



Ursuline Secondary School, Thurles Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Ursuline Secondary School
Address	Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Roll Number	65470F
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	At the Ursuline Secondary School, we believe that regular attendance is important for the emotional, academic, physical, spiritual, cultural and overall well-being of students as reflected in our Mission Statement. We nurture a positive atmosphere in the school and provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities so that all students feel a sense of belonging. We have a Pastoral Leadership Team consisting of Principal, Deputy Principals Year Heads, Special Needs Co-ordinator and the school Guidance Counsellor to support vulnerable students who may be at risk of poor attendance. Needs are assessed and appropriate strategies are put in place.
The school's high expectations around attendance	Management and teachers place a high priority on attendance. These expectations are shared by the B.O.M., the school management, staff and parents.
How attendance will be monitored	Attendance is monitored on a daily basis by the Deputy Principals. The roll is taken at the beginning of every class period by teachers. Parents of absent students are required to phone the Office to explain the absence. A note is required in the student's journal when she returns to school. A text is sent on a daily basis to parents if they have not contacted the school re the student's absence. Ongoing absenteeism is followed up by a phone call from the principal. At any stage teachers, class tutors and year heads can access any student's attendance on VsWare. A monthly review of student attendance is presented by the Deputy Principals at our Pastoral Leadership Team meeting.

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

At the Ursuline Secondary school we set a target of full attendance for all our students.

The summer circular, distributed to all parents, highlights the importance of full attendance and also outlines the negative effects that absenteeism has on student learning and well-being.

The academic calendar for the entire school year accompanies the summer circular and parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children out of school during term time.

As a staff we are very aware of the correlation between disengagement and poor attendance.

Attendance is monitored very closely and as soon as a pattern of absenteeism begins to emerge the Pastoral Leadership Team is informed as are class tutors and parents.

Teachers use various teaching methodologies to make sure students are engaged as student disengagement is one of the main reasons why students have high absentee levels.

The B.O.M and Parents' Council is kept up to date on attendance patterns

A record of attendance forms part of the student's report at Christmas and Summer. It is also discussed at parent teacher meetings.

The importance of regular attendance is emphasised in the student's journal and at school assemblies

As a school we distribute the Tusla leaflet "Don't let Your Child Miss Out" to all our parents.

There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities offered to encourage student participation and good attendance.

Students are encouraged to get involved with Student Council, Green Schools, Charity Committee etc., to foster a sense of belonging.

Mentoring of first year students is provided through the Big Sis-Little Sis programme.

Students with full attendance are awarded the Tusla certificate at the end of the school year.

Early identification and intervention is important for students with poor attendance. As soon as a pattern of absenteeism emerges we meet with the student and parents to discuss causes of absenteeism.

We use school structures such as the Pastoral Leadership team to support individual students with poor attendance and to draw up an intervention programme.

If our intervention programme is unsuccessful we refer the student's case to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services

School roles in relation to attendance	Our school secretaries, Teachers, Class Tutors, Year Heads, SEN Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principals and Principal all play an active role in ensuring that we have good attendance.
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	Our school has links with a number of networks to raise awareness and to promote good attendance. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' Council & Student Council • Principals of other local secondary schools • Tipperary Youth Services & Barnardos • Collaboration with local transport providers
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	The senior management team in the school will monitor the Statement of Strategy. The strategy will also be monitored by the Pastoral Leadership Team. If the strategy is not working effectively it will be re-evaluated and new strategies will be put into place.
Review process and date for review	In Ursuline Secondary School we adopt a collaborative approach to the review process. We consult with all the stakeholders including parents, staff, students, EWO and community groups. This takes place at the end of the academic year.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	17/01/18
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	24/01/18

Sr June Fennelly

Date: 17/01/2018