

### Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Clifden Community School
Address	Clifden Co Galway
Roll Number	91412M

<p>The school's vision and values in relation to attendance</p>	<p><i>Our mission in Clifden Community School is to continue to provide a challenging educational environment in which all members of the school community irrespective of ability level or background can realise individual and collective potential in a caring environment which values and strives for quality and creativity in all that it offers. The school stresses the importance of regular attendance and associated values notably:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participation</li> <li>• responsibility</li> <li>• commitment</li> <li>• well-being</li> <li>• inclusion</li> <li>• learning</li> </ul>
<p>The school's high expectations around attendance</p>	<p>Students are expected to be in all day, every day, as regular attendance is critical to successful participation and achievement in school. Parents are expected to support school attendance by having their children in school all day, every day, unless there are valid reasons for not being in school. Clifden CS advises that irregular and partial attendance affect the continuity of teaching and learning for everyone and stresses the commitment of the school to providing the best possible educational setting for all.</p>
<p>How attendance will be monitored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll call in every class using VS Ware and Teacher Journal</li> <li>• The Year Head oversees the daily attendance record (on VS Ware page)</li> <li>• Students submit absence notes to the Year Head</li> <li>• The Year Head contacts the home to find out the reason for absence if the absence is unexplained</li> <li>• Attendance report at the weekly Year Head meeting with the Principal, DP, HCSL teacher, Chaplain</li> <li>• School Completion Programme follows up on irregular attendance</li> <li>• The Educational Welfare Services are informed when students accumulate 20 days absence</li> <li>• The HSCL teacher sends an attendance alert to parents in consultation with the Year Head</li> <li>• Student Sign In and Sign Out Book at reception for students who arrive late and leave during the day</li> <li>• The Secretary or Year Head amends the record of late arrivals marked absent on VS Ware</li> <li>• Students must inform the Year Head if they wish to go home during the school day</li> </ul>

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

**Target setting and targets:**

1. Ratification of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance by the Board of Management on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2018.
2. The Statement of Strategy will be submitted to Tusla before the end of January 2018.
3. Reduction of the number of days lost through absence in Transition Year expressed as a percentage of the total number of days lost in the school year 2016/17 from 30% to 27% in 2017/18.
4. Reduce from 44% to 42% the students in Fifth Year who missed 20 days or more in 2016/17.
5. The overall absence rate for 2016/17 was 12%. We aim to reduce this to 11% in 2017/18.

**Whole-School Approach to promote good attendance:**

1. The Principal reiterates the importance of attendance and punctuality in the letter sent to parents before the start of each school year.
2. The Principal, supported by the DP, raises awareness about factors affecting attendance, and the duty of the teacher to record attendance at the first Staff Meeting each year.
3. The importance of attendance is stressed during school assemblies and in classrooms.
4. The school endeavours to support extra- and co-curricular activity to encourage regular attendance.
5. The school seeks to be welcoming, inclusive, supportive, safe and caring to encourage regular attendance.

**Promoting good attendance**

1. Students with full and/or improved attendance are included in a draw for a book voucher at the end of each term. Attendance, application and attitude are criteria for the student of the term award.
2. To encourage the participation of students in the life of the school, students are encouraged to engage with activities generated both inside of and outside of the school such as: – Student Council, Senior Prefects, Comhairle na nOg, Gaisce, Coder Do Jo, Social Outreach, Public Speaking, Debating, Choir, Sports (GAA, rugby, athletics, soccer, Ladies Football, .....)
3. Early identification: The Principal & HSCL teacher liaise with the feeder primary schools in advance of the transfer to our school to identify students at risk of developing attendance problems.
4. The school has a breakfast club, an after-school homework support, and a book rental scheme.

**Responding to Poor Attendance:**

1. The Care team (HSCL, DP, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Coordinator, Chaplain) investigates/supports as appropriate.
2. Parents/guardians are contacted by the Year Head.
3. When a child has missed 10 days the Year Head will seek to meet the parent/guardian with a view to understanding the reason(s) for the absences and finding a way to redress the absenteeism. HSCL may contact the home.
4. An attendance alert will be sent to parents/guardians when a child has missed 10 days. An attendance letter will be sent when a child has missed 20 days advising that a report is being made to the Educational Welfare Services. Attendance targets for improved attendance may be set in collaboration with the parents and guardians and monitored with them. If attendance does not improve, parents are advised that the Principal will make a written referral to the Educational Welfare Services.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Chronic attendance issues may point to the need for support from agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, CAMHS, Tusla.....</li> <li>6. Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) obliges schools to inform the Educational Welfare Services if a child is absent for 20 days or more in a school year. In this situation the Principal will inform the relevant parents/guardians by letter that a report has been submitted.</li> <li>7. Attendance is recorded on student school reports.</li> </ol>
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p><b>Board of Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees the development and review of the attendance strategy, and ratifies it</li> <li>• Ensures that policies affecting student well-being are in place and are reviewed regularly</li> </ul> <p><b>Principal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads and guides the work on the Statement of Strategy</li> <li>• Reports to Board of Management on attendance issues</li> <li>• Ensures that the curriculum and timetable facilitate good attendance</li> <li>• Liaises with relevant school personnel about students who do not attend regularly</li> <li>• Stresses the importance of attendance to parents and students</li> <li>• Facilitates strategies supportive of good attendance e.g. after-school supports, differentiated programs</li> <li>• Seeks student opinion on factors which may impact on attendance</li> </ul> <p><b>Deputy Principal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collates attendance data</li> <li>• Liaises with Principal, Year Heads and Tutors</li> <li>• Works with the <b>Home School Community Liaison</b> teacher and the <b>School Completion Programme</b> coordinator to address non-attendance</li> <li>• Collates and submits Tusla reports</li> </ul> <p><b>Year Head</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacts Parents/Guardians about poor attendance/punctuality</li> <li>• Liaises with Principal, Deputy Principal, HSCL and SCP about attendance/punctuality concerns</li> <li>• Signs permission slips for students leaving school for part of the school day, records same on VS Ware</li> <li>• Records daily attendance</li> </ul> <p><b>Class Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record a roll call for each class</li> <li>• Inform the Year Head of any anomalies observed</li> <li>• Provide a classroom climate supportive of participation and engagement</li> <li>• Support students returning after a long absence</li> <li>• Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance and model same</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are legally responsible for their child’s attendance at school</li> <li>• Must inform the school, in writing preferably or by phone, of each absence with an accompanying explanation. This also applies even if the student has reached eighteen years.</li> <li>• Are required to have their child at school on time</li> <li>• Parents/Guardians are requested to comply with legislation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Planning family holidays during holiday time and not during term time</li> <li>➤ Refusing requests for days/time off for activities such as shopping, concerts, sports events...</li> <li>➤ Arranging necessary appointments (e.g. medical, dental... ) outside of school time if possible</li> <li>➤ Discouraging involvement in part-time work, which has been shown to impact negatively on school attendance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have a personal responsibility to engage with their own learning and to support a living and learning environment within which all students are respected and supported.</li> <li>• If there are issues in school or that are school related that make it difficult for a student to attend (being bullied for example), he/she should inform a parent or teacher or other responsible adult so that steps can be taken by the school to remedy the matter.</li> <li>• Students participate in the development of the attendance strategy</li> </ul>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	School Self Evaluation: Attendance data, student surveys, staff observations, parent observations
Review process and date for review	Feed-back from: Year Head Meeting, Pastoral Team Meeting, School Completion Program Coordinator, HSCL End of Year May 2018
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	