



# Coláiste Mhuire, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**



## **Scope**

This strategy applies to the Students, Staff, Parents and Guardians of Coláiste Mhuire Secondary School and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality. This statement of strategy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, including the Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

## **Policy Context**

The school Attendance Policy is directed by:

- The School Mission Statement
- The Pastoral Care Policy
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000

## **Relationship to the Schools' Mission, Vision and Aims**

The Coláiste Mhuire Statement of Strategy for School Attendance involves helping each student develop to his full potential, both socially and educationally. At Coláiste Mhuire we believe this can only happen where each student is encouraged to attend punctually every day. In keeping with the values and principles of the Edmund Rice Charter, we strive to make school and school attendance a pleasant and positive experience.

## **Objectives**

Through implementation of this strategy Coláiste Mhuire:

- Expects students to attend every day for the entire duration of the school day (Monday to Thursday 9am to 4pm & Friday 9am to 1:15pm).
- Highlight full attendance amongst students and parents to improve the educational welfare of our students.
- Positively enforce punctual attendance morning and evening and at each class throughout the day.
- Maintain an effective attendance record-keeping system through our VSWare system.
- Develop suitable intervention strategies to further improve school attendance and punctuality.
- Actively monitor and reward student effort for attending school.

## **Compliance**

### 1. National Educational Welfare Board

Under legislation every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete a minimal three year education in a post primary school; whichever comes later. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

### 2. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 18

Where a child is absent from the school at which he is registered during part of the school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the Code of Behaviour, prepared by the school under section 23, notify a member of the administration staff of the school of the reasons for the child's absence.

### 3. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21 (4)

The Principal of the school concerned shall inform, by notice of writing, the Educational Welfare Officer,

Where:

1. A student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.
2. The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during school year is not less than 20 days.

Coláiste Mhuire secondary school recognises the importance of good attendance and punctuality to support and improve the educational attainment of our students. Regular or prolonged absences will have a negative impact on a student's learning and development and therefore should be avoided. The school has an Attendance Strategy in place, the aim of which is to promote good attendance in the school. Poor attendance and punctuality has a similarly negative impact on the learning of the student, and has the further effect of disrupting the wider school community particularly the class into which the student is arriving late.

<b>STATEMENT OF STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE</b>	
Name of school	COLÁISTE MHUIRE SECONDARY SCHOOL
Address	COLLEGE STREET, MULLINGAR, CO. WESTMEATH N91 AT04
Roll number	63270K
Expectations of attendance	<p>Coláiste Mhuire expects all students to attend for the full school day. This expectation is evident through the strategies employed by the school in this document, and is communicated strongly to students and Parents/Guardians at opportune events throughout the academic year.</p> <p>On a day where a student is required to arrive late or leave early, a note must be shown to a member of the Senior Management Team and the student must sign the log book located in the School Office. The school administrator will update this information on VSWare at that time. Regular excused tardiness is discouraged. However, individual student circumstances are taken into consideration.</p> <p>The school has an Attendance and Punctuality Coordinator who works closely with the Senior Management Team in identifying irregular attendance</p>



	<p>senior management and student support team. The Attendance and Punctuality Coordinator inputs all information into VSWare.</p> <p><b><u>Following 6 days absent:</u></b>  Informal Intervention: The Attendance and Punctuality Coordinator will encourage the Yearhead or Tutor to speak with the student.</p> <p><b><u>Following 12 days absent:</u></b>  Formal Intervention: The Attendance and Punctuality Coordinator will send a letter of concern home, via email, for the attention of the Parent/Guardian. The Year Head will also receive notification.</p> <p><b><u>Following 17 days absent:</u></b>  Formal Intervention: The Attendance and Punctuality Coordinator will send a letter home, via email, for the attention of the Parent/Guardian. This correspondence will clearly outline the schools' legal responsibilities regarding the reporting of absences to TUSLA. The Year Head may make phone contact with the Parent/Guardian to arrange a meeting within the school. This meeting will focus on preventing further absenteeism.</p> <p><b><u>Following 20 Days absent:</u></b>  The Attendance Officer makes a referral to TUSLA. The nominated Parent/Guardian will be made aware of the referral. (U16)</p>
<p>Targets</p> <p>Whole-school approach</p>	<p>To reduce overall student absenteeism to below 5% (both monthly and annually).</p> <p>To reduce overall student referrals to TUSLA concerning absenteeism to below 1% (both monthly and annually).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A welcoming school atmosphere.</li> <li>● Wide range of Subject Options.</li> <li>● Emphasis on Cooperative Learning Strategies.</li> <li>● Provision of particular courses namely; the Transition Year and Junior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programmes.</li> <li>● A wide range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>● Guidance and Counselling Services.</li> <li>● Student-Centred Learning Support Allocations.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Best Attendance Awards.</li> </ul>

<p>Promoting good attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most Improved Attendance Awards for each year group.</li> <li>● Positive affirmations added to the student's profile on the VSWare System.</li> <li>● Reinforcing the school's positive ethos by welcoming the student on their return to school.</li> <li>● Clear communication with Parents, Guardians and Students, outlining the daily routine and supports for successful transition from primary to post primary education.</li> <li>● Continue to work closely with feeder schools to put in place arrangements to make the transition as seamless as possible.</li> <li>● Reminders and re-emphasis each year on the importance of attendance and punctuality through the school journal and assemblies.</li> <li>● Maintain and increase parental awareness of attendance and punctuality during parent's evenings, Parent-Teacher Meetings, and information evenings.</li> <li>● Continue to raise parental awareness of attendance related issues. This will be reported to parents through student term reports.</li> <li>● Rewarding and incentivising attendance and punctuality through the introduction of the '20 Day December Challenge' and prize draws.</li> </ul>
<p>Responding to poor attendance</p>	<p>Attendance Report  Attendance and Punctuality Coordinator  Attendance Officer supports  Year Head supports  Tutor supports  Guidance and Counselling Services  Learning Support  Tailored timetables to support students with specific diagnoses  Formal communication via phone calls and letters  Peer support  A statement of dates of absence will be included on term reports</p>
<p>School roles relating to attendance</p>	<p>Attendance Officer: Mr. Quinn  Attendance and Punctuality Coordinator: Ms. McKenna</p> <p>Other Team Members:  Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Lawler, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Farry, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Casey, AEN Team, Tutors and Year Heads.</p>
<p>Partnership arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Education Welfare Officer (EWO)</li> </ul>

<p>(Parents/Guardians, students, local secondary schools, youth and community groups)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reasonable Accommodations section of State Examinations Commission</li> <li>● Good 2 Talk</li> <li>● Mullingar Arts Centre</li> <li>● Moate Business College</li> <li>● Athlone Institute of Technology</li> <li>● iProject and Youthreach through Martina Smyth (EWO)</li> </ul> <p>Other schools in the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mullingar Community College</li> <li>● St. Finian's College</li> <li>● Loreto College</li> </ul>
<p>Monitoring of Statement of Strategy for School Attendance</p>	<p>The relevant student support team members and persons with responsibility for the implementation of this strategy will meet each month.</p> <p>The strategy may be updated to allow for improvements during its roll out.</p>
<p>Review process</p>	<p>This model is currently being rolled out in our school for the academic year 2022/2023. The relevant student support team members and persons with responsibility for the implementation of this pilot will meet to review the process in <b><u>Autumn 2023</u></b>.</p> <p>Attendance Report findings will be made available to all staff during staff meetings, student council meetings, parent council meetings and the Board of Management at the end of each term.</p> <p>This is an ongoing process and a review meeting may be called prior to this date, where required. The Principal, as the Attendance Officer in the school, completes the process of reviewing the Statement of School Attendance Strategy.</p>
<p>Adopted by the Board of Management</p>	<p>November 2022</p>
<p>Submission of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance to TUSLA</p>	<p>November 2022</p>



# Coláiste Mhuire An Muileann gCearr

## Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

The Board of Management formally adopted this policy on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

It shall be reviewed within the 2023-2024 academic year.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ms. Moira Mahon, Chairperson of the Board of Management**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_