



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

Template for the Statement of Strategy  
for School Attendance

Name of school	Scoil Dara
Address	Church Street, Kilcock, Co, Kildare
Roll Number	61691B
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>Scoil Dara is a co- educational secondary school under the Trusteeship of CEIST. Scoil Dara promotes a community of faith inspired by gospel values.</p> <p>The school adopts a positive whole-school and whole-community approach to maximise supports available for those students most likely to struggle with school attendance, participation and retention.</p> <p>The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world.</p> <p>The dignity to each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures.</p> <p>While educational excellence is promoted, it is the needs of the learner that direct the development of the school. We engage with alternative approaches to education especially for those who are most disadvantaged.</p> <p>Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations where every student is encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning in order to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Students are regularly made aware of the importance of being present, to allow continuity of learning, and the implications for them of irregular attendance is highlighted throughout the curriculum</p>

	<p>Records of attendance are available to parents to view on Eportal by logging in using their unique password</p> <p>The school's reward system acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality</p> <p>Through participation in school life and extracurricular activities, a sense of belonging in school is developed</p>
<p>The school's high expectations around attendance</p>	<p>Scoil Dara believes that regular and punctual attendance is essential for all students to reach their full potential at school. The purpose of our Attendance Strategy is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in the education system. It is hoped that by constantly monitoring and tracking students' attendance records, absenteeism will improve, and students will have a positive school experience.</p> <p>Scoil Dara will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them.</li> <li>• Ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality</li> <li>• Ensure the school fulfils its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant acts.</li> <li>• Develop a positive approach to attendance and punctuality</li> <li>• Encourage students to take responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality</li> <li>• Maintain accurate records of students' whereabouts throughout the school day</li> <li>• Identify at an early stage any poor attendance patterns</li> <li>• Explain to parents the role they play in their sons/daughter's school attendance</li> </ul>

How attendance will be monitored

- The school day begins at 09:00 am and ends at 3:50 pm Monday – Thursday and finishes at 1:20pm on a Friday
- Students are expected to be at school before 8.50 am at the latest, to ensure that students are ready with all the required books and equipment for classes
- All class teachers take registration using Eportal at the start of each lesson
- Period 1 is the designated class period to record the roll call for the purposes of TUSLA returns
- Students who are absent, are marked absent on Eportal
- An absence report is published at 09:20 each morning
- An automatic text is sent to parents at 09:20 if a student is not registered as present on the schools Eportal system
- A copy of the absence report is inserted in the schools' Health & Safety folder in the Student Records & Administration Secretary's office in case of an emergency e.g. fire
- In the event of an absence students must supply the school authorities with a written explanation in the journal provided by the parent /guardian for the absence. This note is to be given to the Student Records & Administration Secretary
- If a student is absent for more than three days without an explanation the parent/guardian is phoned by the Year Head to explain the absence
- After 10 days absence, a phone call is made to the parents/guardians by the Deputy Principal to discuss the situation
- After 15 days absence, a letter is sent by the Principal to the parents/guardians of students under 16 to inform them of the school's obligation to inform TUSLA and inviting them to the school to discuss the situation
- After 20 days absence a report is made to TUSLA by the Principal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued poor attendance will be monitored and in a situation where attendance does not improve, the parents will be invited to a meeting with the Year Head/Deputy Principal /Principal to identify problems for the poor attendance</li> <li>• Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve the issue of persistent absenteeism through consultation with parents/guardians, school staff and TUSLA</li> <li>• If a student needs to leave the school, during the school day, for an appointment, family reasons, illness or other such reason, the student is required to sign out at the school’s Main Office. Prior to signing out the student must get the note signed by the Year Head</li> <li>• Students will not be allowed to leave without prior parental consent written in their journal</li> <li>• The secretary will record the student’s name on the ‘Signing in &amp; Signing Out Book’</li> <li>• When a parent/guardian arrives to collect his/her child he/she must sign the Signing Out book and indicate whether the student is expected to return</li> <li>• If a parent is unable to collect their son/daughter a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to seek permission for the student to walk home</li> <li>• Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to leave without being collected by a parent/guardian or a nominated person or a phone call is made to a parent/ guardian</li> <li>• The secretary will record the student’s departure from the school on Facility Admin</li> <li>• The student is required to sign in on their return</li> <li>• A record of student attendance is provided as part of the Christmas and Summer reports</li> </ul>
<p>Summary of the main elements of the school’s approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target setting and targets</li> <li>• The whole-school approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a raised awareness about the importance of attendance for a student’s learning and school success, and communicate high expectations for attendance at assemblies</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting good attendance</li> <li>• Responding to poor attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who attain full attendance during the school year will be entered into a draw and a prize will be given at the end of year Awards Ceremony</li> <li>• Identification at an early stage of students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems</li> <li>• Establishment of closer contacts between the school concerned and the families of students with school attendance issues</li> <li>• Establishment of lunchtime and after school activities such as, chill zone at lunchtime or sporting activities such as basketball, Athletics, Gaelic Football, Football and Rugby</li> <li>• Involvement in school based and national competitions and initiative e.g. John Paul II Award, Sci-Fest, YSI and Mathletes etc.</li> <li>• The Year Head reinforces the importance of school attendance and the negative impacts that absenteeism has on student learning at assemblies</li> <li>• Based on statistics from previous years (please see appendix A) the school is committed to increasing average attendance rates to surpass an average rate of 90% attendance for each year group.</li> </ul>
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p>The Principal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that appropriate systems are in place to record attendance and absences of students</li> <li>• Promote full attendance and punctuality</li> <li>• Monitor attendance records</li> <li>• Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer regarding concerns about students' attendance and absenteeism</li> <li>• Submit reports to TUSLA regarding concerns about students' attendance and absenteeism</li> <li>• Inform students and parents/guardians about procedures for notification of absences and withdrawal if students from the school</li> </ul>

- In accordance with Section 21 of Education Welfare Act 2000 If a parent decides to take a child out of school for holidays, the Principal will request the parent to provide a letter to the school to say they are doing so and that they are aware of the implications
- Where there are regular holiday absences, the Principal should remind parents of the educational and potential legal impact of removing students from school for periods of time

The Deputy Principal will:

- Promote full attendance and punctuality
- Monitor attendance records
- Monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from school or from classes as reported by class teachers
- Contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences are suspected
- Assist in the completion of absence return forms for submission to TUSLA

The Year Head will:

- Promote full attendance and punctuality
- Monitor attendance records for members of their Year Group on a weekly basis
- Note any absence trends that may emerge e.g. Monday mornings or regular absences on a specific day
- Contact parents/guardians when no contact has been made regarding absences of 3 days or more

Class Teachers will:

- Have high expectations of students – an effect that operates over and above the students' own expectations of themselves
- Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and

engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance

- Take a roll call in every class in their teacher diary and on Eportal
- Actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- Maintain accurate class rolls and record any late arrivals or early departures from class
- Create a welcoming atmosphere with a positive teacher-student relationship
- Discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent-Teacher meetings
- In cases where lateness or non-attendance is emerging, the class teacher should consult with the Year Head/Deputy Principal

Student Records & Administration Secretary will:

- Monitor punctuality on a daily basis, overwriting the absence category of students who are late for school
- To monitor the recording of attendance on Eportal by teachers
- To liaise and assist class teachers in matters relating to the recording of attendance on Eportal
- Liaise with Year Heads, Deputy Principals and Principal in relation to students for whom attendance is a problem
- Submit the required reports to TUSLA during the school year and complete and submit the End of Year report to TUSLA
- Submit an End of Year Report to the Board of Management with regard to Attendance and Punctuality
- Inform all teaching staff of their legal obligation in regard to recording attendance accurately
- Make a presentation to staff at the beginning of the school year regarding the recording of

attendance and punctuality, presenting facts and figures and strategies for improvement

- To collect absence notes from students and file them

Parents of students in Scoil Dara will:

- Have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend (Section 17 of Education (Welfare) Act 2000)
- When a student is absent from school during part of a school day or for a school day or for more than a school day notify the principal about the reasons for the child's absence in accordance with Section 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act
- Will comprehend that the school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time and that only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Section 21(9) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000).

Students of Scoil Dara will:

- Attend punctually all timetabled classes every day unless there is a valid reason not to do so
- Present a written absence note from parents/guardians in their journal on their return to school after a period of absence
- Monitor and take responsibility for their own attendance by filling out the Attendance Tracker in their journal
- Provide a written note from parents/guardians in their journal on arrival late for school



Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	Established closer contacts between the school concerned and the families of students with school attendance issues, through parent teacher meetings, phone calls and texts home to parents in relation to absences and an automatic text at 09:15 if a student is not registered as present on the schools Eportal system  The school will engage with relevant bodies and engage with services where there is a concern regarding attendance
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	The strategy will be monitored by the Principal in consultation with the Two Deputy Principals of the school, Assistant Principals, Programme Co-Ordinator and the Student Records & Administration Secretary
Review process and date for review	End of Term 1 (Christmas) End of Term 2 (Easter) End of Term 3 (Summer)
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	

#### Appendix A

Average Attendance	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	TY	5 <sup>th</sup> Year	LCA 1	6 <sup>th</sup> Year	LCA2
Sept 2017 - Dec 2017	94%	93%	89%	79%	88%	74%	80%	71%
Sept 2016 - June 2017	94%	93%	91%	74%	86%	91%	86%	77%