

School Attendance Strategy

Schull Community College

Scope

This strategy applies to the whole school body, specifically to the students, staff and parents, of Schull Community College and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality. This strategy is drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, including the Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

Mission, Vision and Aims

The aim of the School Attendance Strategy is to provide an environment which encourages all students to attend regularly and punctually. The best gift that anybody can give a child is to offer a child the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential. Full attendance and participation develops the social, cultural and recreational skills of all parties, thus enabling those parties to play a full part as responsible citizens. (Refer to the Aims of Schull Community College Items 1 to 4)

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.

The Strategy aims to

- Encourage full attendance at school.
- Highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents.
- Ensure that adequate records of attendances and absences are maintained by the school as per the Education Act 2000 in respect of each individual student.
- Report on student attendance to Túsla – the Educational Welfare Service.
- Implement suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.

Roles and Responsibility in implementing the Attendance Strategy

School Principal

- Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate which is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance;
- Leads the review and implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy;
- Initiates links with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues;
- Notifies Túsla's Education Welfare Services and the Education Welfare Officer of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensures support for the work of the Education Welfare Officer with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.

School Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor

- In the school community, 'Attendance & Participation' is the responsibility of all parties.
- The Implementation of the Strategy on a daily basis is under the direction of the Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor, with whole school involvement throughout. (See attached daily roll procedure).

- The involvement of the Guidance Counsellor in monitoring attendance has led to a more holistic and positive approach to dealing with attendance issues. The Mentoring Team (Principal/Deputy Principal/ Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain) is involved in the overall monitoring of the Attendance Strategy. The Chaplain plays a supportive role at all times.

Teachers

- Provide a classroom climate and classroom management which support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance;
- Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy to promote attendance;
- Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms;
- Ensure attendance data is recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures;
- Alert relevant staff if concerns arise in relation to a student's attendance;
- Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis;

The role of the Parent/Guardian

- Set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality;
- Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem;
- Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time;
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason;
- Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time;

Implementation of the Attendance Programme

- The Daily Registration Procedure/the School Day/ the Attendance Hot-Line/the Absence Explanation Procedure are included in the Student's Journal, beside the Code of Conduct page. This is to be read and signed by both the student and the parents on the first day of term, at the start of the school year. This detail is also included in the staff booklet. (See attached Daily Registration Procedure sheet).
- These details are reviewed annually at the end of the summer term, before the summer holidays and before the publication of journals for the new school year, to allow for modifications.
- Home/school liaison is essential, where Attendance and Participation problem areas occur. Where necessary, problems should be communicated to the Class Teacher/Year Head, and subsequently to the Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor, who can make contact with home.

Recording and Reporting Procedures to promote Attendance and Retention

1. Registration Roll call is taken on VSWare at the 9am class and in every subsequent class during the school day.
2. Parents are requested to use the Attendance Hot-Line telephone and to record absences on the message service before 10am. A text is sent to parents by 10:00 a.m. approximately, if a student is marked absent without explanation on VSWare.
3. If any teachers are taking students out of their normal class for any activity, they will provide a list to the Attendance Officer in advance so that those students may be marked as being on school business on the VSWare system. This means that when a teacher takes the roll call on

VSWare, they will see who has a legitimate reason to be out.

4. A student arriving late into school in the morning must report to the Guidance/Attendance office with a note of explanation and the student will be marked present but late on the VSWare system.
5. A student signing out early reports to the Guidance/Attendance Office with a note of explanation, details will be put this into the system and teachers will be able to see that they left early with permission.
6. An attendance tracker will deal with any alerts generated by a student not being accounted for. Only parents/guardians may sign students out from school.
7. Class tutors will request notes from students on their return from absence. They will follow up on any notes not received. Class tutors will update the Attendance Officer if there is a note.
8. Subject Teachers/Class Tutors/Year Heads will inform the Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor if there is a pattern emerging or a concern regarding attendance.
9. The Attendance Officer will compile a report at the end of each month showing number of late mornings, attendance and the number of times they left early for every student.
10. Once a student misses 20 days a standard warning letter will be issued to parents and the Túsla - Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed. The Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor will discuss this matter with the parents/guardians involved.
12. If any student misses 25 days or more the Principal will make an appointment with parents to discuss attendance.

Procedures to be followed if a student is absent from school

1. If a student is marked absent without explanation on the roll first thing in the morning parents/guardians will receive a text from the school noting that he/she is absent. If a parent/guardian believes that their son/daughter is actually in school, they are asked to contact the office immediately.
2. Following a student's absence from school, parents/guardians are obliged by the Education Welfare Act (2000) to provide a note explaining the absence. This note is to be written on the 'Explanation for Absence' slips in the school journal and presented to the Attendance Office on the morning of return.

Procedures to be followed if a student is late

1. The school day runs from 8:55 until 15:55 each day except Wed. when school finishes at 13.15.
2. If students are late they must report to the Guidance/Attendance Office, before going to class.
3. Parents are asked to leave a message on the school attendance answer phone in relation to the expected lateness and the student must have a written note in the school journal.

Procedures for Leaving School Early

It is essential that wherever possible appointments are made for outside of school time and students should only leave early in unavoidable circumstances. Should a student need to leave school early there are three steps to be followed:

1. He/she must present written consent from a parent/guardian to the Attendance Officer at the Guidance/Attendance office.
2. Parents must collect students from reception if they are leaving early. No student may leave school without permission from management.
3. On return from an appointment the student must sign in at the Guidance/Attendance office

again, so that their presence will be recorded on VSWare.

Interventions to Promote Attendance

The school provides universal interventions to all students and targeted interventions to certain students. The school recognises that certain groups or individuals may need additional support with attendance and this is provided through targeted and intensive interventions. These groups include:

- Students with special educational needs
- Students with health needs
- Students who have experienced bullying
- Students experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties
- Students disengaged from the curriculum
- Students from the Traveller or Roma communities
- Students who are experiencing homelessness
- Students who are asylum seekers or living in direct provision centres
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students
- Students in foster care
- Young carers or young parents
- Students whose parents have not had a positive school experience
- Students from families where there has been a history of poor school attendance
- Students from socio-economically deprived family or community.

1. Universal Interventions

- a. The school endeavours to provide a safe and orderly environment for students in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
- b. The school deals with bullying related matters in accordance with the anti-bullying policy.
- c. First years are provided with a comprehensive induction programme.
- d. All students follow an SPHE programme to assist them throughout their schooling.
- e. All students are offered the support of a Class Tutor and Year Head as part of the pastoral care system.
- f. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities - sport, music, drama, art etc.
- g. All parents will receive details on absence/lateness in reports home four times each year.
- h. Students are provided with a broad curriculum with subjects which suit the talents of all.
- i. All parents get a text home if their son/daughter is absent without explanation.

2. Targeted Interventions

- a. The school offers the 'Buddy' programme to students.
- b. The school provides after school and late study for students.
- c. The guidance counsellor works with students who are having anxiety or mental health based absenteeism.
- d. Families may be supported by the Mentoring Team.
- e. Meetings may be held with the Year Head, Class Tutor, Deputy Principal, Principal, Mentoring Team, the parents/guardians and the student(s) concerned.
- f. The school may offer a differentiated curriculum to certain targeted students.
- g. The school may seek the assistance of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Barnardo's, Túsla – The Child and Family Agency and any other organisation which may be of assistance.

3. Intensive Intervention

- a. Students may be referred to the Túsla Education Welfare Officer for support and will work closely with the Education Welfare Officer to support the student.
- b. Students may, with the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer, be offered reduced timetables or alternative educational programmes.

Review and Evaluation

Attendance

- Total inclusion involves the whole school body.
- Consultation, involving the Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor/Year Heads/Class Teachers/Principal/Deputy Principal/Mentoring Team/Parents/Students, is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Strategy.
- Evaluation by means of random surveys and constant checking of Attendance Records by Class Teachers, Year Heads, Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor, Mentoring Team.
- The Attendance Officer should regularly explain and re-enforce the effectiveness of the Attendance System to all students and parents.
- The Attendance Officer regularly updates the senior students of their own attendance records.
- The monitoring of the Daily Attendance Records is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the policy.

Participation must be observed by all staff-

- Monitor signs of exclusion
- Monitor willingness to participate
- Monitor involvement in co-curricular activities
- Monitor willingness to participate in school events
- Monitor who is being negative
- Discuss at staff meetings/development days
- Report regularly to the Mentoring Team.

Chairperson's signature: _____

Mr Noel Coakley

Ratified by the BOM on _____

Policy to be reviewed on _____

School Attendance Strategy – Summary Document

Name of school	Schull Community College
Address	Colla Road, Schull, Co. Cork
Roll Number	71102I
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	The school aims to provide an environment which encourages all students to attend regularly and punctually.
The school's high expectations around attendance	The school expects the highest level of punctuality and attendance for all students to ensure students reach their potential.
How attendance will be monitored	<p>Recording and reporting procedures to promote Attendance and Retention</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration Roll call is taken on VSWare at the 9am class and in every subsequent class during the school day. 2. Parents are requested to use the Attendance Hot-Line telephone and to record absences on the message service before 10am. A text is sent to parents by 10:00 a.m. approximately if a student is marked absent without explanation on VSWare. 3. If any teachers are taking students out of their normal class for any activity they will provide a list to the Attendance Officer in advance so that those students may be marked as being on school business on the VSWare system. This means that when a teacher takes the roll call on VSWare they will see who has a legitimate reason to be out. 4. A student arriving late into school in the morning must report to the Guidance/Attendance office with a note of explanation and the student will be marked present but late on the VSWare system. 5. A student signing out early reports to the Guidance/Attendance Office with a note of explanation, details will be put this into the system and teachers will be able to see that they left early with permission. 6. An attendance tracker will deal with any alerts generated by a student not being accounted for. Only parents/guardians may sign students out from school. 7. Class tutors will request notes from students on their return from absence. They will follow up on any notes not received. Class tutors will update the Attendance Officer if there is a note. 8. Subject Teachers/Class Tutors/Year Heads will inform the Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor

	<p>if there is a pattern emerging or a concern regarding attendance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. The Attendance Officer will compile a report at the end of each month showing number of late mornings, attendance and the number of times they left early for every student. 10. Once a student misses 20 days a standard warning letter will be issued to parents and the Túsla - Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed. The Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor will discuss this matter with the parents/guardians involved. 12. If any student misses 25 days or more the Principal will make an appointment with parents to discuss attendance.
<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</p> <p>The policy aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage full attendance at school. • Highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents. • Ensure that adequate records of attendances and absences are maintained by the school as per the Education Act 2000 in respect of each individual student. • Report on student attendance to Túsla – the Educational Welfare Service. • Implement suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality. <p>Interventions to Promote attendance</p> <p>The school provides universal interventions to all students and targeted interventions to certain students. The school recognises that certain groups or individuals may need additional support with attendance and this is provided through targeted and intensive interventions. These groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with special educational needs • Students with health needs • Students who have experienced bullying • Students experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties • Students disengaged from the curriculum • Students from the Traveller or Roma communities • Students who are experiencing homelessness • Students who are asylum seekers or living in direct provision centres

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students
- Students in foster care
- Young carers or young parents
- Students whose parents have not had a positive school experience
- Students from families where there has been a history of poor school attendance
- Students from socio-economically deprived family or community.

1. Universal Interventions

- a. The school endeavours to provide a safe and orderly environment for students in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
- b. The school deals with bullying related matters in accordance with the anti-bullying policy.
- c. First years are provided with a comprehensive induction programme.
- d. All students follow an SPHE programme to assist them throughout their schooling.
- e. All students are offered the support of a Class Tutor and Year Head as part of the pastoral care system.
- f. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities - sport, music, drama, art etc.
- g. All parents will receive details on absence/lateness in reports home up to twice a year.
- h. Students are provided with a broad curriculum with subjects which suit the talents of all.
- i. All parents get a text home if their son/daughter is absent without explanation.

2. Targeted Interventions

- a. The school offers the Buddy programme to students.
- b. The school provides after school/late study.
- c. The guidance counsellor works with students who are having anxiety or mental health based absenteeism.
- d. Families may be supported by the Mentoring Team.
- e. Meetings may be held with the Year Head, Class Tutor, Deputy- Principal, Principal, Mentoring Team, the parents/guardians and the student(s) concerned.
- f. The school may offer a differentiated curriculum to certain targeted students.
- g. The school may seek the assistance of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the

	<p>National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Barnardo's, Túsła – The Child and Family Agency and any other organisation which may be of assistance.</p> <p>3. <u>Intensive Intervention</u></p> <p>a. Students may be referred to the Túsła Education Welfare Officer for support and will work closely with the Education Welfare Officer to support the student.</p> <p>b. Students may, with the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer, be offered reduced timetables or alternative educational programmes.</p>
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p>School Principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate which is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance; • Leads the review and implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy; • Initiates links with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues; • Notifies Túsła's Education Welfare Services and the Education Welfare Officer of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensures support for the work of the Education Welfare Officer with students who have chronic attendance difficulties. <p>School Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the school community Attendance & Participation is the responsibility of all parties. • The Implementation of the Policy on a daily basis is under the direction of the Attendance Officer/Guidance Counsellor, with whole school involvement throughout. (See attached Daily Roll Procedure). • The involvement of the Guidance Counsellor in monitoring Attendance has led to a more holistic and positive approach to dealing with Attendance Issues. <p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a classroom climate and classroom management which support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance; • Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy to

	<p>promote attendance;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms; • Ensure attendance data is recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures; • Alert relevant staff if concerns arise in relation to a student’s attendance; • Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis; <p>The role of the Parent/Guardian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality; • Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child’s attendance and support plans to address the problem; • Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time; • Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason; • Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families may be supported by the Year Head, the Principal, Deputy- Principal, Principal, Mentoring Team, and the school may offer a differentiated curriculum to certain targeted students. • The school may seek the assistance of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Barnardo’s, Túsla – The Child and Family Agency and any other organisation which may be of assistance.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<p>Attendance is monitored daily by the Principal, Deputy Principal, the Mentoring Team and staff in general. The Attendance Officer compiles a report at the end of each month showing the number of Absences, Latenesses and Early Departures. This is analysed by School Management, the Mentoring Team, Year Heads and Class Tutors.</p>
Review process and date for review	<p>The Attendance Strategy will be reviewed in December of each academic year.</p>
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Túsla	

