



## BANDONBRIDGE NATIONAL SCHOOL

# Policy and Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

*Updated to incorporate the National School Attendance Campaign and the Anseo attendance framework*

### ATTENDANCE HERO

Here • Every day • Ready • On time

|                                            |                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date ratified by Board of Management       | 02/09/2017                                                                                            |
| Date policy reviewed and updated           | 31/01/2024                                                                                            |
| New policy ratified by Board of Management | 13/02/2024                                                                                            |
| Current update                             | September 2026                                                                                        |
| Date of next review                        | The policy will be reviewed as legislation changes.<br>The statement of strategy is written annually. |

## Introductory Statement

This Statement of Strategy was formulated initially in consultation with the staff, parents/guardians and Board of Management of Bandonbridge N.S., following Tusla guidance. **Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000** requires the Board of Management of a recognised school, following consultation, to prepare a statement of strategies and measures designed to foster an appreciation of learning and encourage regular school attendance.

*“the board of management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the principal of, teachers teaching at, parents of students recognised at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to, that school, prepare and submit to the Board of Tusla a statement of strategies and measures it proposes to adopt for the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending that school and encouraging regular attendance at school on the part of such students”*

**This policy was reviewed during 2023/24 under the National School Attendance Campaign.** The school continues to review its attendance strategy annually as part of its attendance planning and Board oversight. This 2026 update also reflects the Department of Education and Youth/Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) National School Attendance Campaign, launched nationally in September 2025, and the Anseo evidence-based attendance framework.

## Rationale

In Bandonbridge N.S. we endeavour to foster good school attendance by promoting a positive image of school and education, highlighting the work of Tusla/TESS, and ensuring parents/guardians understand their responsibilities in relation to attendance. The wellbeing of every pupil is central to our school motto, mission statement, values and ethos. Attendance and punctuality are monitored daily so that emerging difficulties can be identified early, families can be supported and the school can meet its statutory and safeguarding responsibilities.

The National School Attendance Campaign reinforces a simple message: when children miss school, they miss learning, social development, friendships and valuable time with teachers. The campaign also emphasises that occasional or casual absences can accumulate quickly. Bandonbridge N.S. therefore treats attendance as a whole-school, whole-family and whole-community responsibility, while recognising that some pupils experience genuine barriers that require compassionate, individualised support.

## Aims

- To ensure the wellbeing of all pupils in our school community.
- To foster an appreciation of learning and recognise that regular attendance is vital to maintaining momentum and consistency.
- To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance and punctuality.
- To enhance the learning environment so that children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To promote positive attitudes to learning among pupils and parents/guardians.
- To implement rules, recognition and supports fairly and consistently in ways that encourage attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of persistent or chronic absence and intervene positively and early.
- To identify pupils at risk of early school leaving and support attendance, participation and retention.
- To support the learning of medically certified High-Risk pupils during pandemics or comparable events where distance learning is required.
- To comply with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and relevant Department/Tusla guidance and to make parents/guardians aware of their statutory duties.
- To use attendance data at pupil, class and whole-school level to identify patterns and select proportionate, evidence-informed responses.

- To strengthen pupils' connection, belonging and positive experience of school, recognising these as important protective factors for attendance.

## What is Good Attendance?

Bandonbridge N.S. uses the following attendance bands to support early identification and intervention. These bands also align naturally with the three-tier approach promoted through Anseo.

| Category                          | Definition                                            | Days absent         | Anseo response                              |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Satisfactory / Regular Attendance | In school more than 95% of the time                   | No more than 9 days | Tier 1 – universal promotion and prevention |
| At Risk of Chronic Absence        | In school more than 90% but less than 95% of the time | 10–18 days          | Tier 2 – early, targeted support            |
| Chronic Absence                   | In school less than 90% of the time                   | More than 18 days   | Tier 3 – intensive, individualised support  |

## The Anseo Framework and National Attendance Campaign

Anseo is an evidence-based, actionable attendance tool developed by TESS and the Department of Education and Youth. Following a successful trial in four schools in 2023–2024, a phased national rollout began in 2025. The framework supports schools to examine attendance at pupil, class and whole-school level, identify patterns and drivers of absence, and respond in a timely and proportionate way.

Bandonbridge N.S. will use the principles of Anseo and has established a School Attendance Team who will meet regularly to analyse school attendance data, plan strategies to promote regular school attendance and work with the other school committee to ensure a cohesive approach to school attendance monitoring and promotion across the school community.. Attendance data will be reviewed regularly and responses will be organised across three tiers:

| Tier               | Who?                                                               | Purpose                                                              | Examples at Bandonbridge N.S.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tier 1 – Universal | All pupils and families                                            | Build a strong culture of attendance and prevent problems developing | Warm welcomes; Attendance HERO; clear family messages; engaging curriculum; belonging and wellbeing; punctuality routines; attendance celebrated without stigmatising unavoidable absence; school calendar; induction; attendance information.                               |
| Tier 2 – Targeted  | Pupils showing emerging patterns or at risk of chronic absence     | Identify barriers early and provide focused support                  | Teacher/parent conversation; attendance check-ins; pupil voice; short-term attendance plan; achievable targets; recognition of improvement; review of patterns such as particular weekdays, subjects, test days or lateness; support from SET/other staff where appropriate. |
| Tier 3 – Intensive | Pupils with chronic, complex or persistent attendance difficulties | Provide coordinated, individualised intervention                     | Principal-led attendance support plan; regular family meetings; multi-agency collaboration; EWO/TESS referral where appropriate; consideration of wellbeing, additional needs and family                                                                                     |

|  |  |  |                                                           |
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|  |  |  | circumstances; frequent review and reintegration support. |
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The national campaign message, “Every School Day is a New Day”, will inform school communications. The emphasis is on encouragement, fresh starts and practical support: a pupil returning after absence is welcomed positively, and improvement is recognised rather than focusing only on perfect attendance.

## Guidelines and Attendance Procedures

- As stated in the Bandonbridge N.S. Code of Behaviour and in accordance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, parents/guardians are expected to communicate promptly with the school when a child is absent. On the morning of an absence, parents/guardians may phone, text, email or use Aladdin.
- All absences and reasons must subsequently be completed by parents/guardians using Aladdin. In the case of illness, parents/guardians should outline the nature of the illness. Where possible, the school should be informed in advance of absence for a family event such as a wedding or funeral.
- School hours are 8:45 a.m.–1:25 p.m. for Junior and Senior Infants and 8:45 a.m.–2:25 p.m. for all other classes. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded on Aladdin. Absence of more than half a school day (2 hours and 50 minutes) is recorded as a full-day absence.
- Family holidays should not be taken during term time and are not considered a valid reason for absence. Permission to remove children from school for family holidays must be sought from the Principal. Teachers will not provide school work for pupils absent due to a holiday.
- Other than HSE appointments, parents/guardians should, where practicable, arrange appointments outside school hours.
- Pupils who have been absent for 20 consecutive school days may be removed from the school roll in accordance with applicable requirements, and relevant information will be communicated to Tusla.
- Reduced School Days will be used only where limited, appropriate and absolutely necessary, in line with Department of Education guidance. Required notifications/referrals will be made to Tusla and the SENO where a pupil accesses a reduced school day for a short period.
- The school must report to the Educational Welfare Service where a child has missed 20 or more school days in a school year, and may seek advice or make a referral where attendance is irregular, unexplained or otherwise a cause for concern.
- The school will comply with notification requirements relating to suspension and expulsion.
- Attendance concerns will be approached in a child-centred and supportive manner. The school will seek to understand the reasons behind absence or reluctance and work collaboratively with the pupil, family and relevant services.

## Whole-School Strategies to Promote Attendance

- The staff endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment where pupils are encouraged to do their best, participate without fear of failure, feel valued and experience inclusion in classroom activities and playground games.
- The curriculum, insofar as practicable, is flexible and relevant to individual needs. Enriching activities include VEX Robotics, Lego Spike, Junior Entrepreneur Project, Cór Fhéile na Scol, Lifetime Lab workshops, sports blitzes and competitions, carol singing, church services, concerts, Science Blast, field trips, fundraising and other school initiatives.
- All staff promote self-esteem and self-worth in line with the school Ethos Statement, Code of Behaviour and Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy.
- The Wellbeing Committee meets regularly to consider wellbeing across the school community.
- Teachers promote positive mental health through SPHE, mindfulness, Active School activities, movement breaks and other approaches that can strengthen regulation, connection and engagement.

- Close home-school relationships are supported through the Parents Association, Parent-Teacher meetings, Support Teaching meetings, Aladdin, newsletters, social occasions and informal conversations.
- The school website and blog celebrate learning and school life in a positive, life-affirming way.
- An annual Open Evening is held for prospective families, together with an induction meeting for incoming Junior Infants and/or their parents/guardians.
- Additional support is provided for pupils with special educational needs or EAL needs in accordance with Department of Education and NCSE guidance.
- Attendance will be promoted and recognised throughout the year. Recognition may include class or individual acknowledgement, certificates, celebration of improvement, attendance challenges and other age-appropriate incentives. Recognition will be inclusive and sensitive to pupils whose unavoidable absences arise from illness, disability or other significant circumstances.
- The school calendar is shared with families and is available on the school website. Changes are communicated by email, newsletter, text or other appropriate means.
- Teachers will make early, appropriate contact with parents/guardians where attendance begins to cause concern. A supportive incentive or attendance plan may be used at the teacher's discretion.
- For repeated absence, especially where reasons are unclear or not illness-related, the Principal may invite parents/guardians to a meeting. If concerns persist, the Principal may seek advice from or refer to TESS/Educational Welfare Services and will communicate this to parents/guardians.
- Each pupil's annual attendance is recorded on the end-of-year report as a proportion of the school year. Relevant attendance information is included in the 6th Class School Passport for transfer to post-primary school.
- The Principal will report to the Parents Association AGM each autumn on attendance levels in the preceding school year.
- The school will identify pupils at risk of developing attendance difficulties and act early. Serious concern may arise where a pupil is missing approximately one day each week/fortnight, where a pattern is unexplained, or where absence is increasing.
- Attendance data will be reviewed for patterns across days, classes, terms and groups. The school will consider whether school-based factors such as transitions, particular subjects, assessment days, peer relationships, anxiety, learning difficulty or punctuality routines may be contributing.
- Pupil voice will be used, where appropriate, to understand barriers and identify what helps a pupil feel safe, connected and ready to attend.
- Returning pupils will receive a warm welcome and a fresh start. Staff will avoid shaming or public questioning about absence.
- Key attendance messages from the National School Attendance Campaign will be shared periodically with families, including the cumulative impact of occasional missed days and the importance of attending whenever a child is well enough to do so.

## Graduated Response to Attendance Concerns

| Stage                  | Indicator                                                            | School response                                                               | Family/pupil partnership                                         | Review                                             |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Universal / Tier 1     | All pupils; satisfactory attendance                                  | Daily monitoring; welcoming culture; clear expectations; attendance promotion | Regular communication; explain absences; punctual arrival        | Whole-school data reviewed at least termly         |
| Early concern / Tier 2 | Emerging pattern; 10–18 days; repeated lateness; unexplained pattern | Class teacher/Principal review data and possible                              | Discuss barriers and strengths; agree realistic short-term goals | Normally 4–6 weeks, or sooner if concerns escalate |

|                     |                                                       |                                                                                                                        |                                                     |                                                        |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                     |                                                       | triggers; supportive contact; targeted plan                                                                            |                                                     |                                                        |
| Persistent / Tier 3 | Chronic absence; >18 days; 20+ days; complex barriers | Individual attendance support plan; Principal oversight; multi-agency support; TESS/EWO advice/referral as appropriate | Regular meetings; pupil voice; coordinated supports | Frequent review with documented actions and next steps |

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Teachers and SNAs:** Create a welcoming, positive atmosphere; greet pupils; welcome pupils back after absence; promote belonging and engagement; notice changes in attendance, punctuality or presentation; share concerns appropriately.

**Class Teachers:** Complete roll call and record absences on Aladdin; record reasons received; retain relevant absence communications; identify patterns and discuss concerns with parents/guardians and the Principal; consider possible triggers such as test days, bullying, academic difficulty, peer exclusion or particular subjects; address attendance at Parent-Teacher/Support Teaching meetings; monitor repeated lateness.

**School Secretary:** Monitor absences; upload absence messages to Aladdin; record late arrivals and early departures; check that reasons/notes have been received and follow up where necessary; monitor pupils identified as at risk; alert the Principal as statutory reporting thresholds approach or are reached.

**Support Teachers:** Contribute to attendance support where pupils in their care experience barriers linked to learning, language, additional needs, wellbeing or school engagement. Attendance is recorded on pupil support plans and review documents.

**Parents/Guardians:** Ensure children attend school regularly and punctually; explain absences; communicate concerns early; engage with school supports; promote a positive view of school and learning; avoid term-time holidays.

**Pupils:** Attend regularly and on time where able; engage with learning and school life; tell a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult; contribute to attendance plans where appropriate.

**Principal:** Lead attendance monitoring and annual strategy review; submit required reports to Tusla/TESS; contact families in serious cases; liaise with the EWO and relevant agencies; oversee Tier 2 and Tier 3 plans; ensure data is used to identify trends and evaluate actions; oversees the Anseo meetings and communicates its finding with the wider school community.

**Board of Management:** Ratify and review the policy and annual attendance strategy; maintain oversight of attendance and absenteeism; consider school practices that may contribute to attendance difficulty; support strategies that improve attendance, participation, wellbeing and retention.

**Educational Welfare Officer / TESS:** Provide advice, guidance and child-centred support; liaise with families, pupils, school personnel and relevant services; respond to referrals and support resolution of attendance problems.

The school maintains contact, as appropriate, with Tusla Social Services and EWOs, NEPS, SENO, Primary Care Services, Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT), CAMHS, local clergy, Community Gardaí, therapists and counselling services, and relevant local community and interest groups.

## Transfer, Enrolment and Removal from Roll

The Principal will remove a child's name from the Primary Online Database/roll only in accordance with applicable requirements, including where written confirmation is received that the child is registered in a new school or where Tusla confirms registration for home education. When a pupil transfers from Bandonbridge N.S., the Principal will provide the receiving school with relevant information concerning attendance and educational progress as appropriate. The exception relating to a pupil absent for 20

consecutive school days will be managed in accordance with current statutory and Department/Tusla requirements.

## Annual Attendance Strategy and Targets

Each school year, Bandonbridge N.S. will translate this policy into a short annual attendance action plan. The plan will be informed by Aladdin attendance data and the Anseo three-tier model. It will identify the school's baseline, priority cohorts or patterns, measurable targets, selected strategies, responsible personnel and review dates.

| Priority               | Baseline           | Target                       | Actions                                                                  | Lead                       | Review date   |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Reduce chronic absence | Insert annual %    | Set annual measurable target | Tier 1 promotion + Tier 2/3 case support                                 | Principal / staff          | Termly        |
| Reduce at-risk cohort  | Insert annual %    | Set annual measurable target | Early identification; family contact; short plans; celebrate improvement | Class teachers / Principal | 6-week cycles |
| Improve punctuality    | Insert annual data | Set annual measurable target | Monitor late patterns; family communication; morning welcome routines    | Secretary / teachers       | Termly        |

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- Attendance and punctuality data will be monitored daily through Aladdin and reviewed at pupil, class and whole-school level.
- The Principal and staff will review the effectiveness of attendance strategies during the year, with particular attention to movement between the satisfactory, at-risk and chronic absence bands.
- The school will evaluate not only overall attendance but also whether targeted pupils are improving, whether barriers have reduced and whether pupils/families report stronger connection and support.
- Attendance information will inform annual planning, Board oversight and communication with the Parents Association.
- The Statement of Strategy will be reviewed annually and the full policy will be reviewed as required by legislation, guidance, changing school needs or Board decision.

## Board of Management Oversight

In ratifying and reviewing this policy, the Board of Management will remain mindful of:

- The identification of aspects of school operation, management or curriculum provision that may contribute to attendance problems for particular pupils.
- Strategies to remove or reduce such barriers where this is compatible with the proper and effective running of the school and the educational and wellbeing needs of pupils.
- Strategies that encourage more regular attendance and strengthen participation, belonging and retention.
- The need to review the strategy as the school population, attendance data, legislation and national guidance evolve.

## Ratification and Communication

This policy will be made available to the school community through the school's usual communication channels and policy section of the school website. Staff will familiarise themselves with the policy, annual attendance priorities and relevant procedures at the beginning of each school year.

## Key Resources and References

- [Department of Education and Youth – School Attendance campaign and resources](#)
- [Tusla/TESS – National School Attendance Campaign and Anseo resources/webinars](#)
- [Tusla – School Attendance / Educational Welfare Service](#)
- [Tusla – Guidelines for Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance](#)
- [Department of Education – Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools](#)
- [Tusla/TESS – Five Year Plan for School Attendance 2023–2028](#)
- [Tusla/TESS – Every School Day Counts resources](#)

Policy note: National attendance guidance and legislation may change. The school will apply the most current statutory requirements and Department/Tusla guidance where these supersede wording in this policy.