

Scoil Mháthair Dé
Roll No. 18677M

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

1. Introduction

Section 22 (1) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 describes the Statement of Strategy as: “A statement of the strategies and measures the school proposes to adopt for the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending the school and encouraging regular attendance at school on the part of such students.”

2. Relationship to School’s Mission Statement

Good attendance is promoted in Scoil Mháthair Dé by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for their own learning and achieve their full potential through regular presence as they progress through each class level.

3. Rationale

- To ensure the care and welfare of our students
- To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process
- To ensure that students benefit fully from the opportunities that the school offers them
- To ensure that all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance
- To ensure the school fulfils its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant Acts. Under the Act, the Education Welfare Boards have been established to oversee school attendance nationwide and each school has been assigned an Education Welfare Officer whose duty it is to liaise with the school in relation to any attendance problems that may emerge.

4. Goals

- To develop a positive approach to attendance and punctuality
- To keep accurate records of students at all times during school hours
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance
- To help parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child’s school attendance
- To reduce the rate of absenteeism for full days and partial days
- To facilitate the early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance
- To encourage full participation in class.

5. How attendance will be monitored

- Aladdin is used to record and monitor attendance and punctuality in every class throughout the day
- An automatic text is sent vial Aladdin Connect indicating absence to parents when the Rolla is taken in each class before 9.30am
- The class teacher records the late absence of students who arrive late to school. The class teacher will enter that student as LATE on Aladdin. If they have previously been marked as absent this is to be changed to LATE.

- Students who leave school during the day due to illness or appointments can only do so with the permission of a parent/guardian. An early exit note re his/her absence is signed by both parent and school authority in the school office. Aladdin will be amended accordingly
- Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by the administrative staff as school activity. The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names and prior to departure provides a copy of the list to Reception. If a student is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the administrative staff of same.

6. **A positive approach to attendance and punctuality**

- Good attendance is promoted in Scoil Mháthair Dé by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for their own learning and achieve their full potential through regular presence in class
- Students are made aware of the importance of being at school every day for their learning and the implications of irregular attendance during collective assemblies.
- Posters are displayed in prominent positions highlighting that “Every Day Counts. Every Class Counts”.
- Senior school management meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue.
- Reports to parents/guardians include a detailed breakdown of attendance from Aladdin for the period in question.
- Records of attendance and punctuality are available to view on Aladdin by class teacher, senior management, administration, parent/guardian, by logging in using their unique password for that student.
- The school’s reward system acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality by using the template certificates for unbroken attendance, improved attendance and consistent attendance from Tusla.
- A sense of belonging and connectedness in school is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities.

7. **Responding to poor attendance**

In order to improve poor attendance the following strategies are implemented:

- Contacting parents (usually by the Principal) on an informal basis when a student is absent regularly in order to begin a dialogue about attendance
- Tracking of students through the Student Support Team
- Assigning of a staff mentor if considered beneficial
- Contacting the Educational Welfare Officer for advice
- Positive reinforcement of good or improving attendance. Every effort is made to re-engage students who are working to improve their attendance.
- Providing teachers with information as to which students are particularly at risk of developing attendance problems through appropriate updates at meetings at the beginning of the school year.
- When the school has exhausted all efforts and there is no improvement in attendance, a referral will be made to Tusla’s Education Welfare Services.

8. School Roles in relation to attendance

Principal:

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students
- To monitor attendance records regularly
- To make reports to the Educational Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- To inform the Principal of another primary school of an inter-school transfer
- The Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:
 - A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than 6 days
 - The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is 20 days or more
 - A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the Principal
 - A student is, in the opinion of the Principal, not attending school regularly.
- To inform parents/guardians of procedures for the notification of absences or the withdrawal of students from the school.
 - To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.
 - To submit the four reports to the NEWB.

Deputy Principal:

- To work in cooperation with the Principal, Class Teachers, Administration School Secretary and Attendance Officer to implement the school policy.
- To liaise with the Class Teacher, Support Staff and Parents to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance
- To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance.
- To ensure that all staff complete Rolla as required

Class Teachers:

- To monitor regularly the attendance records on the Aladdin system for the given class.
- To raise issues regarding attendance regularly with parents
- To liaise with the SETs to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance.
- To meet, along with the Principal, parents of those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue.
- To remind the pupils collectively during assemblies of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- To reward students who have excellent attendance/punctuality or who have made significant improvements to same.

Class Teacher:

- To record the attendance of every class every day on eRolla on Aladdin.
- If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually on paper and submit to the school Secretary.
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance, insist on punctuality and record those who are late for class on Aladdin.

- Acknowledge students, welcome them back and support them on their return to school. Teachers will ensure that students will complete work that they have missed by their absence from school.
- To check absence notes from parents/guardians and to store these safely for the duration of the year.
- To liaise with the Principal in the event of absences not being explained or where any other problems may arise in relation to attendance.

Parents/Guardians:

Educational achievements and personal development are enhanced by parent engagement and support for the school. Parents are asked:

- To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities to ensure that their child is attending a recognised school on every day that the school is open. (Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the Principal (Section 21(9) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Therefore the school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time.
- To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unnecessary absences and where possible to arrange elective appointments outside of school time.
- To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school.
- To inform the Principal in advance of any planned absences from school.
- To provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers which we record and update on Aladdin.
- To adhere to the procedures set out in the Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
- To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.

Student:

To punctually attend school every day unless there is a valid reason for not doing so.

- Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation in the designated section of the School Journal on the day of return to class to your Class Teacher.
- If arriving late for school, the class teacher will enter that student as LATE on Aladdin. If they have previously been marked as ABS this is to be changed to LATE.

Administrative Staff:

- To input attendance data from Class Teachers when required.
- In conjunction with the Principal to submit the four reports to the NEWB.
- To administer the signing in and signing out of students (hard copy).
- Running regular reports as required.
- Emailing teachers with queries re attendance.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board of Management will monitor the policy in consultation with the Principal and teaching staff, the Parents' Association and the Student Council.

Success criteria will include:

- Improved attendance rates

- Improved explanations for absence
- Improved timekeeping
- Improved communication with parents
- Improved engagement and appreciation of learning

10. **Review**

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and by the Board of Management.

11. **Ratification**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on March 10th 2020.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Donough A. Mulvey

Date: 10th 03rd 2020.