



St. Michaels House Grosvenor
School
Attendance Policy
2025

St Michaels House Grosvenor school, Leopardstown road, D18KR80

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School Roll no:18671A

1. Introduction

St Michaels House Grosvenor school is committed to providing a supportive, inclusive and safe learning environment that promotes regular school attendance while recognising the complex medical, emotional and family circumstances that may affect pupils attending a special school.

Regular attendance is essential for pupils' educational, social, emotional and therapeutic development. This policy aims to promote positive attendance in a flexible, understanding and child-centred manner.

2. Legislative and Policy Context

This policy is developed in accordance with:

- Education Act 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004
- National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) / Tusla Child and Family Agency guidelines
- Department of Education circulars and guidance
- The school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Code of Behaviour

3. Rationale

Regular attendance supports:

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- Learning and communication development
 - Social interaction and peer relationships
 - Consistency of routines and care
 - Emotional wellbeing and communication

St Michaels House Grosvenor school recognises that attendance must be balanced with the pupil's health, wellbeing and capacity to engage.

Aims of the Attendance Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote regular and meaningful attendance for all pupils
- Recognise the additional challenges faced by pupils with special educational needs
- Support families to overcome barriers to attendance
- Ensure accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- Fulfil statutory obligations in relation to attendance reporting
- Work collaboratively with Tusla Educational Welfare Services (EWS) when required
- To identify students who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems

4. School Day and Attendance Expectations

- The school operates from 9:00am to 2:40pm
- Pupils are expected to attend school every day the school is open, unless there is a valid reason for absence.
- Attendance expectations take account of:
 - Medical and therapeutic needs
 - Emotional wellbeing
 - Transport arrangements
 - Individual Education Plans (IEPs) / Student Support Plans

5. Recording Attendance

- Attendance is recorded daily using the school's official attendance system which is Aladdin.
- The **Attendance Register** is maintained in accordance with Department of Education requirements.
- Reasons for absences are recorded where provided by parents/guardians.

6. Absences

6.1 Acceptable Reasons for Absence

The school recognises that pupils may be absent for legitimate reasons, including:

- Illness or medical appointments. (Please see illness policy)
- Hospitalisation or recovery following treatment
- Therapeutic interventions
- Emotional or mental health needs
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional family circumstances

Parents/guardians are requested to notify the school as soon as possible regarding any absence.

6.2 Notification of Absence

- Parents/guardians should notify the school:
 - By phone, email, Dojo, Aladdin, or written note.
- On return to school, a written explanation may be required.

7. Managing Attendance Concerns

The school adopts a **supportive and graduated approach** to attendance concerns.

7.1 Early Intervention

Where attendance becomes a concern, the school may:

- Contact parents/guardians to discuss concerns
- Explore underlying reasons for non-attendance
- Adjust school supports or routines
- Involve the class teacher, SEN team, or school leadership

7.2 Supportive Strategies

Strategies may include:

- Organising special transport for those who require this
- Employing bus escorts to ensure a safe and comfortable journey to and from school
- Creating a warm and welcoming environment for students each day
- Providing a varied and interesting specialist curriculum where each child can experience success
- Flexible or phased attendance plans
- Adjusted timetables
- Increased therapeutic support
- Collaboration with external professionals
- Regular review meetings with parents/guardians

8. Role of Tusla Educational Welfare Services (EWS)

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000:

- The school is required to notify Tusla EWS when:
 - A pupil has been absent for **20 days or more** in a school year
 - Attendance remains a serious concern despite school interventions

The school will inform parents/guardians before making a referral and will continue to work collaboratively to support the pupil's return to regular attendance.

9. Transport and Attendance

The school acknowledges that transport issues may affect attendance. Where concerns arise:

- The school will liaise with parents/guardians
- Where appropriate, communication may occur with the school transport provider, bus inspector, CIE and Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO)
- Attendance concerns related to transport will be addressed sensitively

10. Responsibilities

10.1 Board of Management

- Approves and reviews the Attendance Policy
- Ensures compliance with legislative requirements
- To support the school community to promote attendance and participation.

10.2 Principal

- To forward applications for school transport to NCSE in advance of students starting school.
- To make applications to NCSE for changes of address for current students as appropriate / necessary.
- To seek the necessary supports to ensure that students are supported in school (appropriately qualified staff, nurses, SNAs, etc)
- To provide school calendar to parents to allow them plan for school breaks
- To communicate concerns to the Education Welfare Officer and work with him/her towards resolving any difficulties a student may be experiencing
- To engage with the clinical team where concerns arise
- To inform parents if a report is being made to the TUSLA.
- To keep BOM informed of attendance issues.
- Maintain the school records and retain copies of all reports to TUSLA.

10.3 School Staff

- Promote positive attendance
- Monitor and record attendance accurately via Aladdin
- Communicate concerns promptly to the Principal/Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

10.4 Parents/Guardians

- Ensure their child attends school regularly where possible
- Communicate absences and concerns promptly to the class teacher/school office via email, phone, Dojo or Aladdin.
- As many students depend on school transport to bring and collect them from school, parents are asked to have the child ready in the morning and to be available to receive their child in the afternoon.
- Where students use public transport or other means to come to school, parents are asked to ensure they are punctual but not to arrive too early as no supervision is available before 9.00 am.
- Engage with the school to support attendance.

10.5 Students

- Students are encouraged to participate fully in school life and adhere to school rules.
- They are encouraged to discuss any problems they may have in school with staff or parents.

11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or school circumstances.

Date Ratified: 14/1/26
Date of Review: 14/1/27.
Signed: [Signature]
Chairperson, Board of Management

