



An Ráiteas Straitéise faoi Fhreastal Scoile

Ainm na Scoile	Coláiste Muire
Seoladh	Tuar Mhic Éadaigh, Co. Mhaigh Eo
Uimhir Rolla	64691Q

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

Coláiste Muire is a co-educational Voluntary Secondary School. The school is operated on the basis fundamental Christian principal; treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated. The school authorities and staff work to ensure a safe environment. We strive to encourage the holistic development of our students in an atmosphere that enhances both academic and personal growth.

Aims

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To identify students at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and foster positive attitudes to learning
- To enhance the learning environment
- To ensure compliance with the relevant legislation
- Parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance.
- To develop a positive approach to attendance and punctuality.
- Keep accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours.
- Students learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance.

The school's high expectations around attendance

Coláiste Muire has high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality as poor attendance and punctuality by some students negatively impacts the teaching and learning of all students through the disruption caused by students arriving late and hinders the progression of the class through the curriculum.

Parents 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). A substantial amount of research demonstrates that

there are significant benefits for students with good school attendance while poor school attendance has a negative impact.

How attendance will be monitored

- Students' attendance is recorded every morning in the first class of the day at 9.00am. It is at this time that a student will be marked present or absent for the day. VSware is used to record and monitor attendance in every class by the teacher.
- A text message will be sent out each morning at 9.45am notifying parents that their child is absent.
- When a student is absent from school during part of the school day or for a school day or for more than a school day, Section 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 places legal duty on parents to notify the principal about the reasons for the student's absence. A student who is absent from school must, on his/her return, provide a written explanation from parents using the notes included in the dialann scoile.
- The school day begins at 9.00am and ends at 3.55pm on Monday & Tuesday and 3.15pm on Wednesday, Thursday & Friday. Students are expected to be in attendance at school before 8.55am to ensure they are prepared for their classes. If a student arrives later than 9.00am or at any other stage during the day, they must present to the secretary's office and 'sign in'.
- If a student is leaving the school early for an appointment, a note explaining this must be presented in the first class also. When a parent /guardian is collecting their child, they must sign out the student in the secretary's office.
- If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time i.e. more than three days, the parent / guardian should contact the school to notify them of the reason.
- If a student arrives late to school they must sign in in the secretary's office. This will be recorded as late on VSware.
- Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by the school staff as school activity (SCH). The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names and, prior to departure, displays a list of names in the staffroom and provides a copy of the list to the school office. If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Admin Staff of same.
- The school must inform the NEWB, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for six days or more. This report must be made irrespective of the reason for the student's absence. If the school is very concerned about the pattern of a student's absences, then the school is obliged by law to inform the NEWB. The school will always inform parents if a report is being made to the NEWB.
- The school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time. If a parent decides to take a child out of school for holidays the school requires a letter to the principal saying they are doing so. Taking a student out of school during term time has a potential risk to his/her education and the student will need to take action to catch up on what he/she has missed.

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

- Coláiste Muire endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for staff, students and their parents/guardians.
- The calendar for the academic year is published annually in the school journal and on the school website. It is hoped that this will enable parents to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- The issue is addressed with parents/guardians at Parent-teacher Meetings and on the Christmas and Summer reports by teachers and tutors.
- The importance of attendance is highlighted at assemblies by Year Heads.
- The number of days missed is written clearly on students' reports at Christmas and Summer.
- During the Awards Ceremony certificates are presented to students to acknowledge excellent attendance.
- The school offers a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and encourages all students to get involved in these activities. Involvement in these types of activities in school can encourage students to attend. Students are encouraged to become involved in the Student Council.
- The school has developed close links with the main feeder primary schools and with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

Responding to Poor Attendance

In order to improve poor attendance the following strategies are implemented:

- Contacting parents (usually Year head) on an informal basis when a student is absent regularly in order to begin a dialogue about attendance
- Reporting to parents when students are absent without their permission
- Tracking of students through the Care Team
- Contacting the EWO
- Positive reinforcement of good or improving attendance as outlined above. Every effort is made to re-engage students who are working to improve their attendance
- Re-invigorating current systems in order to focus on a particular group or individual
- Providing teachers with information as to which students are particularly at risk of developing attendance problems through appropriate updates from the Care Team and information meetings at the beginning of the school year.
- When the school has exhausted all efforts and there is no improvement in attendance a referral will be made to Tusla's Education Welfare Services

School roles in relation to attendance

Príomhoide

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- To monitor attendance records regularly.
- To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences withdrawal of students from the School.
- To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.

Leasphríomhoide

- To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Class Tutors, Administration Staff and to implement the School Policy.
- To liaise with the Year Head and Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.
- To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance.

Ceann Bliana

- To monitor regularly the attendance records on VShare for the given year.
- To liaise with the Tutors and Care teams to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- To meet, along with the Deputy Principal, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue.
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/ or when patterns of absences are developing and to notify the Deputy Principal of same.
- To remind the students during the assemblies of the Year Group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- To conduct an attendance and punctuality audit at the end of each term. Contact home to raise concerns about patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.
- To check absence notes from parents/guardians and to store these safely for the duration of the year.

Múinteoir ábhair

- To record the attendance of every class everyday on VShare. When substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave, the teacher will complete registration for that class using VShare (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school). If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually on paper and submit to the Secretary's office. If the class teacher is substituting during these periods the attendance should be recorded either electronically on VShare or on the class list available for that time and then submitted to the Secretary's Office.
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.
- Set example by their own punctuality.

- Acknowledge students, welcome them back and support them upon their return to school.

Tuismitheoirí / Caomhnóirí

- To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities. (Education Welfare Act 2000)
- To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unnecessary absences.
- To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the **first day** of return to school.
- To inform the school in advance of any planned absences from school.
- To provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers.
- To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
- To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.
- To arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays.
- Signing out of school: Any student who needs to leave school early must be collected by a parent / guardian or another nominated person of which the school is informed.

Daltaí

- To be in class on time
- If absent from school, contact should be made with a fellow student to obtain the classwork and homework.
- Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation to their Year Head in the School Journal on the day of return to class. Failure to do so will result in detention in line with the schools Code of Behaviour.
- To present to the school office if they are ill
- Students absent from school for whatever reason must catch up on the work covered for the day(s) they were absent.

Rúnaí na Scoile

- To input attendance data from Class Teachers when required.
- To amend on a daily basis, the records on VShare from absence unexplained to absence explained where relevant. Students who fail to produce reason for absence notes will be given detention in line with the schools code of behaviour.
- To work in conjunction with the Attendance Officer to submit the four reports to the NEWB.
- To administer the signing in and out of students and to ensure that the online attendance register is kept updated following the signing in and out of students.

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

The school will liaise with relevant bodies and engage with services where there is a concern regarding attendance.

How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored

Teachers, Parents Association and Students' Council will be central to the monitoring and evaluation of the Statement of Strategy. This will be done by investigating attendance rates at the end of the school year and comparing them to previous years.

This Statement of Strategy will then be reviewed and this review will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

Date for Review:

The Statement of Strategy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in conjunction with related policies at intervals set by the Board, but at least every two years.

Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management: 14 Nollaig 2017

Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla: 15 Nollaig 2017