***Statement of Strategy***

***for Pupil Attendance.***

MC900198609[1]

***Scoil an Fhraoich Mhóir***

***The Heath, Portlaoise.***

***Roll Number: 18150S***

***Rationale:***

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, pupils, parents, Board of Management and Educational Welfare Officer in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in Scoil an Fhraoich Mhóir to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school. It was updated in 2017/18.

***The school’s vision and values:***

Our vision regarding attendance is that all pupils attend school every day. We value regular attendance, punctuality, routine and consistency for pupils.

***The school’s high expectations around attendance:***

As expressed in our vision and values the school expects that all pupils will attend school every day unless they are unwell or there is an urgent family reason for being absent.

***Monitoring attendance:***

Our school monitors attendance on a daily basis through class teachers and the calling of class rolls. Class teachers bring any attendance or punctuality concerns to the attention of the principal. Electronic school management software is used to record daily attendance. This software provides data on all aspects of each pupil’s attendance including dates, reasons and number of absences. The system also provides an overview of attendance including, daily absence, most absent pupils, monthly, termly and yearly reports. This enables the school to identify attendance concerns and provides data for early intervention.

***Our school’s approach to attendance:***

* ***Target setting and targets***
  + School attendance is in general very good. The school sets targets based on the previous year’s Annual Attendance Report and data provided by the school’s management software.
  + Our target for 2017/’18 is to match or improve the 95.7% attendance rate for 2016/’17 which exceeded the 95% attendance rate for 2015/’16.
  + To monitor the 13 pupils who reached 20 or more day’s absence in 2016/17 and to reduce this number in 2017/18. Unfortunately while overall attendance improved in 2016/17 the number who reached 20 twenty days remained the same as the previous school year.
* ***Whole school approach***
  + Our school believes that good school attendance is achieved by the whole school community working together in promoting its importance. This includes staff, pupils, parents, Parents’ Council, Board of Management and external community and state organisations.
  + All members of the school community are expected to support the school in providing the best educational outcomes for all pupils. This can only be achieved if pupils attend school regularly.
  + Each grouping within the school community are expected to carry out their roles regarding attendance as set out in the school’s attendance policy.
* ***Promoting good attendance***
  + Our school is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to good school attendance.
  + The school provides a holistic education which recognises the many different intelligences children possess. Insofar as is practicable teachers differentiate the school curriculum to the needs of the individual child.
  + Numerous extra-curricular activities are run during the school day with all pupils encouraged to participate.
  + The school promotes the development of good self-concept and self-worth in pupils.
  + The school seeks support for pupils with special educational needs.
  + Good internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of special educational needs and other issues of concern which they should be aware of.
  + A reward system for promoting good attendance is in operation in the school.
  + The school places a high value on good communication and relationships with parents/guardians.
  + Attendance rates are continually monitored throughout the school year.
  + The importance of school attendance is continually re-enforced by staff in class, at school assemblies and in school newsletters.
* ***Responding to poor attendance***
  + Pupil attendance patterns are monitored on an ongoing basis by school staff.
  + Parents are expected to provide written explanation for all absences from school. Provision for such explanations is provided in every pupils’ homework notebook. Failure to provide a written explanation is recorded as unexplained absence.
  + Where a pattern of unexplained absence develops the school will contact parents with regard to the absences and the lack of explanation for same.
  + When a significant reason for a pupil’s absence from school occurs (eg. serious/contagious illness, hospitalisation, bereavement), parents/guardians are expected to inform the school and discuss how best to protect the child’s education.
  + Rates of absence are monitored continually by the school and where the rate raises a concern without satisfactory parental explanation the parent/guardian will be contacted to meet with the school principal to discuss attendance.
  + The school will seek to assist parents/guardians who are experiencing difficulties with their child’s attendance and encourage parents/guardians to discuss what supports they need to ensure their child can attend school.
  + Where a parent/guardian fails to respond to informal correspondence from the school, formal correspondence will issue to the parent/guardians home address.
  + A standard letter is sent to all parents whose child has reached twenty days absence to inform them that their child’s name has been forwarded to Tusla.
  + When school interventions fail to improve attendance or efforts by the school to discuss attendance difficulties have been ignored the school principal will make a referral to Tusla’s Educational Welfare Services.

***School roles in relation to attendance:***

* The roles of each member of the school community in relation to attendance is set out in the school’s attendance policy which can be viewed at [www.heathns.ie](http://www.heathns.ie)

***Partnership Arrangements:***

* The school places a high value on communication and positive relationships. In this regard the school seeks to work with pupils and parents/guardians in the first instance to resolve any attendance difficulties.
* The school works with a number of external support services and agencies eg. NEPs, Tusla, Educational Welfare Services when additional advice or support is required.
* The school also works with local community organisations eg. Portlaoise Parish, GAA clubs, Vincent de Paul, Barnados, community Gardai, Laois Sports Partnership to support pupils in our school.

***Monitoring of Statement of Strategy***

* The statement of strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis by school staff in particular the school principal who will be able to monitor its implementation and level of success.

***Statement of Strategy Review***

* The statement of strategy will be reviewed with the school’s attendance policy every two years. The next review of both is due in March 2020. It will also be considered by the Board of Management annually in light of the annual attendance report which is submitted to Tusla at the endo of each school year.
* Any feedback received either by members of the school community or external organisations will be considered at each review.

***Board of Management Approval***

This Statement of Strategy was discussed and approved by the Board of Management at its meeting of 30th November 2016 and most recently on 14th March 2018.

***Date Statement of Strategy submitted to school patron and Tusla***

This Statement of Strategy was submitted to the school patron and Tusla on 1st December 2016 and most recently 21st March 2018.