

### Template for the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Granagh National School
Address	Granagh, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick
Roll Number	099271
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	Granagh N.S. endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils and the school hopes to promote co-operation amongst pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of attendance throughout the school year. Granagh N.S. aims to build and maintain a culture of high expectations amongst all staff and students for the student's learning, participation and attendance.
The school's high expectations around attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Granagh N.S. recognises that consistent attendance is a vital element in education.</li> <li>✓ Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations</li> <li>✓ A sense of belonging and connectedness in school is developed through participation in school life</li> <li>✓ We expect children to have full attendance at school unless they are ill, incapacitated, have a medical appointment or are adhering to the current Covid HSE and DES guidance. We understand that there may also be urgent family reasons why a child may not attend school especially in the case of bereavements.</li> </ul>
How attendance will be monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla on a daily basis.</li> <li>✓ Class daily attendances are recorded in the Leabhar Tinrimh.</li> <li>✓ The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register), together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name(s)).</li> <li>✓ In addition, each student is registered on POD (Primary Online Database)</li> <li>✓ If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher in the Leabhar Rolla.</li> <li>✓ The roll call is taken each morning at 10.10-10.20. Any pupil not present at that time will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in.</li> <li>✓ Class teachers will alert the Principal if they have concerns about student absences.</li> <li>✓ All teachers make reference to a pupil's attendance during parent/teacher meetings and end of school reports.</li> <li>✓ Parents will be informed of their responsibilities in relation to school attendance, and will be requested to provide written explanations for <b>all</b> absences from school, regardless of the length or nature of the absence</li> <li>✓ Individual notes and other written communication around attendance, such as medical certificates and other explanations for student absences will be kept in the office in the child's folder</li> <li>✓ All parents/guardians are informed at least once in each school year that if their child/children miss school for 20 days or more the school is obliged to include the child's/children's name(s) in the School's Absence Reports to TUSLA.</li> <li>✓ If a child misses school and a written explanation is not provided to the school, the <b>school secretary/class teacher</b> will draw the child's parents' attention to same by writing a note in homework journal/ homework sheet.</li> <li>✓ When a child who is aged over 6 years of age has been absent for 20 days the school notifies the Educational Welfare Services section of Tusla - Child and Family Agency</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The School has no discretion over handing this information on to TUSLA – Child and Family Agency, regardless of the reason for absence.</li> <li>✓ However, TUSLA – Child and Family Agency will take account of the explanation of absences due to illness, bereavement or other such circumstances, provided evidence of, or testimony of which, has been provided by the parents in the form of a medical certificate or a note/letter from themselves to the school.</li> <li>✓ There are two times during the school year when the school has to report information re absences to TUSLA – Child and Family Agency- Reports will be submitted on 31<sup>st</sup> December and 30<sup>th</sup> June each year.</li> <li>✓ When a child’s reason for absence is that they are adhering to the current Covid HSE and DES guidance by isolating when they have tested positive for Covid-19 this absence will be recorded in the School’s Tusla’s absence report as illness.</li> <li>✓ When a child’s reason for absence is that they are adhering to the current Covid HSE and DES guidance by isolating when they are a Close Contact this absence will be recorded in the School’s Tusla’s absence report as other (in this instance it means Close Contact).</li> <li>✓ Additionally, TUSLA request an Annual Report at the end of each school year.</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(A)</li> <li>• The whole-school approach (B)</li> <li>• Promoting good attendance (C)</li> <li>• Responding to poor attendance(D)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Targets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Our annual attendance in the school year 2020 – 2021 was 95%. We would like to maintain our attendance at least at this high level.</li> <li>✓ In the 2020-2021 school year, 5 pupils missed 20 days or more. We would like to reduce this figure however we recognise that in the 2021-2022 school year a number of children will be absent because they are following the HSE guidelines re Covid isolation at that time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Whole School Approach:</b>  Granagh N.S. promotes and encourages full attendance by all our students. This ethos is communicated to all members of our school community.</p> <p>The Board of Management and school staff wishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils’ learning.</li> <li>✓ To ultimately reduce the rate of absenteeism and encourage full attendance where possible.</li> <li>✓ To raise awareness of and to develop a positive approach to the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality</li> <li>✓ To promote the early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.</li> <li>✓ To ensure that children are taught in a safe, secure and caring environment where their intellectual, physical and spiritual development is catered for</li> <li>✓ To create a welcoming environment for pupils and parents.</li> <li>✓ Staff and B.O.M will collaborate to implement this policy.</li> <li>✓ All teachers will take responsibility in improving excellent attendance and being vigilant for children who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parental Support</b>  Parents play a vital role in their child’s school attendance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance</li> <li>✓ Notifying the school if their child cannot attend for any reason</li> <li>✓ Ensuring that their child understands that they support good school attendance</li> <li>✓ Discussing planned absences with the school</li> <li>✓ Refraining if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time</li> <li>✓ Showing an interest in their child’s school day and their child’s homework</li> </ul>

- ✓ Encouraging them to participate in school activities
- ✓ Praising and encouraging their child's achievements
- ✓ Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school of their child
- ✓ Ensuring, insofar as possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours

It is our policy:

- ✓ To encourage and maintain open communication between home and school and to encourage parents in their role as primary educators of their children. The Principal is available, on an appointment basis, to meet parents, to discuss pupils' school absences.
- ✓ Parents will be informed of their responsibilities in relation to school attendance, and will be requested to provide written explanations for **all** absences from school, regardless of the length or nature of the absence
- ✓ Our Parents' Association was consulted in the drafting of this strategy of attendance
- ✓ We communicate the requirements of schools and of parents under the Education Welfare Act to parents by including Don't Let Your Child Miss Out (leaflet for parents TUSLA) in our enrolment pack.

#### Good Attendance

- ✓ Teachers constantly encourage good attendance in their respective classrooms.
- ✓ Teachers regularly talk to children about good attendance during assembly.
- ✓ Special Needs – pupils requiring support are identified as early as possible and the appropriate support systems put into place. We emphasise positive achievements and do all we can to enhance self-esteem
- ✓ Settling in to school – New pupils and their parents are supported by the class teachers, the Principal and the SEN teacher if necessary.

School staff are encouraged to complete CPD in initiatives which promote a positive school environment e.g. Incredible Years, Friends for Life

#### Poor Attendance

- ✓ Where class teacher/SEN teacher sees a pattern of poor attendance emerging, they should bring this to the attention of parents at an early stage i.e. Parent Teacher meeting (early detection).
- ✓ The Educational Welfare Act, 2000 requires schools to notify the Educational Welfare Services section of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) of pupils who have been absent for 20 days and who are aged over 6 years of age.
- ✓ Class teacher/SEN teacher informs Principal of her concern

#### Responding to Poor Attendance:

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013) states: 'The parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each day'. Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to TUSLA during the school year through the portal.

Strategies used in the event of poor attendance:

- ✓ Invitation to parents to meet with Principal to discuss if absences are more than 20 and are unexplained
- ✓ Discussing school attendance with the student (where appropriate), with a view to finding an explanation for the absence and thereby a solution.

- ✓ Where the School has cause for concern over a pupil's attendance (i.e. unexplained absences, absences other than for illness or bereavement) and in spite of all efforts at resolution made at school level and in collaboration with the home a formal written and signed Referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service after an EWS Pre-Referral Checklist has first been completed.

**Reporting Absenteeism to Educational Welfare Services (EWS)**

Since the inception of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 (amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013) schools are obliged to report on school attendance. The Deputy Principal is responsible for these reports. The following reports will be submitted:

**Student Absence Report:**

This report may be submitted four times each year on those students falling within the following criteria:

- ✓ a student has been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more and absences are unexplained and are other than for illness or bereavement
- ✓ a student has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days
- ✓ the school has expelled a student

**Annual Attendance Report (AAR)**

The Annual Attendance Report is submitted at the end of each academic year and provides information on levels of attendance. The Deputy Principal provides the following data in the AAR:

- ✓ Total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school year.
- ✓ Total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year.
- ✓ Total number of students expelled in respect of whom all appeal processes have been exhausted or not availed of during the school year.
- ✓ Total number of students who were suspended for any number of days during the school year.

**Transfer to Another School / Communication with Other Schools**

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance.

**Communication with other Schools**

- ✓ When a child transfers from Granagh N.S. to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
- ✓ When a child transfers into Granagh N.S., confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- ✓ Pupils transferring from Granagh N.S. to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment
- ✓ The school will also follow the steps to update POD as per Circular 0033\_2015

School roles in relation to attendance

The Principal

- ✓ Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance.
- ✓ Leads on the implementation and review of the school's Attendance Strategy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promotes good attendance at school assemblies and parent meetings.</li> <li>✓ Updates Board of Management about school attendance.</li> <li>✓ Ensures that the electronic version of the Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil is filled, printed and filed on a monthly basis (D.P. and secretary).</li> <li>✓ Keeps in regular contact with parents where attendance is a concern.</li> <li>✓ Makes the quarterly and annual statistical return to TUSLA (D.P.)</li> <li>✓ Makes referrals to TUSLA when necessary.</li> </ul> <p>Class Teachers and SEN teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance.</li> <li>✓ Encourage and commend good attendance.</li> <li>✓ Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.</li> <li>✓ Set examples by their own punctuality.</li> <li>✓ Collect and file any notes regarding absence (school secretary)</li> <li>✓ Consult with parents regarding attendance or punctuality at parent teacher meetings and record in end of school year report.</li> <li>✓ Alert Principal of any concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.</li> </ul> <p>The Board of Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Work to provide and support a positive, welcoming environment by maintaining and resourcing the school to a high standard, which in turn promotes good attendance.</li> <li>✓ Ensures that an end of year review of the Attendance Strategy is carried out.</li> </ul>
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<p>The school will liaise with the following parties, as and when necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Board of Management</li> <li>✓ Parents</li> <li>✓ Students</li> <li>✓ TUSLA</li> <li>✓ Education Welfare Officer</li> <li>✓ Local G.A.A. club, soccer club, Drama club, Community Games etc</li> </ul>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<p>The strategy will be monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ By teaching staff at staff meetings.</li> <li>✓ By school Principal/ Deputy Principal.</li> <li>✓ By B.O.M.</li> <li>✓ By monitoring of school attendance records by our local School Inspector on incidental visits / Whole School Evaluations to the school</li> </ul>
Review process and date for review	<p>This Statement of Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis by school staff and Board of Management</p>
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	<p>09/05/2022</p>
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to TUSLA	

Signed by the Chairperson: David Leahy on the 09/05/2022