

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance/ School Attendance Policy of Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, Co Longford. Rolla: 18733T

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

In Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, we recognise the importance of consistently good school attendance. We recognise the clear and direct relationship between regular school attendance and pupil progress and that high attendance is linked to pupils staying at school to complete and do well in the second level and further studies. We recognise that poor attendance can have a negative impact on wider aspects of a student's life. We endeavour to develop a supportive, positive and welcoming school environment where the needs of every individual child are met. Our holistic approach to the development of our students as individuals underpins all our actions.

This Statement of Strategy has been drawn up in order to comply with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and to outline the school's policy and practices in relation to supporting school attendance.

The school's high expectations around attendance

Highs attendance at school has a proven positive impact on teaching and learning. Every child in our school is obliged by law to attend school every day on which the school is in operation, unless there is a reasonable excuse for not attending.

Our school opening times are communicated to parents in our General School Policy and to parents of Junior Infants in our Introductory Booklet. Planned school closures and holidays are given to parents in letter form at the beginning of the school year. These documents are also available on our website. Junior Infant parents are also informed by letter of their obligations regarding school attendance and our obligation to report absences of 20 days or more in a school year to Túsla.

Taking into consideration Section 21(9) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the Principal. Therefore, the school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time.

We expect that absences be explained by parents in the form of a note or letter to the school. Absences, late arrivals and early leaving are recorded on our School Management System.

How attendance will be monitored

Attendance is monitored electronically on a daily basis by each class teacher taking the Rolla. Daily, quarterly and yearly attendance is recorded. Late arrivals and early leavers are recorded electronically on Aladdin.

Our school management system (Aladdin) is set to alert teachers and parents when a student has missed 10 days. Aladdin alerts staff and parents again when a child has missed 15 days

and at this stage direct contact will be made with parents by phone or in person. Parents will be asked for a commitment to improve attendance. If a child exceeds 20 days absence, then a letter is sent to parents informing them that Túsła will be notified. Attendance data is used to monitor overall attendance and punctuality levels and to identify trends and patterns in attendance.

Quarterly and annual returns are forwarded to Túsła regarding any child who has missed 20 days or more. If a child reaches a total of 20 days before a quarterly return, we will refer the case to Túsła.

Attendance data is passed on to parents in the annual school report and to secondary schools through the 6th Class Education Passport.

Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:

Target setting and targets

- Increase in attendance levels. Assess by checking previous year's attendance statistics.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils.
- Improvement in individual cases where issues had been present.

The whole-school approach

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra enjoys a consistently high rate of attendance. Education is highly regarded in our community and the vast majority of our parents see the importance of good attendance. All staff are involved in the development of our school policies. Our Parents' Association also participates in the formation and review of policies.

Parental involvement in all aspects of school life is encouraged. This results in pupils having a positive attitude towards the school.

Promoting good attendance

- Good attendance is promoted constantly through encouragement in the classroom, assemblies and communication with parents and our Parents' Association.
- Every effort is made to make the same opportunities available to all the children in the school regardless of ability, background or social setting.
- A report of the days which the child has been absent is given to parents in the end of year school report
- We communicate the requirements of schools and of parents under the Education Welfare Act to parents when they have enrolled their children and it is clearly outlined in the school's code of behaviour. We have a documented system of engaging with parents when their child has missed 10, 15, or 20 days. We have a structured system in place for students signing out of school early, to reduce students missing class time unnecessarily.
- We are conscious of catering for the learning needs of "at risk" pupils.
- Staff development issues – teaching staff in the school are encouraged to and supported in continuous development of their professional skills particularly in the area of differentiation and inclusion.
- Class teachers may operate 'Student of the week'/'Table of the week'/Class Dojo to reward positive engagement with school
- The school and classroom climate, student-teacher relationships and school organisation will promote student engagement and attendance.
- Certificates are awarded at the end of each school year for excellent attendance.

- Art, music, drama and sporting activities, both curricular and extra-curricular, are enrichment activities which can support students in their school attendance.
- We endeavour to have ‘fun’ activities on Mondays and Fridays to especially encourage attendance on these days.
- Participation in school related leadership and skills activities (Green Schools, Junior Entrepreneur Programme, School Garden and Yard Squad, class-based projects, etc.) can engage and support students who may find it difficult to engage with the formal curriculum, and can have positive benefits for school attendance.

Responding to poor attendance

Reasons for absences must be communicated to the school by parents via Aladdin. Class teachers will discuss any concerns about a child’s attendance with the principal.

Our attendance management software alerts us when a student misses 10 days. When a student misses 15 days, concerns are brought to the attention of the parents. We will endeavour to engage in a dialogue with parents to gain an understanding of the reasons for poor attendance and provide support to the pupil and parents in an effort to improve attendance.

When a child has missed 15 days, direct communication is made by phone with the parents of the child. Parents are asked for an explanation for absences if absences are unexplained. School will endeavour to obtain a commitment from parents that attendance will be improved.

In the event of a child missing 20 days or more in a school year, parents are informed that absences will be reported, as per legal requirement, to Tusla.

In the event of a parent being unable to ensure that their child attends school, the school will seek advice from relevant professionals, e.g., Educational Welfare Officer, National Educational Psychological Service or Tusla, regarding appropriate referrals for the student.

School roles in relation to attendance

Rolls are maintained on Aladdin by individual class teachers. The class teacher will alert the Principal if there are concerns about student absences.

The Deputy Principal will have direct responsibility for improving/monitoring attendance and contacting parents when a child has missed 15 days.

Substitute teachers are given instructions by the Principal/Secretary on how to take the Rolla. In the event of a teacher being absent the Principal is responsible for maintaining the roll for the relevant class. The Principal is also responsible for reporting to Túsła at the relevant points during the school year and at the end of the school year in the Annual School Report. These are generated electronically using Aladdin and entered into the Tusla portal.

The Board of Management will review this policy annually. All Staff and Parents’ Association will be asked for their input into annual reviews.

Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)

Parents, Parents' Association, staff members and the children themselves are encouraged to uphold the school's Policy on Attendance.

The school will communicate with other primary schools when a child is transferring to or from our school. Information exchanged may include attendance figures, results of standardised tests (where applicable) and any other relevant educational information

When a child transfers to secondary school the school report for the previous year and results of standardised tests are passed on to the relevant person in that school using the NCCA's Education Passport.

The school will encourage pupils to participate in local community groups and organisations both within and outside school hours, e.g., Cumann na mBunscoil, Aisling Arts Festival, Credit Union Quiz, various art competitions, Community Games, Attic Youth Cafe. We will formally and informally recognise achievements by pupils in these activities.

How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored

Staff, Board of Management and Parents Association and will be central to the monitoring and evaluation of this policy. This will be done by investigating attendance rates at the end of the school year and comparing them to previous years.

Review process and date for review

This Statement of Strategy will be reviewed annually.

Ratification

This Statement of Strategy for School Attendance/School Attendance Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Clondra National School on:

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Ms Mary Duignan, Chairperson, Board of Management, Scoil Mhuire Clondra

Date the Statement of Strategy was originally approved by the Board of Management
09/05/2017

Date the Statement of Strategy was submitted to Tusla
26/09/2017

Addendum to Statement of Strategy for School Attendance:

March 2021

In light of the ongoing Covid-19 situation visitors are no longer asked to sign the 'late arrival/early leaving' book. This information is communicated to the teacher/secretary and absence is recorded electronically.