

## Scoil Uí Mhuirí

### Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

**2025-2026**

Name of school	Scoil Uí Mhuirí
Address	Barn Road, Dunleer, Co. Louth
Roll Number	71780G
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p><b>‘Every School Day is a new Day’</b></p> <p>In Scoil Uí Mhuirí the need for full attendance is emphasised for all students. The Scoil Uí Mhuirí school charter states that the students are “expected to come to school every day and arrive on time. This means that you attend school every day unless it is absolutely unavoidable”.</p> <p>As recommended in the guidelines for developing the statement for school attendance, the management and staff of Scoil Uí Mhuirí engage in universal and preventative work in supporting all students to attend, participate and achieve in Scoil Uí Mhuirí. The needs of the majority of students are met as a result of whole school policies and practices, pastoral supports, incentives and awareness raising.</p> <p>Additional supports are provided to some students such as targeted attendance charts, behaviour plans and monitoring.</p> <p>A small number of students are in receipt of extra targeted support from the Home School Liaison Coordinator HSCLO, the School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Education Welfare Officer EWO.</p>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>Expectations in relation to attendance in Scoil Uí Mhuirí are:</p> <p><b>Students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To attend every day on time.</li> <li>■ To attend for full days.</li> <li>■ To explain all absences to the school via the Student Journal or Compass App.</li> </ul>

- ⊕ To upload a medical note in relation to any medical issues/conditions to the compass app.

**Parents/Guardians:**

- ⊕ To send their child to school every day.
- ⊕ To notify the school in relation to any absences -prior to or immediately after.
- ⊕ To discuss with their child the importance of school attendance.
- ⊕ To liaise with Year Head/HSCLO/SCP/Management regarding any attendance issues.
- ⊕ To minimise/discourage the signing out of students for non-emergency situations.
- ⊕ To avoid family holidays/leisure activities during the school year.
- ⊕ Parents/Guardians are invited to and expected to attend student parent teacher meetings.
- ⊕ Parents/Guardians must call to the school in person and sign a student out when early departure is required.
- ⊕ Parents/Guardians will be required to maintain current and correct telephone, address and email contacts with school administration.

**Staff:**

- ⊕ All teachers to complete electronic registration for all classes on Compass.
- ⊕ All teachers encourage students to attend school.
- ⊕ All teachers monitor attendance in their classes.
- ⊕ All teachers follow the attendance referral process.
- ⊕ All teachers report chronic attendance issues.
- ⊕ Year Heads maintain a record of student absences and follow up on parental explanations.
- ⊕ Attendance Officer to coordinate attendance referral process
- ⊕ All staff engage in attendance initiatives during the year and implement a whole school approach to attendance.

There are many reasons why Scoil Uí Mhuirí places a high priority on attendance, such as:

The positive impact of high levels of attendance on learning and teaching.

The established links between good attendance, student engagement, and staying in school to complete the senior cycle.

	<p>The well-established impact of poor attendance on all student's educational outcomes.</p> <p>The research evidence suggests that even when students stay at school Leaving Cert students with poor attendance do less well in the exam and are less likely to go on to further study (<i>McCoy et al. 2007</i>).</p> <p>The impact of poor attendance on wider aspects of a student's life such as weak peer relationships, risk of engagement in anti-social activity and family relationships.</p> <p>The pressures for students and for teachers that arise when students miss out on classes and key parts of the curriculum.</p> <p>The links between attendance, school engagement, school climate, a student's unique personal characteristics, and their family and community context are complex. However, the reality remains that a student who is not in school cannot benefit from school. This reality justifies the focus on attendance Scoil Uí Mhuirí.</p>
How attendance will be monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance is monitored through the compass portal.</li> <li>• Teachers are instructed that attendance <b>must</b> be kept up to date and registration must be completed for every class.</li> <li>• The form tutor takes a roll call during tutorial class.</li> <li>• Notes for absences are placed on the compass app.</li> <li>• Deputy Principals, Attendance Officer, HSCL and SCP all have access to the registers on Compass.</li> <li>• When a student misses 5/10/15 an alert is sent home through the compass system informing the parents of the days missed.</li> <li>• These alerts are also sent to Year head, HSLO and Attendance officer.</li> <li>• If a student misses 20 days a letter is sent home.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Attendance Referral Process:</b></p> <p>The attendance referral process that staff should follow is available in Appendix 1 of this document.</p> <p>Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 schools are obliged to submit a number of reports and notifications that relate to poor school attendance. Poor school attendance needs to be responded to early; otherwise, as research has shown, it can lead to poorer exam results, early school leaving, unsuccessful transfer from primary and poorer life chances for children. See link below to see how schools report/notify categories of students to Tusla Education Support Services (TESS).</p> <p><a href="https://www.tusla.ie/tess/tess-ews/reporting-absenteeism/">https://www.tusla.ie/tess/tess-ews/reporting-absenteeism/</a></p>
<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> <li>■ Promoting good attendance</li> <li>■ Responding to poor attendance</li> </ul>	<p>As a designated DEIS school, Scoil Uí Mhuirí has formulated a plan which encompasses attendance. This plan was developed by the DEIS team, in consultation with the school stakeholders. The initial steps involved looking at the existing situation, establishing baseline data, deciding on targets and devising initiatives to help meet these targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Attendance is everyone's responsibility.</li> <li>■ We operate a Whole School approach to attendance.</li> </ul> <p><b>DEIS PLAN 2021-2024 Attendance Targets:</b></p> <p><b>DEIS Targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To reduce our attendance percentage across the school. Last year 13% of school days were missed across the school. Our aim is to reduce this from 13% to 12% in year 1, 12% to 11% in year 2 and 11 to 10% in year 3.</li> <li>■ To decrease the number of students missing 20 days or more from 212 to 200 by the end of year 1, 200 to 190 by the end of year 2 and 190 to 170 by the end of year 3.</li> <li>■ To ensure a proper record of attendance is taken through new Compass system.</li> <li>■ To increase the number of students that receive 100% monthly awards.</li> </ul> <p>The Principal, Deputy Principals and Year Heads speak regularly to students on importance of maintaining excellent attendance.</p>

Promoting excellent attendance is a regular theme in form tutor class and year group assemblies.

The following Attendance Referral Process is active in Scoil Uí Mhuirí:

If a student misses 2 days, the following actions are taken:

- ⊕ Class tutor discusses with student.

If a student misses 5 Days, the following actions are taken:

- ⊕ Notification is sent home through the Compass app.
- ⊕ Year Head notifies Attendance Officer & HSCLO.
- ⊕ Student is discussed at care team and necessary supports put in place.

If a student misses 10 Days, the following actions are taken:

- ⊕ Notification is sent home through the Compass app.
- ⊕ Year Head phones home.
- ⊕ Students discussed at care team and necessary supports put in place.
- ⊕ Attendance intervention initiative for JC Students – Attendance Officer.

If a student misses 15 Days, the following actions are taken:

- ⊕ Notification is sent home through the Compass app.
- ⊕ Year Head notifies Attendance Officer and HSCLO..
- ⊕ Students discussed at care team and necessary supports put in place.
- ⊕ HSCLO Sends Letter Re Meeting.
- ⊕ Attendance Meeting for students with Parent/Guardian, Year Head, Attendance Officer and HSCLO.

If a student misses 20 Days; the following actions are taken:

- ⊕ Year Head notifies Attendance Officer and HSCLO.
- ⊕ Attendance Officer sends letter.
- ⊕ EWO Referral for relevant students.

Attendance is monitored throughout the year and a range of initiatives and events are organised in order to promote attendance. (These may vary slightly in different years).

- ⊕ Attendance Officer to assist Year Head with organising weekly/fortnightly/monthly certificates/spot prizes for good attendance.
- ⊕ A 6 week 'Every Day Counts' Attendance Awareness campaign is held before Christmas.
- ⊕ Mini Campaign to run from February Midterm until Easter with a small informal awards ceremony and certificate. Easter Egg Prizes for 100% attendance.
- ⊕ During the Last Term, an attendance awards Trip will be organised with students with 100% attendance for the year and students with 100% attendance over the duration of the campaign.
- ⊕ Attendance officer provides Year Heads with certificates for students for 100% monthly attendance.

Attendance Campaign Support Grant – used to promote attendance and reward full and improved attendance.

In February there is an 'Every Day Counts' Awards ceremony where students with unbroken, excellent and improved attendance are awarded with certificates and prizes.

There is a class party for the class with the best attendance every week during the 'Every Day Counts' campaign.

Parents/Guardians are invited to this award ceremony to help promote the importance of school attendance, in 2024 a new prize is being awarded in the campaign for Parents/Guardians.

Attendance is awarded on a monthly basis by the Attendance Officer and Year Head. Year group assemblies will take place and certificates presented for 100% and improved attendance.

Attendance awards are also presented at the Year Group Awards, Leaving Certificate and Transition Year Graduation Ceremonies.

Responding to Poor Attendance: irregular attendance is reported to the Year Head and attendance referral is followed when necessary. Difficulties with attending may also be discussed at the weekly Year Head and student support meetings.

Targeted students are mentored by HSCLO or SCP using a personalised attendance journal, report cards and Positive behaviour interventions.

	<p>Attendance Officer, HSCLO, SCP &amp; EWO have <b>termly</b> meetings regarding attendance in Scoil Uí Mhuirí. Advice is regularly sought from the EWO regarding attendance issues.</p> <p>Attendance Clinics: HSCLO to organise and arrange attendance clinics with students and Parents/Guardians and liaise with The EWO in relation to these.</p> <p>Attendance Committee: To meet regularly throughout the year to discuss matters relating to attendance, to assist in organising and promoting events. These meetings are chaired by the Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Other measures used to promote attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Positive Behaviour Matrix</li> <li>✚ Organisation Skills Programme</li> <li>✚ Retracking Programme</li> <li>✚ Guidance Support</li> <li>✚ Check and Connect</li> <li>✚ Breakfast Club</li> <li>✚ Lunch</li> <li>✚ Themed weeks</li> <li>✚ After school study (Seniors)</li> <li>✚ Extra-curricular activities</li> <li>✚ Clubs &amp; Societies</li> <li>✚ Exam Support classes/study skills classes for 3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 6<sup>th</sup> Years</li> <li>✚ Targeted AEN Support</li> </ul>
School roles in relation to attendance	<p>The school community in Scoil Uí Mhuirí have a Whole School approach to attendance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Developing a supportive, positive and welcoming school environment.</li> <li>✚ Developing positive student – teacher relationships, of mutual trust and respect.</li> <li>✚ Developing high expectations of our students.</li> <li>✚ Operating a Whole School approach to Attendance</li> </ul> <p><b>Principal and Deputy Principal:</b> Will promote the vision that 'Every School day is a new school day' to staff and students.</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> All teachers create positive learning experiences for students which encourages them to attend school every day. Teachers promote good attendance and are encouraged to welcome students back to school rather than focus on what they have missed. Record and monitor attendance on Compass.</p>

	<p><b>Tutors:</b> Have particular responsibility for recording attendance during wellbeing time and promoting good attendance. Tutors follow the Attendance Referral Process and are aware of their responsibility in relation to same.</p> <p><b>Year Heads:</b> Have particular responsibility for promoting good attendance and identifying irregular attenders. Year Heads follow the Attendance Referral Process and are aware of their responsibility in relation to same.</p> <p><b>HSCLO:</b> Liaise with Parents/Guardians re attendance issues (telephone class, home visits, offer supports &amp; incentives). Work with staff and Parents/Guardians to provide supports for irregular attenders.</p> <p><b>SCP:</b> Specific attendance interventions for targeted students on the SCP Programme.</p> <p><b>EWO:</b> When the school has exhausted all efforts and there is no improvement in attendance a referral will be made to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services. As part of this referral the school will outline the efforts already made to address the problem through a pre-referral checklist.</p> <p><b>Clerical staff:</b> To assist with posting letters regarding attendance to Parents/Guardians and individual students over 18 years of age.</p>
Partnership arrangements (Parents/Guardians, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<p>Parents/Guardians <b>must</b> contact the school if their child is absent for more than 2 days. Parents/Guardians upload a note of absence on compass for all days missed to explain the reason for the absence.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians are given a presentation on attendance at induction. They are shown the process of alerting the school regarding a student's absence. Notes on compass need to be completed every time a student is absent. They are informed when it would be necessary to send in a Medical Certificate regarding absence.</p> <p>The process of alerting Parents/Guardians using the 5/10/15 days Attendance Alerts and 20 day letters is explained and Parents/Guardians are shown a copy of all letters. Parents/Guardians are also advised what happens when a child misses 20 days and when they are referred to EWO.</p> <p>Partnership with Parents/Guardians in dealing with chronic attendance problems is key. This will be supported by the HSCLO.</p>

	<p>The causes of a student's chronic attendance problem may point to the need for support from a variety of different agencies such as SCP, GP, CAMHS, TUSLA, GARDAI, Family Support Worker etc.</p> <p>Strong links are established with our local primary schools, through HSCLO Cluster groups and our SCP, attendance information is shared, students with poor attendance are highlighted prior to starting in Scoil Uí Mhuirí so that appropriate supports can be put in place. A transfer Programme with SCP also takes place during the summer for incoming first year students with attendance issues.</p>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	The statement of strategy will be monitored by The Senior Management Team, HSCLO and SCP.
Review process and date for review	<p>The Strategy will be reviewed &amp; updated on an annual basis &amp; all relevant stakeholders will have an input.</p> <p>The Board of Management will review &amp; ratify the policy on an annual basis.</p>
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	

Appendix 1:



Dear Parent/ Guardian

**Re: Attendance Concern**

I hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to bring to your attention a concern regarding attendance at school. Our records indicate that \_\_\_\_\_ has been absent for \_\_\_\_\_ days to the end of \_\_\_\_\_ =

We appreciate you may have informed the school regarding your child's absence and provided an explanation, however, in line with our whole school statement of strategy on attendance we advise parents/guardians of all student absences.

Regular school attendance is vital to \_\_\_\_\_ academic progress and overall development, and we want to ensure that any barriers to attendance are identified, and relevant support is provided.

Attendance not only impacts \_\_\_\_\_ learning but also plays an important role in building essential skills such as time management, accountability, and participation. Frequent absences will affect their ability to keep up with the curriculum and leads to missed learning opportunities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We appreciate your support in ensuring regular attendance to help them succeed.

Sincerely,

Gordon Magennis

(Attendance officer)

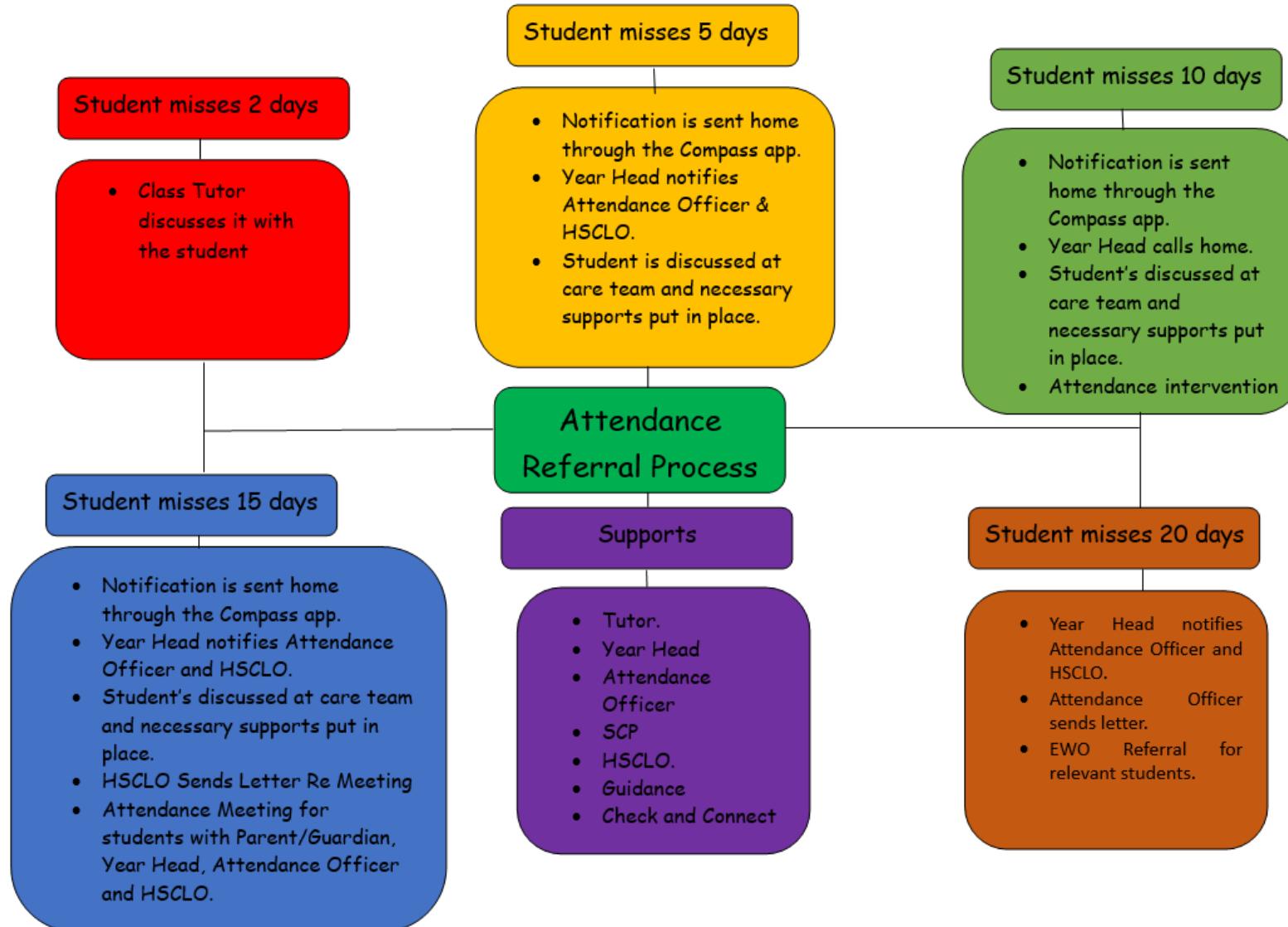


Figure 1: Attendance Referral process

