



Attendance

Policy

St Martin de Porres NS
Roll Number: 19617W

Date: 03/12/25

St Martin de Porres NS: School Attendance Policy

1. Introduction and Aims

This policy is founded on the belief that **regular and punctual school attendance is crucial** to ensuring every pupil at St Martin de Porres NS achieves their full academic and social potential.

The primary aims of this policy are to:

- Promote and encourage **excellent attendance and punctuality** as an essential foundation for learning.
- Clearly define the responsibilities of the Principal, teaching staff, parents/guardians, and students.
- Establish clear, consistent procedures for recording, monitoring, and responding to non-attendance.
- Create a supportive school culture where attendance is prioritised and celebrated.

2. Core Principles

St Martin de Porres NS adopts a **supportive and collaborative** approach to attendance. We aim to identify and address the underlying reasons for non-attendance in partnership with families before engaging in formal procedures.

- **Early Intervention:** Addressing concerns promptly when they first emerge.
- **Positive Culture:** Creating a school environment where all students feel safe, welcomed, and motivated to attend.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Recognising that regular attendance requires commitment from the whole school community.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities, overseeing the monitoring of data, and authorising tiered interventions and external referrals (e.g. to the Education Welfare Officer, if necessary).

The Legal Requirements

There are two mandated reporting mechanisms for attendance where attendance is reported to TUSLA, the child and family agency.

School Attendance Reports

There are two reporting periods in the year, September to December and January to June. We submit the school attendance returns in January for September to December and again in June.

On this form the school is required to list any pupils, over the age of 6, who have missed 20 school days for any reason. Parents will be informed if their child is included in the report. These figures are used for statistical purposes only.

It is important to note that while attendance is hugely important there are also very valid reasons for children to miss school and this is understood. Where the school has concerns about a child's attendance, we will contact parents to discuss this.

Discretionary Referrals

Discretionary referrals are made where a school is worried about the attendance of a pupil. This might be due to a lot of unexplained absences, a pattern of absence, significant ongoing issues with punctuality leading to a lot of missed learning time etc. The school will refer a child to the Education Welfare Officer where they have these concerns. The role of the Education Welfare Officer is primarily to offer support to families to improve attendance. The school will always contact parents before referring to the Education Welfare Officer and support where possible.

3.2. Teachers and Staff

- Record attendance and punctuality accurately.
- Alert the Principal or designated Attendance Lead to any emerging attendance patterns or concerns.
- Maintain a positive, engaging, and inclusive classroom environment.
- Follow up on absent students and request written explanations upon their return, to be notified on the Aladdin system.

3.3. Parents/Guardians (Our Partners)

- Ensure their child attends school **every day** and **on time**, unless prevented by genuine illness or unavoidable circumstances.
- Immediately notify the school on the first morning of an absence by recording the absence and its reason on the Aladdin Connect school app.
- Avoid taking children out of school during term time for holidays or routine appointments (dentist, doctor) where possible.
- Engage actively with the school and any support plans established to improve attendance.

3.4. Students

- Strive to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Inform a staff member if they are experiencing a problem that is preventing them from wanting to come to school.

4. Procedures for Recording and Communication

4.1. Recording Attendance

Attendance is recorded daily at 10.10am. The legal register is maintained electronically.

4.2. Punctuality (Lateness)

- The school day begins at 9.00am. Students arriving after this time are considered late.
- Lateness is recorded and monitored. Habitual lateness will be addressed with parents/guardians as part of the intervention process, as it is disruptive to the student and the class.

4.3. Communication of Absence

- **Same-Day Absence:** If a student is absent and the school has not been notified by 11.00am, the school office will contact the parent/guardian via text to confirm the reason for absence.
- **Return to School:** The class teacher must receive a written explanation, via the Aladdin Connect app for **every single day of absence**.

4.4 Communication of the Importance of Attendance

The importance of regular school attendance is communicated consistently to the whole school community. Key messages are shared at the Junior Infants *Active Start* meeting, through the September Term Bulletin, and via general reminder emails throughout the year. Attendance is also discussed at parent-teacher meetings and reflected in end-of-year school reports. In addition, parents and guardians can monitor their child's attendance through Aladdin Connect.

5. Tiered Intervention Strategy

The school utilises a **tiered intervention strategy**, moving from universal promotion to targeted, formal support, to address non-attendance. The school principal, together with the class teacher and the relevant post holder, has responsibility for ensuring that this system is implemented effectively. While we fully recognise that legitimate illness and other unavoidable circumstances require a child to stay home, this system is designed to proactively identify and provide timely support for emerging patterns of **unexplained or persistent absence**, ensuring consistent engagement with families at every stage.

Tier	Attendance Rate (%)	Action	Focus
Tier 1: Good Attendance	96% - 100%	Universal reward systems, newsletters celebrating whole-school attendance targets.	Promotion and Celebration
Tier 2: Attendance Concern	90% - 95%	Letter/email sent home highlighting the dip in attendance. Data reviewed by Principal/Attendance Lead.	Early Warning and Monitoring
Tier 3: Attendance Risk	85% - 89%	Mandatory meeting with Principal/Designated Lead and Parent/Guardian. Discussion focuses on identifying specific barriers.	Targeted Support & Collaboration
Tier 4: Significant Absence	Below 85%	Implementation of a Personalised Attendance Improvement Plan (PAIP) , potentially involving the School Completion Worker (if consent is given). Formal consultation with external agencies (EWO/Tusla).	Formal Intervention & Multi-Agency Action

6.Role of the School Completion Officer (SCO)

The School Completion Officer plays a supportive and preventative role in promoting regular school attendance. Working as part of the School Completion Programme, the SCO collaborates closely with the school principal, class teachers, and relevant post holders to help identify and address barriers to attendance. Their key responsibilities include:

- **Student Support:** Providing mentoring, encouragement, and practical assistance to help students remain engaged in school.

- **Family Engagement:** Working with parents and guardians to understand challenges affecting attendance and to assist families in accessing appropriate supports.
- **Interagency Collaboration:** Liaising with external agencies and community services where additional interventions are required.
- **Prevention and Early Intervention:** Delivering programmes that promote school engagement, wellbeing, and regular attendance.

The SCO's role is **supportive rather than disciplinary** and does not replace the statutory responsibilities of the school principal in relation to attendance monitoring, recording, and reporting. Instead, the SCO provides targeted assistance to complement the school's formal attendance procedures and to promote positive engagement for students at risk of disengagement.

6. Policy Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 03/12/25 and will be reviewed every three years or as required in light of updated legislation or guidance.

Signatures:

Chairperson, Board of Management

Principal, St Martin de Porres NS