



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Scoil Chaitriona
Address	College Street, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal
Roll Number	17945g
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>The vision of Scoil Chaitriona is to foster the spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing of the children entrusted to our care.</p> <p>We endeavour to provide a sound education which is holistic in approach and tailored to the individual child's needs.</p> <p>The vision of our school however, may only be recognised through positive school experiences and high attendance levels.</p> <p>Scoil Chaitriona aims to work together with parents and guardians to foster positive attitudes to regular school attendance and learning.</p> <p>The Aims of this Statement of Strategy are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance. ● To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early. ● To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning. ● To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>Scoil Chaitriona and its Board of Management recognises that attendance is crucial to allow for effective learning and the development of our children.</p> <p>We strive to provide a warm, welcoming and supportive learning environment for our pupils and it is our intention that a good standard of attendance is maintained and that best practice in attendance and punctuality are implemented. We emphasise these</p>



	<p>intentions regularly in our communications with parents and pupils.</p> <p>We expect that students will arrive promptly for school each morning at 9.10am and are collected at 2.00pm or 3.00pm.</p> <p>We expect children to have full attendance at school unless they are ill, have medical appointments or an urgent family reason.</p>
<p>How attendance will be monitored</p>	<p>Scoil Chaitríona recognises the importance of recording, tracking and monitoring attendance. As such the school will utilise the following methods to monitor attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daily record of attendance on Aladdin system by each class teacher. ● Record of late arrivals on Aladdin system. ● Sign out Book to record early removal from class stating reason. ● Teachers will discuss concerns re attendance at parent teacher meetings and will alert Principal about concerns. ● Teachers will monitor children who may be at risk of poor attendance. ● We encourage parents to communicate reasons for absences to the school in writing on the absence slip in the school diary. ● We have regular communication with parents and provide them with updates on their child's attendance. ● Once a child misses twenty days the school is legally obliged to inform the Education Welfare Services and an Education Welfare Officer may be in contact with the parents.
<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><u>Targets</u></p> <p>The school is using the academic year 2018-19 attendance data as a baseline. Our attendance rate for the 2018-19 year was 92%. We would like to at least maintain and hope to improve on this level.</p> <p>Last year we had 13 pupils(out of 64, 20%) who missed 20 days of school or more. Over the next 3 years we aim to reduce that figure to 8 or less(12%).</p>



Whole-School Approach:

Staff and Board of Management will collaborate to implement this policy. All teachers will take responsibility in striving for excellent attendance and being vigilant for children who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.

Promoting Good Attendance:

To emphasise the value Scoil Chaitríona puts on good attendance we:

- Highlight the importance of attendance and positive affirmation of attendance when the roll is being taken.
- Record attendance in students' Parent Teacher Meetings and also in their end of year School Reports.
- Celebrate students with good attendance by acknowledging their achievement with a reward and certificate.
- Distribution of Tusla's Educational Welfare Services' leaflet entitled *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out*.
- Involve parents in all aspects of school life and promote good communication between home and school.
- The school will use regular newsletters and web texts to promote attendance and punctuality.
- Communication with class teachers through Class Dojo builds positive, supportive relationships with parents.
- The HSCL teacher works to raise parental awareness through letters, meetings and Parent courses.
- Provide curricular and extra-curricular activities such as art, drama, music, sporting and IT enrichment activities to encourage high levels of attendance.
- Provide after school activities such as Gaelic Football and Art and Crafts.
- Timetable enjoyable subjects for Mondays and Fridays.
- Offer Skills programmes in the areas of behaviour, confidence, self-esteem and well-being. Eg. Incredible Years, Life Skills, Transfer Programme.



- Develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility by involving Target children on school committees eg Green Schools, Active schools, Creative Schools and Library.
- Track and celebrate whole-class and whole-school attendance.
- Provision of healthy snacks and hot lunches for children in school.
- Foster links with other schools, youth organisations and local organisations such as Foróige and Donegal Traveller Project.
- Equality of Participation: Children are not excluded from participating in activities because of inability to pay e.g. school tours.
- Curriculum: Understanding and support are given to children who have difficulty with or who are reluctant to engage in certain aspects of the curriculum.
- To engage with support agencies such as the Department of Education and Skills, National Psychological Service (NEPS), National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the HSE and TESS- the Child and Family Agency .

Responding to Poor Attendance

- Class teachers will inform the Principal of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- Contact between school and parent/guardian to express concern re attendance, late arrival or early removal e.g. phone call, letter, discuss at parent teacher meeting.
- Specific meeting in school with parent/guardian to identify problems and agree interventions.
- Concerns and agreements communicated in writing to parent/guardian.
- Implementation of any appropriate in-school measures (e.g. 'contact person' in school, support in class etc.).
- Use of appropriate interventions with pupil (e.g. attendance charts/ attendance report, incentives, rewards etc.).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other school interventions (e.g. Pastoral care teams). ● Children will be monitored by and work with the Sligo School Completion Teacher throughout the year, including over the Summer holidays. ● Children will be included on school committees. ● Children will be offered a place at our DEIS Summer camp. ● Principal/Post holder will work closely with various agencies who are involved with such students. ● Contact TUSLA to assist with issues, where necessary.
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p>Each class teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourages and commends good attendance. ● Implements any whole school plan to promote good attendance. ● Provides a busy and stimulating classroom where children feel valued. ● Calls the roll electronically on a daily basis, using the Aladdin data system. ● Collects any notes/medical certs regarding absence. ● Notes any queries or concerns re absence. ● Records individual patterns of attendance. ● Consults with parents where there are concerns around attendance or where parents have not provided explanations regarding absences. ● Makes Principal aware of concerns with regard to the attendance of individual children, specifically when a pupil's absences approaches or exceeds 20 days. <p>The Principal / Deputy Principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes good attendance at school assemblies, meetings with parents, end of year events. ● Updates the BOM about attendance in the school ● Ensures that the electronic version of the 'Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil' (Daily Attendance Book - records summary information in relation to daily, monthly and annual attendance of



	<p>pupils) is filled, printed and filed on a monthly basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keeps in regular contact with parents where attendance is a concern. ● Follows up on any issues regarding attendance. ● Makes the quarterly and annual statistical return to Tusla. ● Makes referrals to Tusla when deemed necessary. ● Advises parents of the importance of regular school attendance by means of reminders in Family Notes. <p>Board of Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this strategy under the guidance and authority of the school’s Board of Management. ● The Board works to provide and support a positive, welcoming environment by maintaining and resourcing the school to a high standard, which in turn promotes good attendance.
<p>Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)</p>	<p>Parents / Guardians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that children are in school every day, as far as possible. ● It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that children are on time for school. ● When children are absent from school/late for school, parents should provide a note to the school with an explanation for that absence/lateness for school records. <p>Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance. ● Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason. ● Making sure that children understand that parents/guardians support good school attendance. ● Discussing planned absences with the school.



- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- Encouraging their children to participate in school activities.
- Praising and encouraging their children's achievements.
- Instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
- Ensuring, in so far as possible, that their children's appointments (with dentists etc.), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school immediately if they have concerns about absence or other school-related matters.
- Notifying the school, in writing, if their children, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher. This applies particularly to children in junior classes.
- Working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance issues.

Other Schools

- Constant links with local schools are fostered.
- Provision of relevant information eg. school reports, educational information (SEN) to other primary or second level schools to which a student may be transitioning or transferring.

Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in our school:

- TUSLA.
- NEPS.
- Local GAA clubs, soccer clubs, etc.
- Community Gardaí.



	<p>Local Organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils are encouraged to participate in local organisations outside school. ● Providing rewards of achievement in pupil's chosen activity. ● School encourages pupils to bring in any awards.
<p>How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored</p>	<p>Scoil Chaitríona will monitor the strategy by discussing attendance at meetings during Croke Park hours with all staff. The Principal will discuss children at risk and possible solutions.</p> <p><i>The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin database and Leabhar rolla records. ● Happy, confident, well- adjusted children. ● Positive parental feedback. ● Teacher vigilance. ● A satisfactory level of accountability for all absences.
<p>Review process and date for review</p>	<p>Strategy to be reviewed by Staff and Board of Management annually.</p>
<p>Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management</p>	<p>This strategy was discussed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 21st November 2022.</p>
<p>Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla</p>	<p>22/11/22</p>