



**Dunshaughlin Community National School**  
**Drumree Road, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath**  
[www.dunshaughlincns.ie](http://www.dunshaughlincns.ie)  
**08685220270**  
[dunshaughlincns@lmetb.ie](mailto:dunshaughlincns@lmetb.ie)

## Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

|  |   |
|--|---|
| School   | <b>Dunshaughlin Community National School</b>   |
| Address  | <b>Drumree Road, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath</b>  |
| Roll number  | 20521Q  |
| The school's vision and values in relation to attendance | <p>At Dunshaughlin CNS we are committed to the core values of respect, inclusion and equality. This school celebrates diversity of belief, language and cultural traditions and we all learn to respect, trust and encourage each other. We listen to each other and negotiate our differences. This makes it easy for us to accept every person for who they are.</p> <p>We are dedicated to the holistic development of every child. By building relationships in our community and with the community we aim to help children develop the resilience, self-esteem and relationships needed to overcome the many challenges on the road to adulthood. We combine socio-cultural building blocks with high-quality approaches to teaching and learning in order to develop each child's academic, social, moral, emotional, spiritual and creative capabilities. Thus, enabling them to reach their full potential and play an active part in the local community and wider civic society.</p> <p>Education is a partnership, and at Dunshaughlin CNS experienced teaching professionals, students and parents work together with members of the wider community in a welcoming educational environment which is safe, happy, stimulating, inclusive and</p> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>reflective of the diverse modern society in which we live.</p> <p>The Dunshaughlin Community National School Board of Management recognises the positive impact high attendance has on student engagement and on teaching and learning. It is acknowledged that positive experiences of engagement with the school contributes positively to the quality and quantity of school attendance.</p> <p>All pupils are supported to attend, participate and achieve in school through the implementation of whole school policies and practices in line with our school values. Pupils requiring additional support for attendance receive suitable interventions and guidance.</p>   |
| <p>The school's high expectations around attendance</p> | <p>Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2005, parents are responsible for making sure their child receives an education. In this regard, the Board of Management of Dunshaughlin CNS expects a high level of pupil attendance. Children are encouraged to come to school every day, that they are able to, and the school's approach to, and promotion of, attendance is outlined in this strategy.</p> <p>Tusla (Child and Family Agency) and the Board of Management of Dunshaughlin CNS strongly advise that parents do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. Holidays should be taken during the allocated holiday time as outlined in the school calendar.</p> <p>The Board of Management acknowledges that there are cases where a child has a genuine reason for absenteeism. These may include illness, urgent family reasons, expulsion, suspension, or transfer to another school.</p> |
| <p>How attendance will be monitored</p>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All class teachers take a daily roll call which is recorded on the school's data software programme Aladdin. The roll call must be completed by 9:50am each morning.</li> <li>• If a child does not attend on a day when the school is open, their absence will be recorded by the class teacher on the Aladdin system.</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the teacher has been made aware of the reason for absence, in writing, this is also recorded on the Aladdin system.</li> <li>• If a teacher is concerned about student absences, they alert the Principal.</li> <li>• The annual attendance of each child is recorded by Aladdin and is printed in the end of year school reports.</li> <li>• Late arrivals and early departures are discouraged unless necessary.</li> <li>• Late arrivals will be recorded on the Aladdin system. For early departures, a parent/nominated carer must collect their child. The school must be informed of early collections.</li> <li>• School begins at 9:00am. The school will contact parents/carers in the event of children being consistently late. The school Principal is obliged, under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late to Tusla.</li> </ul>   |
| <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><b>Target</b><br/>The policy aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage full attendance at school.</li> <li>• Highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents/guardians.</li> <li>• Targets - A year on year reduction in the percentage of children recording absences at the Tusla categories of Tier 2 (At risk of chronic absenteeism-less than 95% but 90% or more of the time) and Tier 3 (Chronic Absenteeism-attending less than 90% of the time).</li> <li>• Ensure that adequate records of attendances and absences are maintained by the school as per the Education Act 2000 in respect of each individual student.</li> <li>• Report on student attendance to Tusla's Educational Support Service.</li> <li>• Implement suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.</li> </ul> <p><b>Whole-school approach</b><br/>Children, parents/guardians, staff and the Board of Management work in partnership to provide the best education for our children and believe that consistent attendance is necessary to facilitate the education of the children.</p> |

The whole-school approach to attendance is as follows:

- The promotion of a positive learning environment is essential.
- Attendance is recorded on Aladdin, daily, by each class teacher by 9:50am.
- Dunshaughlin CNS sees it as pivotal to promote school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected.
- Encouraging full attendance where possible.
- Parents/Guardians are required to submit a reason for a pupil's absence.
- Punctuality of each child is encouraged. Punctuality is discussed with parents on a case by case basis.
- Teachers will document all late arrivals (arriving after 9:20am) on Aladdin.
- Dunshaughlin CNS aims to foster an appreciation of learning among its entire school community.
- Dunshaughlin CNS aims to raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Dunshaughlin CNS aims to raise everyone's expectations of our school attendance.
- It is all the teaching staff's responsibility to ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Teachers and school management work collaboratively in identifying children at risk.
- Efforts to collaborate with the pupil's parents/guardians will be made. This is particularly pertinent regarding children who may be at risk of attendance problems.
- Communication will be made with parents/guardians if a child has missed 15 days.
- If a child has missed 20 days Tusla will be notified as per the school's legal requirements.
- The school will do their best in identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

#### **Promoting good attendance**

The following are strategies employed by the school to promote good school attendance:

- Promoting a positive learning environment.
- Members of the school management meet and greet with pupils every morning.

- Discussion about attendance at class meetings at the start of the year and information meetings with new parents.
- Regular notifications on Newsletter/Aladdin encouraging attendance.
- Record of attendance in child's annual school report.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities throughout the school year, e.g., Games and Exercise Club
- The school calendar for each academic year is distributed in term 2 of the previous year to make parents/carers aware of school holidays, to avoid holidays being taken during term time.

### **Responding to poor attendance**

The Board of Management acknowledges that despite the best efforts of the school and of families, some children will need extra support to prevent patterns of poor attendance developing. The following are strategies employed by the school to respond to poor attendance.

- Working with groups or individuals who may need additional support (Tusla Guidelines for Schools, p.30).
- Tailoring whole-school approaches to group or individual needs e.g. Social Circle, Sunshine Time and individualised supports.
- Engaging in early dialogue with parents and students.
- Using school-led, multi-agency support processes.
- Referral to Tusla's Education Support Services.

### **Approach to attendance concerns – School-based**

- Where there is a concern regarding a child's level of attendance or pattern of absenteeism, the Principal will speak to the parents/carers.
- The school will communicate with parents/carers informing them of when their child has reached 15 days of absenteeism.

### **Tusla**

- The school must notify Tusla if a child is absent for 20 days or more, or where absences/patterns of absence give rise to concern.
- If there is a concern about a child's attendance at school or about the reasons given for

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>absenteeism, families may be contacted by an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is obliged to report regularly to Tusla regarding attendance. There are four reporting periods each year. The report is generated by the school, based on the guidelines provided by Tusla.</li> <li>• Any child who has missed 20 days or more, or any children about whom there are absenteeism concerns, must be reported to Tusla.</li> <li>• Tusla is also informed if a child is suspended for 6 days or more, or in the case of the expulsion of a child.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>School roles in relation to attendance</p> | <p>The Board of Management acknowledges a collective responsibility for the promotion of attendance. The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of people within the school community regarding attendance:</p> <p><b>Principal</b></p> <p>The Principal will provide leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance. It is the responsibility of the Principal to lead the development and implementation of the statement for strategy for school attendance, under the guidance of the Board of Management. The Principal will undertake the following responsibilities in relation to this strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with parents/guardians regarding attendance concerns.</li> <li>• Prepare a report on attendance for the Board of Management on a yearly basis, or as the need arises.</li> <li>• Maintain the Leabhar Tinreamh (Daily Attendance Book) on Aladdin, ensuring that attendance is taken regularly and on time.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school's Attendance Strategy.</li> <li>• View the attendance statistics on the Aladdin regularly.</li> <li>• Initiate links with relevant bodies on school attendance issues.</li> <li>• Making the periodic returns to Tusla.</li> </ul> |

- Communicate to parents of children whose absenteeism has exceeded 15 days.
- Notifying Tusla's Educational Support Services and the relevant EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensure support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties. At the end of each school year the Principal forwards the attendance information to Tusla.

### **Parents / Guardians**

The Board of Management acknowledges the important role of parents/guardians in the attendance of their children at school. In line with Tusla's guidelines for school (p.44), parents/carers are expected to:

- Set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem.
- Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time.
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a valid reason to.
- Discuss planned absences with the school.
- Inform the school of planned absences.
- Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason – using the Aladdin app for this.
- Showing an interest in their child's school day.
- Encouraging their children to participate in school activities.
- Praising and encouraging their children's achievements in school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.) are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- Notifying, the school if their child/children, are to be collected by someone other than nominated caregivers.
- Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform school management about any long term illnesses the child may have and how this may impact attendance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pupils</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils can inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor attendance, inform principal regarding pupils who miss 15 days.</li> <li>• Take attendance on time.</li> <li>• Teachers will strive to keep open communication with parents/guardians in relation to matters of attendance.</li> </ul>                       |
| Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups) | The Board of Management acknowledges the importance of partnership arrangements and a multi-disciplinary approach, where relevant, in supporting the attendance and punctuality of children at school. In relation to attendance, the school community may involve staff members, parents/carers, students and Tusla, among others.   |
| How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored   | <p>The Board of Management and the Principal will monitor the implementation of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance on an ongoing basis by undertaking the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities will be provided for staff to share experiences about how the strategy is working and to review progress towards attendance targets. This will be done at staff meetings.</li> <li>• The Principal will update on attendance levels at Board of Management meetings, with reference to the school's attendance targets.</li> <li>• Statistics on Aladdin will be reviewed regularly by the Principal.</li> </ul> |
| Review process and date for review  | A formal review of the Statement of Strategy will be conducted annually as part of the preparation of the Board of Management's annual report on attendance (as per Section 21(6)(a)(b) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000) to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services.   |
| Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the                                      | 18/04/2024  |



|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Board of Management                               |            |
| Date of review                                    |            |
| Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla | 19/04/2024 |