to attend assembly each day at 08:50 sharp where a fire-register is taken, using VShare.
- VShare registers are taken for all periods by the subject teacher.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their name is marked in every register.
- A note of an appointment of a medical nature or important family business will be accepted as valid.
- Discretion may be allowed regarding traffic conditions, the weather and other unforeseen circumstances, provided there is notification from parents.

3.2 Procedure - Registration following absence for all Students

- In the event of an absence the student must present a written note separate from the journal, on her return to the Class Teacher, who will initial it, and individual Subject Teacher (when requested). The student submits the note to the office for archiving. This will be recorded on VShare.

3.3 Procedure – Registration for students attending appointments during the school day

- Students who wish to leave the school early for an appointment (e.g. Doctor, Dentist etc.) must present a note of explanation separate from the journal, to their class teacher who will initial it. The student submits the note to the office for archiving. This will be recorded on VShare.

3.4 Procedure – Registration for students who leave school due to illness during the school day

- In the event of a student becoming ill while at school, the parents/guardians will be contacted for further instruction. The student should remain in Sick Bay or another designated place during this time.

3.5 Procedure – Registration for students who miss registration or class registers due to extracurricular activities

- It is the responsibility of students to notify the teacher beforehand that they will be absent from class due to sporting or other extra-curricular activities, so they may be registered correctly on VShare.

4. Participation

4.1 Participation helps to develop friendships and enhances the experience of school. Rosemont actively encourages every student to participate in school life.

- Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate to the best of their ability
- The approach to teaching and learning (AFL) encourages student participation during classes
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are undertaken
- Activities take place during lunch time as well as after school
- Emphasis is placed on participation instead of winning
- SNA's help to integrate special needs students during lunch time
- Participation is recognised, praised, publicised and rewarded

4.2 Full attendance and participation in timetabled PE classes is required. Students who are unable to participate fully in PE classes due to medical circumstances may be asked to furnish their PE teacher with a parental note/medical note in the journal.

4.3.1 It is the responsibility of students who are absent from class/school for any reason to find out details of work missed. This applies also to students who miss class due to sporting or other extra-curricular activities.

5. Target setting

The board of management, school management and class teachers will set targets regarding attendance, punctuality and participation.

Students are consulted on the attendance and punctuality rules through their participation on the Student Council.

Specified Targets

Attendance = 85% attendance for all students in the school

Punctuality = 95% of students attend assembly each day

Participation = no student drops out of school prior to Leaving Certificate exams.

6. Strategies to achieve targets

- The whole-school focus on wellbeing
- Building a warm, caring, respectful and compassionate atmosphere in which every person feels accepted and valued.
- The provision of an excellent extra-curricular activity package which has something for everyone and encourages the participation of all students.
- A modern meaningful curriculum, which is inclusive of all students.
- Well-structured pastoral care system
- Rosemont's coaching system
- Transition Year Programme.
- A comprehensive roll attendance system.
- Supervised evening study
- The promotion of involvement by students in extra-curricular activities and other areas of school life
- The maintenance of close links between the school management, the Student Council and the Parent Association
- The identification of students who are at risk of dropping out at an early stage
- The establishment of closer contacts between the school and the families concerned
- The co-ordination with the Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA aimed at promoting and encouraging attendance

7. Legislation

The Education Welfare Act 2000

The main provisions of the Education Welfare Act are as follows:

- 1) Schools are required to establish and maintain a school register, showing attendance or non-attendance for each student.
- 2) Every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years of education in post primary, whichever comes later.

- 3) The act established a National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB); now Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA. The NEWB/ Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA has appointed Education Welfare Officers to work with schools to encourage school attendance.
- 4) The act stipulates that the school is obliged to report to the Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA (formerly to NEWB) every time:
 - It decides to expel a student
 - A student has been absent for 20 days or more cumulatively
 - A student's attendance causes concern for the school
 - A student's name is removed from the school's register
 - A student has been suspended for six days consecutively.
- 5) Schools must prepare a student absence report. This information must be submitted as per Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA's schedule in summary format for all students.
- 6) Absences must be categorised under six headings:
 - A. Illness
 - B. Family Business
 - C. Appointment
 - D. Other (Religion, Holiday etc.)
 - E. Unexplained
 - F. Suspended
 - G. Transfer to another school

This policy was approved by the Board of Management on 15th June 2017
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