

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, co. Clare (61950W)

Mission Statement

"To foster the holistic development of each student in a supportive learning environment enabling all to live fulfilling lives"

Vision and Values

Scoil Mhuire aims to foster a culture of attendance for all it's students. A pattern of regular attendance contributes to the holistic development of each student in a supportive learning environment. The school has traditionally a very high level of attendance. In addition, our retention rate is very high with the vast majority of our students progressing to senior cycle and completing their Leaving Cert.

Expectations

Scoil Mhuire expects that each student:

- takes responsibility for her own learning to achieve her potential through regular attendance in class.
- is aware of the incremental nature of learning.
- is aware of the correlation between good attendance and educational achievement. Research has shown that poor attendance is directly linked to low educational achievement and early school leaving.
- is aware of the importance of punctuality for school and class. Punctuality is an important life skill and lateness has a negative impact on the schools teaching and learning environment.

The above expectations are communicated by all class teachers and by the Pastoral Care Team.

Approach to Attendance and Punctuality

- A broad-based curriculum caters for the needs of individual students of all ability levels subject to available resources.
- Reported cases of bullying, which can have a negative impact on school attendance, are dealt with promptly in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided.
- Supervised study and homework club (for 1st year students only) are available.
- A peer mentoring system is in place between TY students and 1st years.
- Scoil Mhuire acknowledges good attendance by awarding certificates at the end of the school year.
- There are established procedures for monitoring and recording attendance and punctuality on VSWare.
- Mandatory reports are submitted to Túsla in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Monitoring Attendance

- Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. The roll is verified electronically on VSWare.
- In the event of absenteeism a student is required, on her return to school, to submit a note/cert to the office explaining her absence. There are blank templates at the back of the student's journal to facilitate this.
- Punctuality
 - Students who arrive at school between 9 - 9.30am are required to report to the Secretary's office. The roll is amended and a late slip is issued to the student for presentation to the relevant teacher.
 - After 9.30am, students must proceed to class and the class teacher records the student as late on VSWare.
- A parent/guardian is required to sign out a student leaving the school during school hours.
- Absence for a school-related extra-curricular activity is recorded by the Secretary on VSWare as School Activity (SA). The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of

names and prior to departure, provides a copy of the list to both the Secretary and staffroom. If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Secretary.

- The school monitors students' absenteeism to ensure Túsla, the Child and Family Agency, is notified if required.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendance
- To monitor attendance records regularly
- To address students who are absent from school without permission
- To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of full or partial absences
- To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student's progress
- To liaise with the Pastoral Care Team regarding student's absences
- To provide mixed ability classes, in so far as possible, to promote equal opportunity
- To provide appropriate supports for students with special education needs

Deputy Principal

- To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Tutors, class teachers and administration staff to implement the Strategy for School Attendance
- To inform new teachers of their obligation with regard to recording attendance
- To liaise with the CBS regarding attendance in cooperating option subjects
- To check absence notes from parents/guardians and to store these safely
- To contact parents/guardians when unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/or when a pattern of absenteeism is developing
- To conduct an attendance audit at the end of each term and to contact parents/guardians to acknowledge excellent attendance and to raise concerns about poor attendance and punctuality
- To submit the mandatory reports to Túsla
- To conduct an end of year full analysis of attendance and a 5 year review

Year Head

- To regularly monitor the attendance records on VSWare
- To meet students who record regular absences or lates in order to discuss the issue and support them through positive interventions
- To liaise with the class tutors to address the issues surrounding a particular student's attendance
- To remind the students during assembly of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their own learning during absences and to complete missed assignments

Programme Co-ordinator

- To monitor attendance of students on work experience and to contact parents/guardians where concerns arise
- To notify administrative staff of any absences so that an accurate record of attendance is maintained

Class Tutor

- To promote regular attendance and liaise with the Year Head to address issues surrounding a particular student's attendance

Class Teacher

- To record the attendance in every class, including substitution classes on VSWare
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality
- To set a positive example by their own punctuality
- To acknowledge students, welcome them back and provide appropriate support following absence
- Teachers are required to investigate unexplained absence from class and take appropriate action. In some instances pastoral support is recommended

Parents/Guardians

- To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities (Education Welfare Act 2000)
- To ensure regular and punctual attendance and to avoid unnecessary absences. To arrange appointments outside of school times where possible
- To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school. In the case of a prolonged absence, and the student being under medical care, a letter or cert from the attending practitioner should be included.
- To communicate with the school during prolonged absences
- To inform the school in advance of any planned absences
- To adhere to the procedures set out in this strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day. Any student who needs to leave the school early must be signed out by a parent/guardian.
- To provide the school with contact telephone numbers
- To acknowledge and, where necessary, to reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues

Student

- To attend class punctually
- Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation to the office on the day of return to school
- To take responsibility for her own learning in relation to missed class work/assignments and to seek help if required

Administrative Staff

- To input attendance data from class teachers when required
- To text alert parents in the case of unexplained absence
- To administer the signing out of students
- To prepare school reports which include a report on the student's attendance and punctuality

Students with Special Education Needs

Scoil Mhuire recognises the particular challenges of students with special education needs in accessing the curriculum. Appropriate supports are provided including a reduced curriculum where necessary. The importance of regular attendance is highlighted frequently. A pastoral approach by all teachers is adopted when working with these students.

Partnerships

At the core of all relationships in the school is mutual respect and understanding, supported by good communication. Our Attendance Strategy works most effectively when there is good communication between all parties.

The school will work in partnership with parents/guardians, students, other schools, and youth and community groups to foster an appreciation of learning and to understand the importance of regular attendance in achieving student potential.

Monitoring the Strategy

The strategy will be monitored by analysing the end of year data in comparison with previous years. A full review of all roles and responsibilities will be conducted annually and amended as required.

Policy Ratified on: _____

Review Date: _____