



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Swords Community College
Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Swords Community College
Address	Broadmeadow, Rathbeale Road, Swords, Co Dublin, K67 A3E8
Roll Number	76475D
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>Swords Community College aims to provide positive learning experiences and environments to enable all students develop independent learning skills. It is our vision that good attendance supports our four pillars of respect, teamwork, excellence and resilience undermined by positive behaviour and strong relationships.</p> <p>Swords Community College aims to provide a wide range of educational experiences to reach all levels, ability and interest. This aim supports good attendance as all students feel included and able to reach their full potential in a healthy environment.</p>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>Students are expected to attend every day, in cases of genuine illness and/or experiencing bereavement. Students are asked to schedule medical/dentist appointments outside of school hours where possible. All absences must be explained by parents/guardians by logging student absences on VSWare in a timely manner. Once logged they are then internally approved by administrative staff. Students are expected to be functional each morning. If late students must</p>

	<p>report to the office. Students are expected to be on time for every lesson.</p>
<p>How attendance will be monitored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A roll is taken by the students tutor at 8.21am every morning. Students are expected to be on time for their tutor, they will be marked absent if not present by 8.21am, if not notified of an absence in advance. • Students must report to the office if they arrive after tutor time. The late is recorded on VSWare. If a student is late twice in one week, they will be given detention. This is assigned by their Year Head. Parents are notified by VSWare mail. Consistent lateness will result in a meeting with parents in line with the Attendance Policy . • A roll is also taken at the beginning of each lesson. Absences are followed up by the Tutor, Year Head and Attendance Coordinator. Lates will also be recorded on VSWare. Parents/guardians have access to this information on their VSWare app. • Students who are absent or who leave school early must provide an explanatory note form their parent/guardian, this can be done through the app. No student is permitted to phone home. If students are found to be using their phone, the Mobile Phone Policy sanctions will be implemented. • If a student wishes to leave early due to illness, they must speak to their tutor first, the tutor then provides a note requesting the school secretary phones home to collect the student. • Students must sign out when leaving school and sign back in if returning. • If a student is absent a message will be sent to parents/guardians notifying them of their child's absence. • Parents will be notified if a student has 6 days absences by the tutor. Parents/guardians will receive a letter notifying them of their child's absences after 10 days, parents/guardians will be invited for meeting at

Commented [RC1]: Marked absent instead of late - Point 2 clarifies lates.

Commented [RC2]: I'd remove journal - everything should be on Vsware

Commented [AC3R2]: some parents don't have access in that they don't have smart phones so didn't want to exclude them.

Commented [RC4]: Leaving

Commented [RC5]: this generally happens after p1 and before breaktime

Commented [AC6R5]: going to leave it vague in case it is delayed

after 15 days absences. At 20 days a referral will be made to Tusla if student is under 16.

- Swords Community College is required to submit Student Absence Reports twice each year on those students with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e. students that have been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more falling within the following categories; illness, urgent family reason, holiday, suspended, other and unexplained.
- Parents must make whatever arrangements necessary to ensure that their child attends school onetime each day of the school year. Students should not be withdrawn from school throughout the year except for unavoidable situations. Parents/guardians must log absences through VSWare app.

Commented [RC7]: U16 only

Commented [RC8]: Again remove journal

Commented [AC9R8]: as above

<p>Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target setting and targets • The whole-school approach • Promoting good attendance • Responding to poor attendance 	<p>Target Setting and Targets:</p> <p>The college attendance rates for 2022/23 was 87%, 2023/24 was 87% and 2024/2025 was 89%.</p> <p>2025/2026 target is 90%.</p> <p>Whole School Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of good attendance is promoted throughout the school. • All class teachers monitor accurate and live rolls on VSWare and will alert class tutor with any concerns. • Teachers affirm importance of attendance. • Tutor is responsible for checking the official roll call every morning, during this time they will also follow up on any outstanding absences update VSWare accordingly. The tutor will amend the VSWare record based on the notes to ensure that accurate records are maintained. The tutor will inform and liaise with the Year Head / Attendance Coordinator should a pattern of lateness or absence emerge. At this point, the tutor, Year Head or Attendance Coordinator will contact home. • Student Support Team (SST) meet weekly and discuss attendance and punctuality. • Attendance Coordinator informs parents/guardians of 10+ absences and outline consequences of further absence. • 20+ absent days are reported to Tusla. • Late arrivals and departures are recorded and monitored. • Parents have full access to records via VSWare app. <p>Promoting Good Attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swords Community College aims to provide a caring, happy environment where students feel safe and welcome. • Swords Community College offers a wide range of sports and extracurricular activities to support students attendance.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of a modern, meaningful curriculum promotes attendance. Teachers utilise a wide range of teaching methodologies which encourage the participation and engagement of all students. • Swords Community College offers a comprehensive pastoral care programme to help in the promotion of positive attendance. Students are supported through their tutor, Year Head, SLT, and two Career Guidance Councillors. Student mentoring programmes are offered as well as a strong Student Council and Prefect Leadership team. • The college offers a detailed induction programme for new students to support transition from primary to post primary. • The college has a strong SEN department supporting student students with AEN. • The college has adopted Bí Cineálta with a dedicated AntiBullying Coordinator and team to help protect and manage and bullying issues. • Tutors award points for 100% attendance once per term, in line with the Code of Positive Behaviour. • Full attendance is promoted during regular assemblies. • Students are rewarded at the end of year awards for full attendance. • Annual attendance drive to encourage sustained attendance.
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Commented [RC10]: Attendance drive in December - Mark & I will be organising

Commented [AC11R10]: done

Promoting Good Attendance (cont.):

- Attendance drives held during targeted times during the year when attendance rates decrease.

Responding to Poor Attendance:

- Early contact with parents/guardians, through text messages, phone calls and meetings to encourage early intervention.
- Parents/guardians contacted by tutor when six days missed. Letter sent when 10 days missed (see Appendix 1). At 15 days, parents/guardians invited in by Attendance Coordinator to discuss supports available (Appendix 2). At 20 days referral is made to Tusla.
- Swords Community College promotes student voice and maintaining open dialogue with students is recognised as a key element in promoting attendance.
- If a student is late twice in one week, they're required to attend afterschool detention.
- An individual, targeted approach for some students with regard to attendance will be agreed with the family and student on a case-by-case basis. Pastoral care can include one to one support.
- Correspondence and links with Tusla Education Support Services (TESS) and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Re-engagement programmes are put in place to facilitate students who have been absent over a continuous period.

<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is monitored by tutors, subject teachers, Year Heads and Attendance Coordinator. • Absences are recorded digitally through parents/guardians logging into VSWare. • Referrals can be made to the Year Head / Attendance Coordinator when a patter of poor attendance presents. • The Year Head / Attendance Coordinator liaise with students, parents/guardians, TUSLA and management to resolve attendance issues. • Links with primary schools and meetings with 6th class teachers to flag historical patterns of poor attendance. • Middle management record students arriving late or early in the main office and entered on VSWare. • Year Heads impress upon students the importance of good attendance, to monitor attendance and to follow up on agencies/home if and when necessary.
<p>Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The college has a vibrant Parent Council and Student Council • The college maintains close links with the local feeder primary schools. • School visits to / contact with primary schools at regular occurrences throughout the year. • Swords Community College has strong links with local agencies such as Jigsaw, Foroige, Crossfire, CAMHS, HSE, Alternative Learning Programme, Youthreach and Tusla. • Communication with the Education and Welfare Officer and Tusla is made when the need arises.
<p>How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the year in SST. • Attendance data will be analysed and shared with staff. The strategy will be reviewed and amended as needed. • The statement will be monitored by staff and the BOM. • Meetings between Year Heads and Tutors • Meetings with Parent and Student Councils.

Commented [RC12]: ALP ? Maybe it doesn't fit here?

Commented [AC13R12]: DONE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of the strategy by the BOM looking at statistics for the academic year and planning for the next academic year based on current figures.
Review process and date for review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and statistics on school attendance shared with BOM, Student and Parent Council. An annual review of this strategy and how it is working at the final board meeting of the year.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	

Appendix 1

[insert date]

Subject: Student Absences

Dear Parent/Guardian,

You have received this letter as our records show that has missed 10 school days since the beginning of the school year.

When students miss school regularly it leaves them at a huge disadvantage. They miss important lessons making it harder to keep up and often resulting in reduced academic attainment.

Should you have a certified reason for your child missing school, the Tutor must be informed. This can be done on the VShare App so that our attendance records can be updated accordingly.

Please be aware that Swords Community College is obliged to formally notify the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency if your child has missed 20 days or more in the school year, or if there is a concern that your child is missing too much school.

Should you wish to familiarise yourself with information in relation to school attendance please log on to www.tusla.ie

We appreciate your support with this matter

Yours Sincerely,

Ms.
Principal

A.

Smith

Appendix 2

Dear Parent/Guardian,

You are receiving this correspondence as you child has missed 15 or more days since the start of the school year. We would like to invite yourself and the student into school for an attendance meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide support and encouragement to get students attending school more consistently. If you would be willing to attend this meeting please approve this permission slip. Once approved I will be in contact with a day and time slot for the meeting. I look forward to hearing from you.

If you have spoken with Year Head/Tutor in relation to absenteeism and feel this meeting is not necessary, then please leave a comment on this permission slip.

Kind regards,

Mr. Harley