



Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire STATEMENT OF STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Introduction

Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire recognises that regular school attendance is a crucial factor in enabling children to achieve their potential and is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes attendance and engagement.

This updated strategy reflects Tusla's *Developing a Statement of Strategy for School Attendance* guidelines (2022).

As a non-DEIS primary school, Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire does not have access to a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) officer. Despite this, we are committed to implementing a proactive, whole-school approach to attendance that encourages positive attendance habits from the early years through to Sixth Class.

Our views and values in relation to attendance

At Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire, we are committed to fostering a culture of regular attendance and engagement among our students, recognising its pivotal role in their academic success and overall well-being. Our strategy for improving school attendance encompasses a multifaceted approach aimed at addressing the diverse needs of our students and their families while nurturing a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

In Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire we value the individuality of all our children and respect their right to access all areas of learning. We work to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfilment and their development into active and responsible adults. We fully appreciate the personal and academic benefits of good school attendance and in doing so we aim to:

- Increase whole-school attendance rates year on year
- Minimise the number of pupils missing more than 20 days
- Provide targeted support by identifying pupils at risk of early school leaving and increasing absences
- Celebrate achievement and progress of our students in maintaining regular attendance
- Continuously monitor and evaluate attendance data, trends and outcomes
- Comply with the requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000
- Promote a school-wide culture that values attendance, punctuality and a love of learning
- Support pupil engagement and wellbeing through collaboration with families and relevant agencies
- Provide a fair, inclusive environment where all pupils can progress and are encouraged to attend regularly

By embracing these principles and implementing our comprehensive strategy for school attendance, we are dedicated to creating an environment where every student feels supported, motivated and empowered to attend school regularly, achieve their full potential and thrive academically and personally.

The school's high expectations around attendance

We encourage and expect pupils to attend school regularly and punctually and that absences will occur only when absolutely necessary. We make every effort to make our school a happy, welcoming and supportive place for pupils, parents and staff.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

We have employed the following strategies to encourage good attendance:

- The school curriculum, in so far as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire will promote the development of good self-esteem and self-worth in our pupils. We strive to create a positive and supportive school climate where students feel safe, respected and valued, which can contribute to higher levels of attendance and engagement in school activities.
- Support for our pupils who have special educational needs will be provided in accordance with Department of Education guidelines and resources.
- We will use our newsletters, Aladdin and the school website to promote attendance and punctuality.
- The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- We will regularly monitor and analyse attendance data to identify patterns, trends and areas of concern related to student attendance. This includes tracking overall attendance rates, as well as early identification of specific groups or individuals who may be at risk of chronic absenteeism.
- Attendance levels and record keeping will be discussed as necessary at staff meetings.
- At the annual open afternoon for new entrants and their parents, the school's policy and procedures in relation to attendance are explained. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and good punctuality.
- The advice and support of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be utilised as necessary.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published by Easter each year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance.
- Late arrivals: Times are recorded by class teachers on Aladdin (in so far as is possible in the context of busy classrooms and school activities). Punctuality levels are entered on the school reports.
- The principal will promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff as well as at our monthly assembly and Parents' Association meetings. Likewise, teachers will emphasise this at parent-teacher meetings held in the first term of each school year. Attendance and punctuality for the year are recorded on each pupil's end of year report. The principal will add a comment on school reports regarding attendance where necessary.
- It is the policy of Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire to encourage and maintain open communication between home and school and to encourage parents in their role as primary educators of their children. The principal and teachers are available on an appointment basis to meet with parents.
- Our school is a member of Deeside School Completion Programme. Places are available to students from 3rd to 6th Classes and eligible pupils are identified by the Principal in consultation with teachers. A Lunch-Time Club is held one day per week led by team leaders. Activities include personal development, baking, art and craft, games, outings and a summer camp. Deeside SCP facilitates a "Transfer Programme" for 6th Class in the last term each year to support pupils as they transition to secondary school. Deeside SCP supports our school in improving school attendance levels by strengthening engagement and participation. They do so through in-school, afterschool and out of school support as well as holiday provision.
- A rewards system (certificates, small prizes, or recognition at school events) may be used to acknowledge and encourage good attendance, where deemed appropriate.

- We launch an annual Attendance Campaign with a school-wide assembly, encouraging students and families to prioritise attendance for the designated month. We use posters, newsletters, Aladdin messages and social media to spread the message.

Promoting Good Attendance

- Attendance and punctuality are clearly recorded on the annual report cards in June.
- Pupils who achieve full attendance for the school year receive a certificate with their school report.
- An Attendance Campaign is incorporated into assemblies and school displays.
- Deeside SCP may work with students who have poor attendance, they keep attendance diaries and present prizes for full and/or improved attendance.
- Incentives may be used to promote and encourage attendance with target students.

How we will Monitor Attendance

- It is a core duty of our Assistant Principal 1 (AP1) to monitor attendance and to implement this attendance strategy.
- It is the responsibility of parents to enter absence reasons on the Aladdin school app.
- Parents receive an automatic text notification on Aladdin after 10, 15 and 20 days of absence (and so on in increments of 5).
- The class teacher keeps a daily record of attendance on Aladdin. All reasons for absence are requested from parents via Aladdin (our office management system).
- Attendance rates will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the principal of any concerns regarding the attendance or punctuality of any pupil.
- Attendance data is reviewed monthly by the principal and AP1 post holder.
- The AP1 post holder liaises with the principal, teachers, pupils, families and Education Welfare Officer to promote good school attendance. The AP1 will identify pupils whose attendance levels are a cause for concern and develop strategies and targeted measures to improve their school attendance and the overall school attendance.
- The AP1 in consultation with the class teacher will assess each case of high absenteeism individually and a telephone call to the parent/guardians in question may be deemed necessary.
- Meetings or phone calls with parents provide opportunities to discuss reasons for poor attendance and to provide support(s) for parents and pupils to improve attendance.
- Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 states that schools must engage with parents when attendance problems emerge and all efforts made to encourage and improve attendance will be documented on Aladdin (Attendance Log of Actions).
- The principal will inform Tusla;
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of the school year. This is called the Student Absence Report (SAR) and is submitted to Tusla twice annually, in January and June.
 - When a pupil has been suspended from school more than once under the Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy.
 - Where there is on-going concern about a pupil's attendance a referral will be submitted by the Principal/AP1 to Tusla Education Support Service (TESS).

Preventing and Identifying Attendance Issues

- Use of Aladdin system to monitor and analyse attendance trends.
- Our AP1 will contact parents about emerging attendance concerns.
- Monthly review of attendance by AP1 Attendance holder.
- Information sharing when support planning and Special Education Team meetings.

Interventions to Address Poor Attendance

Tier 1 (Whole School):

- Promotion of good attendance in newsletters, website and Aladdin.
- Attendance policy shared with all families annually in October and during Attendance Awareness Month.
- Attendance information letter issued to all parents at beginning of each school year (Appendix 1: Information Letter).

Tier 2 (Targeted):

- Individual attendance plans for pupils missing 20+ days (Appendix 3: Attendance Support Plan Template).
- Notification letter sent to parents (Appendix 4: Sample Information Letter to Parents).
- Check-ins with support staff.

Tier 3 (Intensive):

- Use of attendance contract template with parental agreement (Appendix 2: Attendance Contract).
- Interagency meetings (Tusla, NEPS, Social Work) where needed.
- Attendance tracking with daily contact if necessary.
- Implementation of Attendance Care Plans.
- Referral to Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)

Fostering Contacts/Partnership Arrangements

We recognise the close links that exist between our pupils, families, school and wider community. Therefore, we will foster and develop good contact and communications with the following in order to promote the good attendance of students in Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire:

- Tusla Education Support Services (TESS)
- Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Other schools in the Ardee area, including the secondary schools to which our pupils transfer
- Deeside School Completion Programme
- NEPS

Fostering Contacts/Partnership Arrangements Engagement with Pupils and Parents

- Our Student Council/Wellbeing Committee will help to create an attendance display and lead a whole-school poster competition highlighting the importance of regular attendance.
- Clear communication of attendance expectations via Aladdin, website and notes.

Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers:

- identify individual early patterns of attendance along with reasons for absences on our Aladdin administration system
- share information received from pupils or parents regarding attendance with the Principal/ AP1
- alert the principal if there are concerns about a pupil's attendance or punctuality
- promote high expectations of punctuality and attendance in their classrooms

Principal:

- has overall responsibility for the implementation and review of this Attendance Strategy.
- will ensure that the school register of pupils (POD) is maintained accurately.
- makes returns to TESS: Student Absence Reports (SAR) and the Annual Attendance Report
- liaises with Deeside SCP staff, parents, TESS and the Education Welfare Officer when there are concerns about a child's attendance and in cases where a pupil is suspended or expelled.

- makes referrals to TUSLA where there are concerns regarding a pupil's attendance.
- prepares an annual report on attendance for the Board of Management.

AP1 Post Holder (Attendance Lead):

Monthly attendance tracking and analysis and communication with Principal and families.

Parents:

Ensuring children attend regularly and punctually, communicating promptly.

Submit absence reasons on Aladdin school app.

Pupils:

Attending school unless ill or with a valid reason.

Review Process and Date for Review

An annual end-of-year review of this Statement of Strategy will be carried out and shared with the Board of Management.

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, parents and Board of Management guided by Tusla's "*Developing Statement of Strategy for School Attendance*" document in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire to encourage regular attendance at school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 4th February 2026.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Principal

Date: 4th February 2026

Appendix 1: Attendance Information Letter

School attendance – Information for parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are fast approaching the Easter holidays and at this stage in the year some families may start to receive attendance notifications via the Aladdin App. It is a good time to remind everyone about the importance of good attendance and about the rules that apply to all schools regarding the monitoring of attendance and to outline the steps the school is required to take if attendance is cause for concern. We all know that good school attendance and punctuality is matched with better learning outcomes and a stronger sense of community and happiness for children in school.

There will always be situations where a child has to stay home, for example due to illness and other unavoidable situations. **Outside of this pupils should be at school each day.**

Our school starts at 9.20am each day. Attendance is recorded daily by the class teacher on our online roll books via Aladdin. It is school policy that parents submit all absence reasons via the Aladdin app. You will automatically receive an Aladdin notification if and when your child misses 10, 15, 20 days and so on.

The Legal Requirements

All schools in Ireland are required to comply with school attendance monitoring and reporting in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act. There are two mandated reporting mechanisms for attendance where attendance is reported to Tusla Education Support Services (TESS).

(1) School Attendance Reports:

There are two reporting periods in the year (a) September-December and (b) January-June. We submit the school attendance returns in January for the September-December period and again in June. **On this form we are required to list pupils who have missed 20 school days or more, for any reason.** These figures are used for statistical purposes. The reports are not something to be concerned about in themselves. While attendance is hugely important there are sometimes very valid reasons for children to miss school and this is understood.

Where the school has concerns about your child's attendance, we will be in touch to discuss these concerns. Please be mindful that missed days add up quickly and 20 days in a year is a month of learning time the child has lost, so it is important to minimise absences that are within a family's control.

(2) Discretionary Referrals:

"Discretionary referrals" are made where a school is worried about the attendance of a pupil. This might be due to a lot of unexplained absences, a pattern of absences, significant ongoing issues with punctuality leading to a lot of missed learning time etc. A school will refer a child to the Education Welfare Officer where they have these concerns. The role of the Education Welfare Officer is primarily to offer support to families to improve attendance. The school will always contact parents before referring to the Education Welfare Officer.

Key things to note

- The aim of attendance and punctuality procedures are to ensure each child gets the best experience of education and maximises learning time.
- There's no need for concern if you get a letter saying your child has been included on the attendance report. Genuine, explained absences are recorded as such.
- Be sure to enter your absence reason on Aladdin each time your child is absent.
- Aim to have your child in school for 9.20am each day. We understand this isn't always possible and allowances can be made for individual circumstances. Chat to us if it's an ongoing challenge and we can offer advice and support.

The Tusla Education Support Service have more information for parents/guardians on their page [here](#).

If you require any help and support with your child's attendance please contact your child's teacher or contact the school office for an appointment and I will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely,

Deirdre Sweeney,
Principal

Attendance Matters



Every Day Counts...

Appendix 2: Attendance Contract

Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire – Attendance Support Contract

Pupil Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

This contract is designed to support improved school attendance. We agree to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the pupil.

Target:

To attend school on time every day unless genuinely unwell or there is a significant reason for absence.

Supports to be provided by the school:

- Monitoring attendance weekly
- Encouraging positive attendance through praise and incentives
- Communicating regularly with parents/guardians

Responsibilities of the parent(s)/guardian(s):

- Ensure the pupil attends school each day
- Contact the school before 10am if the child is absent
- Provide a written explanation for each absence
- Engage with school support structures if required

Responsibilities of the pupil (if age-appropriate):

- Try my best to come to school every day
- Tell an adult if I need help or if something is worrying me

Review Date: _____

Signatures:

Parent/Guardian: _____

Pupil (if appropriate): _____

Principal/Teacher: _____

Appendix 3: Attendance Support Plan Template

Pupil Name: _____

Class/Teacher: _____

Date of Birth: _____

School Year: _____

Date Plan Initiated: _____

1. Reason for Plan

- ☐ 20+ days absence
- ☐ Persistent irregular attendance
- ☐ Pattern of concerning absences (e.g. Mondays/Fridays)
- ☐ Punctuality issues
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

2. Attendance History (Past 12 Months)

Term	Total Absences	Explained	Unexplained	Notes
Term 1				
Term 2				
Term 3				

3. Identified Barriers to Attendance

- ☐ Illness (chronic or repeated)
- ☐ Family challenges (e.g. childcare, housing)
- ☐ School anxiety/social issues
- ☐ Transport/distance
- ☐ Lack of routine
- ☐ Other: _____

4. Actions and Supports

Action/Support	Person Responsible	Start Date	Review Date
Contact with parent/guardian			
Morning check-ins / welcome routine			
Attendance monitoring (daily/weekly)			
Visual attendance tracker (for pupil)			
Referral to external service (if applicable)			
Positive reinforcement strategy			
Other: _____			

5. Attendance Goal

Short-term goal: _____

Long-term goal: _____

6. Review Notes

Date of Review:	Progress Made:	Next Steps:
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Class Teacher: _____

Principal/AP1 Post Holder: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Pupil (if appropriate): _____

Appendix 4: Sample Information Letter to Parents

SAMPLE LETTER 1

Dear Parents,

I am writing to tell you a little about the Education Welfare Act, 2000 (amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013) and about some of the responsibilities we share under the Act.

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every child stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school whichever comes later.

As a parent, you must let the school know if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that reasons must be given in writing. The school will notify Tusla – Child and Family Agency if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise to concern.

If your child is sick or is absent for other good reasons, no action will be taken by Tusla - Child and Family Agency. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be visited by an Educational Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education.

Further information concerning the new service and about school attendance matters generally can be obtained from the national Lo-Call Education Helpline - 1890 36 36 66.

Yours sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER 2

LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING A CHILD'S ABSENCE WHERE THERE NO CONTACT HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

I am writing to regarding <Insert name> attendance at school.

<Insert name> has been absent on the following days < insert days>. The school has not received any letter or contact from you. You are asked to contact the school as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to discuss the matter with <name of teacher>.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary whichever comes later. When your child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for this absence every time. It is school policy that you do this in writing.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER 3

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.

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding <Insert name> attendance at school.

<Insert name> has been absent on the following days <insert days>.

The school has written to you about this matter but has not received an explanation from you. The school is now very concerned that < Insert name> is not receiving an education and we will be writing to the Educational Welfare Service of Tusla - Child and Family Agency to pass on our concern. An Educational Welfare Officer may therefore be in contact with you shortly to discuss the matter further.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary education whichever comes later. When a child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for the absence every time. It is school policy to do this in writing.

If you wish to discuss < Insert name> attendance, please contact the school to arrange an appointment to meet with <name of teacher> as soon as possible.

Thank you for you co-operation in this matter.

Yours truly,

SAMPLE LETTER 4

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

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding <Insert name> attendance at school who has been absent on the following days <insert days>.

Because <insert name> has now been absent for 20 days, the school must pass the information to the Educational Welfare Service of Tusla - Child and Family Agency. An Educational Welfare Officer may therefore be in contact with you to discuss the matter further.

OR

Because <insert name> has been absent through illness, the school will be reporting the absence in the normal way but will not be informing Tusla – Child and family Agency that it is concerned about your child's educational welfare.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary education whichever comes later. When a child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for the absence every time. It is school policy to do this in writing.

If you wish to discuss < Insert name> attendance, please contact the school to arrange an appointment to meet with <name of teacher> as soon as possible.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours truly,