



SCOIL BHRÍDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Killane, Edenderry, Co. Offaly.

Phone / Fax: 046-9773451

email: info@scoilbhrideps.com



Attendance Policy

Updated October 2025

*“Be a **Hero**—**Here**, **Every** day, **Ready**, **On** time”*

1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential for every child’s learning, wellbeing, and long-term educational outcomes. This Attendance Policy outlines the school’s strategies for promoting, monitoring, and responding to attendance concerns using a three-tiered approach consistent with DEIS planning and the School Self-Evaluation process.

The policy also reflects the school’s legal obligations under:

- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- TUSLA – Child and Family Agency guidelines
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children

2. Aims

- To promote a positive culture of daily attendance.
- To ensure early identification of pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- To support families facing barriers to attendance.
- To work collaboratively with parents, TUSLA, and community agencies.
- To track, monitor, and improve attendance across the school.

3. DEIS and Attendance

As a DEIS school, we at Scoil Bhríde place a strong emphasis on ensuring that every child comes to school regularly so they can access the learning and supports they need to succeed. This involves setting whole-school targets, monitoring attendance patterns, and putting tailored interventions in place to reduce absenteeism. As a DEIS school, we work closely with families through HSCL, support teams, and community partnerships to identify barriers such as routines, transport, or wellbeing needs, and to provide practical, positive assistance. By promoting consistent attendance, the DEIS framework helps create a stable, engaging environment where all pupils—especially those at risk of educational disadvantage—can thrive.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Board of Management

The BOM will:

- Ratify and review the attendance policy.
- Support a whole-school approach to attendance

Scoil Bhríde, as a DEIS school

As a DEIS school, Scoil Bhríde will:

- Establish measurable annual DEIS attendance targets.
- Review progress using Aladdin attendance data.
- Implement DEIS actions including incentives and family engagement supports.
- Hold DEIS review meetings three times per year.
- Use DEIS resources such as HSCL and SCP (if applicable) to support pupils.
- Align interventions with MD-MTSS (universal, targeted, intensive supports).

Principal

The principal will:

- Maintain the school register (Aladdin).
- Lead DEIS attendance planning (shared with HSCL / DEIS Co-ordinator)
- Ensure implementation of MD-MTSS (shared with HSCL / Attendance post-holders)
- Collaborate with HSCL and attendance post holders.
- Report to the Board of Management.
- Notify EWO as legally required (shared with HSCL / Attendance post holders).
- Lead implementation and monitoring of attendance strategies. (shared with HSCL / Attendance post holders)
- Communicate with TUSLA and external agencies.

ISMT Post holder(s)

The post holders will:

- Track attendance data and inform staff members accordingly
- The post holders will issue 10-day absence letters to parent(s) / guardian(s).
- The post holders will issue 20-day absence letters to parent(s) / guardian(s) including notification to TUSLA.
- The post holders will update both the attendance policy and attendance strategy.
- The post holders will complete the TUSLA attendance returns as required.
- Deliver DEIS attendance actions in conjunction with HSCL.
- The post holders will have responsibility for co-ordinating whole-school attendance initiatives / drives.
- Responsibility for creating and managing the attendance team.

HSCL

The HSCL Coordinator will:

- Build positive relationships with families to support attendance.
- Conduct home visits to identify and address barriers.
- Deliver DEIS attendance initiatives
- Provide early intervention for emerging attendance issues.
- Liaise with community and support agencies.
- Attend DEIS and attendance team meetings.
- Collaborate with SCP where applicable.
- Support parents in understanding school procedures.
- Working collaboratively with the EWO.

Class & SET Teachers

Class & SET teachers will:

- Provide a flexible, relevant curriculum.
- Support pupils with SEN.

- Maintain effective communication between staff, HSCL, and Principal.
- Provide attendance rewards.
- Monitor attendance and implement tiered supports.
- Engage EWO where required.
- Record daily attendance on the school MIS system.
- Maintain awareness of attendance patterns for their class.
- Monitor lateness and early collections.
- Contact parents regarding unexplained absences
- Implement interventions for emerging attendance issues.
- Identify pupils requiring tiered supports and notify HSCL/post holder.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians will:

- Ensure children attend daily and arrive on time. School opens at 8:50am. Pupils must be in class by 9:00am.
- Communicate absences promptly. All absences must be explained via Aladdin or written note.
- Communicate explanations for lateness. Should a child be late (any time after 9:00am), parents must sign the 'Sign In' book at reception or explanation must be provided a written note. Patterns of lateness will be monitored and may be reported to the EWO. Parents will be contacted where patterns of absence or lateness occur.
- Work with the school, HSCL, and EWO to resolve issues. Continued concerns will be referred to the EWO.
- Avoid holidays during school time. Holidays during school time cannot be authorised.
- Engage with supports offered under DEIS/MD-MTSS.
- Arrange appointments e.g. dental/GP outside school hours when possible.
- Promote good school attendance by:
 - Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
 - Encouraging them to participate in school activities.
 - Praising and encouraging their children's achievements.
 - Instilling in their children, a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.

Responsibilities of Pupils

Pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and on time.
- Inform staff of issues affecting attendance.
- Participate in attendance initiatives.
- Deliver school communications to parents.

5. Three-Tiered Approach to Attendance

Tier 1 – Support for All (Universal Supports)

Whole-school approaches that benefit every pupil and family.

Positive School Culture & Relationships

- Build warm, consistent, trauma-sensitive classroom environments.
- Ensure strong relationships between teachers, SNAs, pupils, and families.
- Promote a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere for pupils in all and special classes.

Clear Attendance Expectations

- Communicate attendance expectations annually through newsletters, website, parent meetings.
- Provide simple explanations of attendance targets (e.g., “Every Day Counts”).
- Display attendance information in child-friendly formats.

Engaging Teaching & Learning

- Prioritise active, hands-on, differentiated instruction to promote enjoyment.
- Regularly review classroom routines to ensure accessibility for pupils with SEN.
- Offer engaging morning activities to motivate punctuality.

DEIS Attendance Actions

- Implement whole-school attendance targets as part of DEIS plan.
- Share progress with staff, pupils, and families.

Positive Recognition

- Class-level rewards for improved attendance.

- Certificates or assemblies celebrating consistent attendance (with sensitivity to individual circumstances).
- Non-competitive, low-pressure incentives (e.g., extra golden time for class milestones).

Consistent Communication

- Use Aladdin/TEXT system for reminders about school events and attendance.
- Provide translated or simplified communication for EAL families.

Inclusive School Events

- Host family-friendly events (e.g., morning cafés, open classrooms, stay-and-play sessions).
- Ensure events are accessible to pupils in special classes.

Tier 2 – Support for Some (Targeted Supports)

For pupils or families showing early signs of attendance difficulty (e.g., patterns of lateness, intermittent absences).

Early Identification & Monitoring

- Weekly review of attendance data by HSCL, Principal, SENCo.
- Track patterns (e.g., specific days, medical issues, transitions).

Targeted Communication

- Class teacher phones families after 3 unexplained absences.
- Send supportive, not punitive, messages: “How can we help?”
- Provide attendance information in personalised, family-friendly ways.

Support for Transitions

- Enhanced morning meet-and-greet for children with SEN or anxiety.
- Social stories or visual timetables for returning after absences.

In-School Supports

- Breakfast club/morning club to reduce lateness and provide routine.
- Sensory breaks, calm spaces, and predictable daily structure for pupils with SEN.

Group Interventions

- Small-group attendance monitoring programmes (e.g., “Sunshine Start/Sunshine Room”).
- Friendship or anxiety-reduction groups run by SEN team or HSCL.
- Parent workshops on routines, sleep, behaviour, and school readiness.

Targeted Incentives

- Individualised short-term attendance charts.
- Positive postcards home for improved attendance.

Strengthened Parent–School Partnership

- HSCL home visits or meetings to understand barriers (transport, morning routine, anxiety).
- Practical supports: uniform supplies, alarm clocks, after-school clubs.

Tier 3 – Support for a Few (Intensive / Individualised Supports)

For pupils with significant, ongoing or chronic attendance issues.

Individual Attendance Support Plans

- Develop personalised plans with Principal, HSCL, SENCO, class teacher, parents, and child.
- Identify root causes (anxiety, behaviour, SEN needs, family issues, transport).
- Agree clear, small, achievable steps and review weekly.

Intensive Family Support

- Regular HSCL home visits.
- Multi-agency involvement where needed (social workers, disability services, family support workers).
- Offer wrap-around supports such as counselling, parenting support, or referrals.

Therapeutic & SEN Interventions

- Occupational therapy-informed sensory supports or regulation plans.
- 1:1 check-ins with trusted adult each morning.
- Anxiety-based school avoidance supports (graded exposure plans, predictable handovers).

Timetable Adjustments (Short-Term Only)

- Reduced or flexible timetable with a clear plan to return to full attendance.
- Staggered morning entry for pupils with high anxiety.
- Individual transition supports between special and mainstream classes.

Enhanced Monitoring & Reporting

- Daily attendance tracking and feedback to families.
- Engagement with Education Welfare Services (TESS) if attendance remains below threshold.

Intensive Positive Reinforcement

- Highly individualised reward systems aligned to child's motivators.
- Immediate reinforcement for arriving on time or staying the full day.

6. Transfer of Pupils

- Once a child has transferred from another school, a written letter must be sent to the previous school stating the child's name, PPS number and the date of enrolment to our school.
- Should a child leave this school, they cannot be taken off the school roll book until a letter from another school is received stating the child's name, PPS number and the date of enrolment to that school.
- Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, behaviour, academic records in the form of standardised tests results and attendance records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the new school, by post, with parental permission, should they be requested in writing by the new school.
- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought by formally writing and requesting same directly from the previous school.
- When transferring to a second level school, if requested, attendance and standardised tests will be sent to the school, once enrolment has been confirmed.

7. Retention of Pupils

In accordance with circular 32/03, children should only be allowed to repeat a year for "educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances". In such circumstances the principal

following consultation with SET teachers and the class teacher must keep a record outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain the child.

In addition, there should be a clear programme outlined for such pupils that records precisely what new approaches will be used for him/her and what its expected benefit will be. No pupil should repeat a grade more than once.

8. Monitoring & Review

- Attendance reported monthly to the Board of Management.
 - DEIS attendance targets reviewed termly.
 - Annual review of the policy informed by school data.
 - Feedback from pupils, staff, and parents included where appropriate.
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9. Success Indicators (see Attendance Strategy for specific criteria)

- Improved overall attendance rates.
- Reduction in chronic absenteeism.
- Increased parent engagement.
- Positive feedback from pupils and staff.

Board of Management Ratification

This policy is hereby ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde Primary School.

Signed: *Nichola Hogan* (Chairperson BOM)

Date: 5th November 2025