



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Coláiste na Sceilge Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Approved by Staff on 10 May 2017

Approved by Student Council on 19 May 2017

Approved by Parent Reps on May 2017

Approved by Board of Management on 1 June 2017

Name of school	Coláiste na Sceilge
Address	Valentia Rd, Cahersiveen, Co Kerry
Roll Number	76068N
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	The schools Mission Statement 'We Respect, We Care, We Learn We Develop , We belong' underpins the value the school has in regard to the promotion of good attendance. The school respects and cares about our students that we strive for good school attendance and provide appropriate interventions to enhance attendance. Good attendance is critical to a students' learning and development and to their sense of belonging to the school community.
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class.</p> <p>Students are expected to be in class at 9am every morning and to remain in school all day until 3:50 with the exception of Wednesday where school starts at 9.00am and finishes at 1:15</p> <p>The importance of attendance is communicated to parents and students through the student, on the school website, in the</p>

	<p>student journal, by the Year Heads, Care Team SPHE Department throughout the year and at Open Night/events and Parent-Teacher-Student meetings throughout the year.</p> <p>A sense of belonging and connectedness in school is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities.</p>
<p>How attendance will be monitored</p>	<p>All student are expected to be in class for the 9.00am roll call and again at 1:50pm for the afternoon roll call. Those student who arrive in after 9:00am will be recorded as late and be placed on lunch time detention unless a written explanation is signed by the parent/guardian in the student journal. All students arriving to school regardless of the reason for the lateness are required to sign in at the school office and go directly to class.</p> <p>Absence notes are submitted to the Year Head. He/she will subsequently amend the unexplained absence to absence explained on VSWare.</p> <p>Students who leave the school during the day due to illness or appointments must be collected by a parent/guardian at School Office and must then sign out. The signing out is inputted to VSWare by the Administration Staff.</p> <p>When that student returns to school they must sign back in at the School Office and the register will be amended by the Administration staff.</p> <p>The afternoon attendance is entered into VSWare at 1:50pm by the relevant Subject Teacher.</p> <p>Where students are absent from school for a school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by the Year head/organising teacher as school activity (SA). The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names on VSWare Groups and, prior to departure, confirms with the Deputy Principal that those listed are attending the event. If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Deputy Principal/Administration staff of same and attendance records will be amended accordingly.</p>
<p>Summary of the main elements</p>	<p>Target to decrease the number of whole school days missed by 5% by May 2018</p>

of the school's approach to attendance:

- Target setting and targets
- The whole-school approach
- Promoting good attendance
- Responding to poor attendance

Target to decrease the numbers of students suspended from school by 20% by May 2018

The whole school approach to promoting attendance:

All stake holders have been involved in the creation of the Statement of Strategy and Attendance & Punctuality Policy and this has formed the basis for the Statement of Strategy. It is agreed that everyone has a role to play in promoting attendance and punctuality. During 2016-17 The Positive Behaviour Liaison Team have focused on ways to promote school punctuality and attendance. The school has reviewed procedures for responding to poor attendance and these changes are reflected in the Statement of Strategy for Attendance and in the Code of Behaviour.

Promoting good attendance:

Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class.

Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance. This is also promoted through the Pastoral Care programme.

The school's reward system acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality eg by way of formal letters acknowledging good attendance in December and May, annual school award for best attendance in each year group, term draw for best attendance in each year group.

A sense of belonging and connectedness in school is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities.

Responding to poor attendance

The Year Head and/or member(s) of the Care Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue and contact parents regarding attendance.

	<p>Records of attendance and punctuality are available to parents to view on VSWare by logging in using the unique username and password.</p> <p>Reports to Parents/Guardians include a detailed breakdown of attendance for the period in question.</p> <p>Internal and external supports are utilised where possible to support student attendance and punctuality.</p>
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p>All student are expected to be in class for the 9.00am roll call and again at 1:50pm for the afternoon roll call. Those student who arrive in after 9:00am will be recorded as late and be placed on lunch time detention unless a written explanation is signed by the parent/guardian in the student journal.</p> <p>All students arriving to school regardless of the reason for the lateness are required to sign in at the school office and go directly to class.</p> <p>Absence notes are submitted to the Year Head. He/she will subsequently amend the unexplained absence to absence explained on VSWare.</p> <p>Students who leave the school during the day due to illness or appointments must be collected by a parent/guardian at School Office and must then sign out. The signing out is inputted to VSWare by the Administration Staff.</p> <p>When that student returns to school they must sign back in at the School Office and the register will be amended by the Administration staff.</p> <p>The afternoon attendance is entered into VSWare at 1:50pm by the relevant Subject Teacher.</p> <p>Where students are absent from school for a school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by the Year head/organising teacher as school activity (SA). The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names on VSWare Groups and, prior to departure, confirms with the Deputy Principal that those listed are attending the event.</p>

If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Deputy Principal/Administration staff of same and attendance records will be amended accordingly.

Strategy Content: Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

To make arrangements to check how the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance is being implemented and how it is working by facilitating staff representatives to report about how the strategy is working and to review progress towards attendance targets.

Are aware of the schools attendance targets and monitor the levels of attendance at each Board of Management meeting
Formal end-of-year review of the Statement of Strategy as part of the Board of Management's annual report on attendance (Section 21(6)(a)(b) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000) to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services and the Parent Association

Principal:

To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.

To put arrangements in place to monitor attendance records regularly.

To put arrangements in place to review the implementation of the School Attendance Strategy

Provides opportunities for staff to engage with the development and monitoring of the strategy

Initiates links with relevant bodies/agencies on school attendance issues

To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer/relevant bodies as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other subsequent Acts as required by any additional legal requirements.

To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences 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.

Facilitate mixed ability classes in so far as possible throughout the curriculum.

Deputy Principal:

To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Subject Teachers, Class Tutors , Administration Staff and to implement the School Policy.

To liaise with the Year Head and Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.

To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.

To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance.

Year Head:

To monitor daily the attendance records on the VSWare system for the given year group.

To amend on a weekly basis, the records on VSWare from absence unexplained (UNE) to absence explained (ABNR) where relevant. Make contact with parents/guardians in instances where students have failed to produce absence notes or where any other problems may arise in relation to attendance and punctuality.

Contact home in the case of a student being **absent for three consecutive days** where the school has not already received notification of absence.

To liaise with the subject teachers, Check and Connect Mentor, Care teams, SEN Team agencies as relevant to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance and to alert staff to patterns in attendance/punctuality and to put interventions in place.

To make contact with and arrange meetings with parents where attendance and punctuality issues have emerged.

To put in place additional supports for students such as a Check and Connect Mentor where there are resources to do so/ as appropriate

To meet, along with the Principal/Deputy Principal/Care/SEN Team/agencies as appropriate/parents those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue.

To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/ or when patterns of absences are developing and to notify the Principal/Deputy Principal to ensure attendance text alerts to parents are accurate. To phone parents/guardians after 5 absent days and to send a letter to **parents after 10 and 15 unexplained absences** as per the Tusla sample letters to parents 'Letter to parents regarding a child's absence where no contact has been made with the school.'

After 20 Days Absence: Letter regarding a child's absence where the school is concerned about a child's non attendance and the concern is being passed to Tusla- Child and Family Agency

Or Letter regarding a child's absence where the school is not concerned about the pattern of absences but where the child's name is being passed to Tusla- Child and Family Agency eg Where illness has caused an absence of 20 or more days.

To remind the students during the assemblies of the Year Group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

To conduct an attendance and punctuality audit at the end of each term and make reports to Tusla.

Use the merit system and other rewards to promote attendance in the year group. To issue good attendance, perfect attendance/most improved attendance letters in December and May.

To contact home to acknowledge excellent attendance to issue certificates of attendance as per the Tusla sample for Unbroken School Attendance Certificate

http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/cert_unbroken.pdf

Improvement in School Attendance

http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/cert_improvement.pdf

To run prize draws each term for best attendance in Year Group

To nominate for award the School Awards ceremony the student with the best attendance in the Year Group.

Where a student Signs Out the reason for absence is also recorded- Information regarding full and partial day absence is required where a student wishes to make DARE/ HEAR grant applications in 6th Year.

Teacher:

The teacher will record the attendance of every class every day on VSWare. This also includes recording attendance when substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave. The teacher will take attendance for that class using the VSWare system (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school).

The teacher will alert the Deputy Principal, in the first instance if there are concerns about a students' absence from your class in any class on any day. Alert the Principal/Year Head/Administration Office if the Deputy Principal is unavailable. Eg where a student was present earlier but is not present for your class- please contact the Deputy principal immediately.

The teacher will input the attendance for the first and seventh periods into the VSWare system at 9:00am and 1:50pm to allow text alerts to be sent home to parents as early as possible. If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually on paper and submit to the Deputy Principal in the first instance and to the School Office if the Deputy Principal is unavailable. The same applies to teachers substituting during these periods.

The teacher will impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality and actively use the schools Attendance Strategy to promote attendance.

The teacher will set high expectations for punctuality and attendance standards with students as part of the classroom rules

The teacher will set example by their own punctuality.

The teacher will provide a classroom climate and classroom management that supports participation and engagement

The teacher will liaise with the Year Head/Care team as early as possible where patterns of attendance/punctuality are evident.

The teacher will support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty attending school on a regular basis

The teacher will support students on return to school where they have missed periods of schooling. Teachers will liaise with the Year Head in advance. Teachers may privately acknowledge and affirm student efforts to attend school where it is appropriate to do so and mindful of not drawing attention to any attendance in cases where this in itself is an issue for students.

Teachers will follow up of any concerns regarding attendance/punctuality by carrying out an initial investigation and refer to Year Head if the student does not have a satisfactory explanation for absence from your class.

Where a teacher is withdrawing a student/group/organising a whole class event and taking students from their timetabled class it is the responsibility of the organising teacher to take accurate roll calls for these students and inform the teacher who would normally have the student at this time by record eg School Activity (SA) or Withdrawn (WD) as relevant, for the students removing from normal timetabled class.

Administration Role

- To administer the signing in and out of students on VSWare. The absence/Late/Sign Out together with the reason for the absence/Late/Sign out is recorded on VSWare

To input attendance data when required.
To work in conjunction with the Year Heads to submit the four reports to the NEWB.
The absence/Late/Sign Out together with the reason for the absence/Late/Sign out is recorded on VSWare

Parent/Guardian:

To set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality

To engage with the school by attending meetings with school personnel if there is a difficulty about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem

To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities. (Education Welfare Act 2000) Coláiste na Sceilge Attendance Statement of Strategy:

To ensure that their child regularly attends school for the full day and arrives to school on time

To ensure regular and punctual attendance and avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason. Where possible, to arrange appointments outside of school time e.g. Wednesday afternoons or during school holidays.

To avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.

To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school.

To inform the school in writing in advance of any planned absences from school.

To provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers.

To adhere to the procedures set out in this 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.

Signing out of school: Any student who needs to leave school early must be collected by a parent / guardian in instances where a note has not already been received by the school.

Student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises: In the event of a student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises the school must be notified immediately by Parent / Guardian.

Student:

	<p>To be in class on time</p> <p>To attend school for the full school day</p> <p>Returning to school after an absence-Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation to their Year Head in the School Journal on the day of return to school.</p> <p>Arriving to school Late-To go directly to the school office if arriving Late to school for any reason and then going directly to the class that is on at that time.</p> <p>Notes to Year Head-To give a Late note to the Year Head in instances where there is a genuine reason for lateness</p>
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	The Staff, Student Council, Parent's Association, KDYS and NBSS and Education Officer were consulted in relation to promotion of attendance and punctuality. The school's Positive Behaviour Team in association with the Parent's Council and Student Council and student body focused on ways to enhance the school building and grounds to encourage greater attendance.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	Year Heads will monitor Year Group attendance weekly and engage parents and students at earliest point where attendance issues arise. Staff, Parent and Student Focus groups will review the policy annually.
Review process and date for review	May 2018
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	1 June 2017
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	04/12/17