



Scoil Eoin

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

September 2022

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School Name	Scoil Eoin
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Scoil Eoin

1. Introduction

The Board of Management of Scoil Eoin recognizes the clear and direct relationship between regular school attendance and pupil progress. High attendance is linked to pupils staying at school to complete and do well in secondary and third level education. Overall, good attendance engenders a positive attitude to school and learning (McCoy et al, 2007). The Board also recognizes the impact of poor attendance on wider aspects of a student's life, such as weak peer relationships, risks of engagement in anti-social activity and poor family relationships (Hibbett and Fogelman, 1990; Carroll, 2011).

In light of the fact that absenteeism is often a complex matter, the Board of Management, from the beginning, views each child in the context of his/her family and a holistic approach to improving attendance will be followed. By striving for greater understanding of the barriers faced by students and the supports and interventions that can be of help in ensuring students engage, participate and attend.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance are;

- promoting a positive learning environment
- promoting a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected
- facilitating children to have a voice in school matters
- encouraging full attendance where possible
- encouraging punctuality
- fostering an appreciation of learning
- raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- raising everyone's expectations of our school attendance
- ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- ensuring awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- identifying pupils at risk
- developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance
- rewarding good attendance and improvements in attendance

3. Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing children's potential in a caring, Catholic environment where the welfare and nurturance of each child is paramount.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy
- HSCL co-coordinator will engage with parents of pupils when evidence of poor attendance emerges as a pattern to provide practical steps to improve attendance
- Aladdin Connect Notices, phone calls, texts and/or emails will be issued to alert parents to attendance issues by instruction of Principal
- HSCL & SCP co-coordinator will meet bi-terminally to plan and evaluate programmes and services to improve attendance for those most at risk of leaving education early.
- Class teachers have the responsibility of recording daily individual attendance on Aladdin.
- The Principal has responsibility for making returns to TUSLA Child and Family Agency.
- The Principal will prepare a report on attendance for the Board of Management on a term basis or as the need arises.
- It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

5. Punctuality

- School begins at 8.50 am.
- All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time.
- Late arrival of pupils will be recorded on Aladdin by the class teacher
- The class teacher and/or HSCL will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late.
- The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late to TUSLA Child and Family Agency.

6. Recording Attendance

- The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the Aladdin administration software, on a daily basis. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher.
- The roll call is taken at 9.40 am each morning. Any pupil not present at this time will be marked absent for the day. If a pupil arrives late after this time, this is recorded on Aladdin by the class teacher. It is possible to view days marked as absent as a result of arrival after the roll was taken on Aladdin if required. Late arrivals and early departures are discouraged unless absolutely necessary.
- Attendance is monitored by the class teacher, and HSCL if necessary.
- Attendance records and statistics for each individual pupil is recorded on Aladdin.

7. Attendance Target for 2022-2025

- One of the priority areas of activity in our Deis Plan 2022-2025 is attendance.
- School Returns from 2021-2022 showed us that there was 84 pupils absent from school for more than 20 days. It must be noted that many of these absences were due to Covid-19 illness, symptoms and public health guidelines. This is an absenteeism percentage rate of 56% of pupils with 20 or more days of absence in the academic year 2021-2022.
- 32 pupils (21% of school pupils) were absent 40 or more days during the academic year 2021-2022.

- *Our aim is to decrease the absenteeism rate of our targeted pupils (those absent 40 or more days in 2021-2022) from 21% in 2021-2022 by 5% over three years in Year 1 (2022-2023), 2% in Year 2 (2023-2024) and 1% in Year 3 (2024-2025).*

8. Role of the School in Supporting School Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Providing afterschool clubs through SCP
- Providing breakfast from 8.30-8.50a.m.
- Tracking attendance through SCP provision of attendance officer
- Developing mutual trust and respect with students
- Holding high expectations of students' attendance
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- Collaborating in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils
- Early-intervention with personalised support (e.g. curricular incentive, targeted attendance chart, behaviour plan or mentoring) and engagement with families and their children
- Addressing personal (e.g. pupil conflict experiences, bereavement issues, consequences of homelessness, etc) and practical issues (e.g. access to health / mental health care)
- Inviting parents/guardians of new entrants to engage in school activities through HSCL
- Engaging parents of all pupils to be involved in some level of activity in the school
- Reminding Parents/Guardians of the importance of regular school attendance from Junior Infants onwards and the Board's obligations to report absences in the Principal's report at Board of Management meetings
- Publishing the calendar for the coming school year annually in June and publishing it on Aladdin. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- Involving parents in discussion and reflection about attendance
- Requesting parents to participate in reviews of attendance strategy
- Escalating the response by the school in proportion to the complexity of the child's needs
- Monitoring progress or lack of and noting when the threshold is met for a referral to TUSLA's Educational Welfare Services
- Providing end of term and annual awards for attendance
- Acknowledge good attendance in newsletters to parents

9. Role of Parents/Guardians in Supporting School Attendance

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- Working with the School and TUSLA Child and Family Agency to resolve any attendance problems
- Making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- Participating in and supporting school activities
- Praising and encouraging their children's achievements.

- Instilling in their children a positive sense of self-worth
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- Contacting the school if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters
- Notifying the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher

10. Role of TUSLA Child and Family Agency

TUSLA Child and Family Agency is informed if:

- A child is expelled for 6 days or more
- A child is suspended for 6 days or more
- A child has missed more than 20 days

TUSLA Child and Family Agency is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed online.

11. Communication with Other Schools

- Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school, via P.O.D. (Primary Online Database) that the child is now registered in their school.
- When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.
- When a child transfers into Scoil Eoin, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school via P.O.D., and appropriate records sought.

12. Communication with Parents

- Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA Child and Family Agency particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year.
- When a pupil has accumulated 10, 15 or 20 absences in any one school year, an Aladdin Connect notification informing the HSCL and principal is sent automatically. When a child has accumulated 15 days absence, the HSCL will make contact with the pupil's Parents/Guardians via Aladdin connect, phone call and/or home visit.
- The school is obligated to inform TUSLA Child and Family Agency of all pupils who accumulate an aggregate of 20 school days in any one school year.
- Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to contact the class teacher and HSCL via Aladdin connect, phone call or email to collaborate on attendance supports for the pupil.
- Parents are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.
- The class teacher, HSCL and Principal have responsibility for communications with Parents/Guardians regarding attendance.
- All pupil absence must be explained by the parents/guardians to the teacher using Aladdin Connect. If Aladdin Connect is unavailable, a phone call can be made to the school office or HSCL to explain the reason for absence. This message will be passed on to the class teacher and recorded in Aladdin.
- When such an explanation for absence is not provided, the class teacher will record this as an unexplained absence.

- Parents/guardians must also contact the school via Aladdin Connect if a child is late or needs to leave early during the school day. If Aladdin Connect is unavailable, the parent/guardian can contact the school office via phone call. Reason for late arrival or leaving early will be recorded on Aladdin.
- Attendance records and statistics are kept safely and securely on Aladdin only.

13. Evaluation

The success of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin records and statistics
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher observation and reports

14. Roles and Responsibilities

All stakeholders in the education of the pupils will take responsibility for implementing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance .

15. Review

The Statement of Strategy for School Attendance will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by representatives from the relevant sections of the school community and will be reviewed **every three years**.

Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the BOM of Scoil Eoin at its meeting on

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management