1. **RATIONALE**
   Education in NSW is compulsory. All students from six years of age and under the minimum school leaving age of 17 are legally required to attend school. Regular attendance at schools is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

2. **AIM**
   This attendance policy aims to clearly articulate the responsibilities of the parents/carers and the school staff in regard to optimising student attendance.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION**
   The implementation of this policy will follow the directives as mandated in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Schools Office “Attendance K-12 Policy”. These directives will be implemented at St Patrick’s as follows:

   **3.1: Responsibilities**
   i. **Parents** are responsible for:
      a. Ensuring that their children attend school regularly.
      b. Explaining to the school the absences of their children promptly and within seven days of the absence.
      c. Taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.
   ii. **The school staff** is responsible for maintaining accurate records of student attendance across the school day.
   iii. **The principal** is responsible for:
      a. Ensuring that attendance records are maintained in accordance with the Diocesan approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.
      b. Establishing a system for signing out students who need to leave the school premises during school hours e.g. appointments.
      c. Investigating all cases of unsatisfactory attendance, including part- and full-day absences from school, and implementing appropriate intervention strategies.

   **3.2: Documentation**
   i. Teachers’ electronic rolls must reflect the highest professional standards in complying with BOSTES requirements.
   ii. Parents are required to complete a “late arrival” slip if their child arrives at school after 9.00am. The student takes the slip of paper to their class teacher, who uses the information on the slip to record in the roll the time of arrival and the attendance code.
   iii. Parents are required to complete an “early dismissal” slip if they are collecting their child before 2.55pm. The slip is given directly to the child’s teacher who uses the information on the slip to record in the roll the time of departure and the attendance code.
   iv. At the beginning of each week, unexplained absences from the previous week will be followed up as follows: A transcript of any unexplained absences from the previous week will be sent home to parents. The parents are required to write the reason for the absence(s) onto the transcript and to return it to their child’s teacher by Monday of the following week. If the reason given is considered to be reasonable, the teacher will amend the records to show that the child had leave of absence on that day/s.

3.3: **Following up on absences**
Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school-based strategies, including:
   i. Student and parent interviews
   ii. Reviewing the appropriateness of the student’s educational program
   iii. Development of a school-based attendance improvement plan
   iv. Referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies
v.  Support from school-based personnel

4. **BUDGET**
   The school will make provision each year in its annual budget for implementing this attendance policy.

5. **EVALUATION**
   As part of the school policy review and development cycle, the attendance policy will be reviewed by the staff, or a committee, every three years.