**Statement of Strategy for School Attendance- Scoil Chroí Íosa**

The Board of Management and staff are committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance.

The vast majority of pupils are punctual and are excellent attenders.  The management and staff hope to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in improving upon the current level of attendance and punctuality throughout the school year.

Procedures for recording attendance are laid out in the school’s Attendance Policy

Roll Call

* The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded daily by the class teacher via the Aladdin system.
* The class teacher records explained and unexplained absences and punctuality.
* The class teacher notifies the Principal of concerns regarding the attendance of any child and/or when the pupil reaches 20 days absence.

Reporting to the Board of Management

* The Principal provides an update on attendance annually to the School Board of Management.

Annual Attendance Reports

* The bi-annual attendance return to TUSLA is completed

**Targets for School Attendance**

* To review and update the school Attendance Policy.
* To raise awareness of attendance among management, staff, students and parents.
* To raise awareness of the vital role parents play in their child’s school attendance.
* To put in place strategies to ensure the early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance.
* To develop suitable intervention strategies to support individual students with poor attendance and their parents.
* To further develop working partnerships between the school and other relevant agencies and services.
* To raise awareness of strategies to minimise the spread of common illnesses within the school.
* To provide guidance to parents and staff on school absences arising from common illnesses.

**Whole School Approach**

* The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for the promotion and monitoring of attendance in the school.
* Management and staff work as a team with a consistent approach to attendance.
* Parents and students have opportunities to contribute to and take appropriate responsibility for attendance policy and strategy.

**Strategies for promoting good school attendance**

1. *Raising Awareness of Attendance*

The school recognises the importance of good attendance at the initial meeting for new parents.

* The Principal addresses the importance of good attendance at the initial meeting for new parents.
* Attendance is discussed at Board of Management, Staff and parent-teacher meeting.
* Records of attendance are provided on pupil end of year reports.
* Parents receive an update of their child’s attendance at the end of the school year or during the school year if the need arises
* Records of attendance are provided on a student’s Education Passport.
1. *Involving Parents in Setting High Expectations for Attendance*.

The school recognises that parental involvement is of paramount importance to students’ well-being and success in school generally and in particular their attendance at school.

Parental involvement is fostered by;

* Regular communication between parents and the school.
* Parental involvement in school life eg. Attendance at concerts, school events, HSCL organised events and classes, parent/teacher meetings.
* Opportunities for parents to review proposed policies.

*In addition to this;*

* The calendar for the coming year is published annually in the last term and a copy is distributed to all parents with the end of year report from the Board. Parents are encouraged to plan holidays and family events around school closures.
* The school highlights to parents how missed days can have a negative effect on the student’s achievement and thus cause stress.
1. *Providing Support Programmes to Enhance Attendance.*

The school endeavours to provide support programmes to promote attendance;

* Enrichment and sporting activities are provided. Enrichment and sporting activities such as the music programme (violin, guitar, drums, Colourstrings), Active School, Library, sensory garden and outdoor play areas, various sports eg basketball, soccer, self-defence etc
* Pupils are given opportunities to participate in decision making and to assume leadership roles in the school eg. The Active School Committee and Green Schools Committee, Library Advisory group etc
1. *Building Linkages with other Schools, Youth Organisations and Local Organisations.*

The HSCL scheme plays a huge role in fostering links with other educational providers, youth organisations and any local statutory and non-statutory organisations whose work could encourage participation and attendance. In conjunction with the School Completion Programme children who are at risk of poor punctuality, attendance and early school leaving are identified and targeted for supports and interventions.

* Working with other education providers to identify pupils transitioning to our school who may need additional supports.
* Working with post-primary schools to support attendance in transition from primary to post-primary school.
* Principals’ networks working on joint approaches to raising awareness about the importance of attendance, promoting attendance and sharing experience.
* The school identifies and supports students who may need additional support including pupils with special educational needs, students with health needs, students who have experienced bullying, students experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties.
* Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of pupils who may need additional support.
* The school curriculum, in so far as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
* The school promotes development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children through the School Wellbeing Framework

Support for pupils who have special educational needs are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.

**Responding to Poor Attendance.**

1. Monitoring attendance.

The attendance rates of individual pupils will be monitored by the class teacher, Principal and HSCL.

1. Engaging in early dialogue.
* School staff make every effort to engage in early dialogue with parents and students on attendance both informally and formally eg. Highlighting attendance patterns during Parent Teacher meetings, informal meetings and discussions at pick up and drop off, HSCL visits and meetings/phonecalls etc
* Parents are invited to meet with the Principal and or HSCL to formally discuss concerns about pupil absences and to put in place strategies to improve pupil attendance as required.
* Pupils with a poor attendance record will, in so far as is practical, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.
1. Using school-led multi-agency support process.
* Ongoing consultation between HSCL, SCP and the Principal is key to targeting individuals, challenges, solutions, communication etc
* The school also consults with relevant external personnel eg the National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S) and others who have a particular expertise to support students, families and the school with poor attendance
* The school works with social and child support services including Tusla – Child and Family Agency and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as well as child welfare organisations such as Barnardos.
1. Referral to Tusla’s Educational Welfare Service.

The school complies fully with reporting procedures to TUSLA and liaises with the education welfare officer when necessary.  Details of reporting are set out in the School Attendance Policy

*The Board of Management will*

* Play an active role in reviewing and developing the Statement of Strategy.
* Ensure that all the measures required to promote and support attendance, in line with the School Attendance Guidelines, are in place and set out in the Statement of Strategy.
* Approve the Statement of Strategy and submit it to Tusla’s Education Welfare Service.

*The School Principal will*

* Lead and guide the work on the Statement of Strategy.
* Promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff regulations.
* Make every effort to ensure that school identifies and supports students who may need additional support eg. Pupils with Special Needs.
* Engage in early dialogue with parents and students on attendance, both informally and formally
* Meet with parents to formally discuss concerns about pupil absences and to put in place strategies to improve pupil attendance, as required.
* Make every effort to implement support strategies for pupils with poor attendance in conjunction with class teachers, support and other agencies.
* Consult with National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.) and relevant external personnel who have a particular expertise to support students with poor attendance, when appropriate.
* Comply with reporting procedures to TUSLA and liaise with the educational welfare officer when necessary.
* Inform parents of a decision to contact the Educational Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil’s attendance and/or when a pupil has missed 20 days.
* Inform the Board of Management annually of the up to date information regarding attendance.
* Ensure that staff and the Parent Association (if any) are informed on attendance issues.
* Foster links with other schools in the area, youth organisations and any local organisations whose work could encourage participation and attendance.
* Ensure that accurate and comprehensive attendance records are maintained.
* Monitors the daily, termly and annual attendance statistics.

*The ISM team will-*

* Work closely with the School Principal to co-ordinate and prepare the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance.
* Investigate and promote strategies to minimise the transmission of common illnesses within the school.
* Investigate and distribute guidance for parents and staff on school absences arising from common illnesses.

*Class Teachers will*

* Bring their professional expertise and insight to bear on the preparation of the Statement of Strategy.
* Maintain accurate class attendance records and record late arrivals and early departures.
* Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
* Contact parents in instances where ongoing absences are not explained.
* Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
* Engage in early dialogue with parents and students attendance, both informally and formally, eg. By highlighting attendance issues during Parent Teacher meetings.
* Inform the Principal of concerns he/she may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
* Make every effort to implement support strategies for pupils with poor attendance in conjunction with the school principal, Assistant Principals and other support staff.

*Parents will*

* Ensure regular and punctual school attendance
* Make sure their children understand that parents support and approve of school attendance.
* Ensure, in so far as is possible, that children’s appointments (dentist etc.) are arranged for times outside of school hours.
* Notify the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
* Inform the school of the reasons for absence from school.
* Show an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework.
* Encourage children to participate in school activities.
* Praise and encourage their children’s achievements.
* Instil in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
* Contact the school immediately if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
* Work with the school and Education Welfare service to resolve any ongoing attendance problems.

*Pupils will*

* Attend school regularly and punctually.
* Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
* Show absence notes from parents to their class teacher promptly

Pass school correspondence to their parents on the specified day.

The strategy was researched and co-ordinated by the Principal in co-operation with the ISM team and HSCL

The number of pupils referred to the Education Welfare Officer will be monitored and compared to previous years.

* Individual pupils with poor attendance, will be monitored and compared to previous years.