

**The Statement of Strategy for School Attendance**

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| Name of school | Portmarnock Community School |
| Address | Carrickhill Road  Portmarnock  Co Dublin |
| Roll Number | 91324P |
| The school’s vision and values in relation to attendance | Good attendance is promoted in Portmarnock Community School by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class.  **Scope:**  Board of Management, Teaching Staff, Administration Staff, Parents Association, Student Council  **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 active, responsible citizens (Ref. Mission Statement)  *To instil a spirit of intellectual enquiry and academic endeavour*  *To foster the desire for participation and challenge*  *To build individual and compassionate men and women of character*  **Rationale:**   * To work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and welfare of the students * To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process * To ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them * To ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance * To ensure the school fulfils its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant acts. Under the Act, Education Welfare Boards have been established to oversee school attendance nationwide and each school has been assigned an Education Welfare Officer whose duty it is to liaise with the school in relation to any attendance problems which may emerge. The Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:   + A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days   o The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than twenty   * + A student’s name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the   Principal  o A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school in which he/she is registered, not attending school regularly |
| The school’s high expectations around attendance | * Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class * Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance. This is also promoted through the Pastoral Care programme * The Year Head and/or member(s) of the Student Support Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue * Reports to Parents/Guardians include a detailed breakdown of attendance for the period in question for students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue * Records of attendance and punctuality are available to parents to view on VSware by logging in using the unique password for that student * The school’s reward system acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality * A sense of belonging and connectedness in school is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities |
| How attendance will be monitored | * Attendance is recorded by every class teacher or supervisor at the beginning of every lesson * Parents/Guardians are informed via text if their son/daughter is absent from school during the first class period of each day * Records of attendance and punctuality are available to parents to view on VSware by logging in using the unique password for that student * No student is allowed to leave the school during class time without permission of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head or Tutor * Students who leave the school during the day due to illness or appointments must be collected by a parent/guardian at School Reception and must then sign out. The signing out is inputted to VSware * Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the VSware system by administrative staff as school business. The teacher who oversees the school activity prepares a list of the names and, prior to departure, emails a list of student to the administration staff and provides a copy of the list to Reception. If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Administration Staff of same * Once a student misses 20 school days a standard notification letter will be issued to parents and the Tusla/Educational Education Officer (EWO) will be informed |
| Summary of the main elements of the school’s approach to attendance:   * Target setting and targets * The whole-school approach * Promoting good attendance   Responding to poor attendance | **Goals:**   * 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 * Parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child’s school attendance * Reduce the rate of absenteeism and encourage full attendance where possible * The early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance and punctuality   The Attendance Strategy is currently under review and is a key operating theme in our Three Year Strategic Plan (2019-2021) |
| School roles in relation to attendance | **Roles and responsibility:**  **Principal:**   * 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 * Facilitate mixed ability classes in so far as possible throughout the curriculum     **Deputy Principals:**   * 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   **Year Head**:   * To monitor regularly the attendance records on the VSware system 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 * Use the special certificates and other rewards to promote attendance in the year group * To conduct an attendance and punctuality audit at the end of each term. Contact home to acknowledge excellent attendance and punctuality and to raise concerns about patterns of poor attendance and punctuality   **Class Tutor:**   * During Monday morning’s Tutor class -to check absence notes from parents/guardians and to store these safely for the duration of the year * To amend on a weekly basis, the records on VSware from absence unexplained to absence explained where relevant. Students who fail to produce reason for absence notes should be reported to Year Head * Contact in the case of a student being absent for three consecutive days where the school has not already received notification of absence. If they do not get an answer, or have concerns they should then report to Year Head * To liaise with the Year Head in the event of absences not being explained or where any other problems may arise in relation to attendance and punctuality   **Class Teacher:**   * To record the attendance of every class every day. When substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave, the teacher will complete registration for that class using the VSware system (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school) * 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 * Teachers need to be made fully aware of their responsibilities regarding the recording of attendance and follow up of any concerns regarding attendance. They need to carry out an initial investigation and refer to Tutor / Year Head if the student does not have a satisfactory explanation for absence from your class   **Parent/Guardian:**   * 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 Where possible, to arrange appointments outside of school time e.g. Wednesday afternoons * 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   **Student:**   * To be in class on time * Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation to their class tutor in the School Journal on the day of return to class   **Administrative Staff:**   * To input attendance data from Class Teachers when required * To work in conjunction with the Attendance Officer to submit reports to the NEWB/Tusla * To administer 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  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), Tusla – The Child and Family Agency and any other organisation which may be of assistance. |
| How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored | The Statement of Strategy will be monitored by the Year Heads and the Senior Management Team |
| Review process and date for review | The Attendance Strategy is currently under review and is a key operating theme in our Three Year Strategic Plan (2019/2021) |
| Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management | Tuesday 23 October 2018 |
| Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla | Wednesday 24 October 2018 |