



## Statement of Strategy for Attendance

Name of school	Ardscoil na Tríonóide
Address	Athy, Co Kildare
Roll Number	68077S
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>Ardscoil na Tríonóide is inspired by the educational vision of Venerable Catherine McAuley and Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice. It exists to provide a centre of learning where Christian values underpin and pervade all activities, where each member of the school community is cherished and respected.</p> <p>In Ardscoil na Tríonóide, emphasis is placed on the moral and spiritual formation of students along with their intellectual, social and physical development. Students are encouraged to strive towards academic excellence. This school community advocates, and will develop a strong sense of social justice. It is intended that the experience of education in Ardscoil na Tríonóide will be happy and creative, enabling each participant to strive to fulfil his/her potential.</p> <p>Our expectations of students are high and we will expect them to strive towards the fulfilment of their potential in all spheres of school life: religious, academic, social, and sporting.</p> <p>Because of this the following is expected from students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high standard of behaviour by adherence to the Code of Behaviour.</li> <li>• Regular and punctual attendance.</li> <li>• Consistent homework and study.</li> <li>• A commitment to achieving the best in every aspect of school life.</li> </ul>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p><b><u>Regular and punctual attendance</u></b></p> <p>Regular and punctual attendance has been proven to have a positive impact on academic attainment. Our targets are to have maximum attendance from all our pupils. In aiming for this we are seeking to maximise the learning of each student and ensure the minimum disruption to classes.</p> <p>We are committed to putting in place processes and structures which promote and support maximum student attendance throughout the school through our pastoral and student support team structures. We strive to regularly affirm and recognise excellent attendance.</p>

<p>How attendance will be monitored</p>	<p>VSware is the Management Information System (MIS) used to record and monitor attendance and punctuality in every class throughout the day. Parents/Guardians have access to VSware and can view their child's attendance online. When school reports are issued attendance forms part of the feedback shared with parents/guardians.</p> <p><b><u>Student absence</u></b></p> <p><b>1. <u>Planned absence during the school day</u></b></p> <p>Students must have a signed note with permission to leave school in their journal signed by the parent/guardian. Students must present their notes to the Deputy Principal or Principal before 8.45am to be signed. The school may ring a parent/guardian to authenticate if in doubt to the legitimacy of a note.</p> <p>Permission to leave school can also be submitted on the school app. The school may ring a parent/guardian to authenticate if in doubt to the legitimacy of the notification.</p> <p>The student must sign out at the school office with the note. Students are only allowed to sign out in the presence of parent/guardian or another person nominated by the parent/guardian. The school office will ring the parent/guardian to verify the nominated person if not known to school personnel.</p> <p>Text messages on a student's phone will not be accepted as a note. Appointments with dentists, opticians, doctors etc. should be made outside of class time.</p> <p>Parents are asked not to sign out their son or daughter to bring them to a school match in which they are not playing.</p> <p><b>2. <u>Illness</u></b></p> <p>In the event the student is feeling unwell throughout the day and needs to leave school they must speak to their Class Teacher. The Class Teacher will sign the students journal and send them to triage at the Front Office. If deemed necessary the Front Office will try to contact a parent/guardian. The student will sign out when collected by their parent/ guardian. Students are not permitted to phone parent/ guardian if unwell during the school day using their mobile phone. This is in breach of our Code of Behaviour (mobile phone use during the school day) and will be dealt with accordingly.</p> <p><b>3. <u>School related activities</u></b></p> <p>Where students are absent from school for school-related extracurricular activities, the teacher organizing the activity prepares a list of the names and prior to departure provides a copy of the list to the office. The office then enters these students as SchA (School Activity) on VSware. Students must have good attendance in order to travel and represent the school on teams or at matches. This will be monitored by their Tutor and Year Head. Where attendance is</p>
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deemed to be less than satisfactory, the student will not be permitted to represent the school on the team/at a match.

### **Student returning to school after an absence**

Parents should notify the school of absences via our VSware App and absences can be approved and entered on the student's attendance record. Also, a parent/guardian can complete a slip with a written explanation (slips are allocated in the back of the student journal for the written explanations) covering the period of absence which can be handed to the Front Office and their attendance record can be updated.

### **Recording of attendance by class teacher**

Student attendance is formally recorded during the 1<sup>st</sup> class period / 5<sup>th</sup> class period of the day and at the start of every class period throughout the day using VSware.

A student who is absent period 5 of the day will be recorded as partial (afternoon) absent.

Each class has a class Tutorship period Monday – Thursday with their class tutor. The class tutor will monitor attendance identifying patterns and connecting with students to support their attendance.

The class tutor monitors attendance and reports patterns that may emerge to the relevant Year Head and Deputy Principal.

### **Punctuality**

#### **1. Late in the morning**

Students who arrive late to school (between 8:50 and 9:45) are required to sign in at the office as late. The office will enter that student as late on VSware. If a student arrives in school after 9.45am they will be recorded as having a partial absence on VSware.

The Deputy Principal /office staff will record late-comers (students who arrive after 8:50 in the morning) by stamping a late stamp in the space provided at the front of the student's journal and on the homework page.

Students will also be asked to sign the Late Book which will then be used to update their attendance record on VSware.

Three days of lateness results in one hour detention on Friday afternoon.

We ask Parents/Guardians to ensure that pupils arrive in school with sufficient time to organise books etc. and be in class at 8.50 am and 1.50 pm.

## **2. Late to class during the day**

Class teachers insist on punctuality and will record those who are late for class. Persistent late arrival to class without adequate explanation is considered a serious discipline issue and will be referred to the relevant Year Head and dealt with as per Code of Behaviour.

### **Year Head Team Meetings and agreed attendance protocols**

Year Head Team Meetings take place each week. Members include the Principal, Deputy Principals and the relevant Year Heads. Students with poor attendance are identified at this meeting and specific interventions are agreed and undertaken at 5 days/10 days/15 days/20 days absent.

#### **5 days absent**

Conversation with student

Phone call to parent /guardian

Update absence on VSware

1. If valid/plausible explanation given mark as explained
2. If no plausible /or vague reason is given (school refusal) then it remains unexplained but note that phone call / meeting took place

Update notes on student file on VSware to log phone call

#### **10 days absent**

Student will be discussed at weekly Year Head Meeting

Conversation with student

Letter home

Update notes on VSware to log letter sent

#### **15 days absent**

Conversation with student

Attendance report if merited and agreed at Student Support Team meeting or Year Head Meeting

Meeting with parent /guardian

Update notes on VSware to log meeting

#### **20 days absent**

Letter notifying 20 days absence

Meeting with Deputy Principal/Principal

Conversation with student

Attendance report if merited and agreed at Student Support Team meeting or Year Head Meeting. Notification of 20 days will be submitted in the January and June returns. TESS (EWO) referral will be made where a student is not attending school or sporadically

	<p>attending and has missed &gt;30-35 days. A referral will be made in consultation with the Deputy Principal &amp; Principal.</p> <p>In addition to the above interventions, the Year Head Team will engage the support of the Guidance Counselling Team and the Special Educational Needs Team to help support a student who is at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>At one Year Head meeting per month the sole agenda / focus of that meeting is discussing student attendance.</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><b><u>Target setting and targets</u></b></p> <p>As a school, our target is to have maximum school attendance by each student. The importance of school attendance and attendance at each class is consistently reinforced both formally and informally.</p> <p><b><u>Whole-school approach</u></b></p> <p>In Ardscoil na Tríonóide each class is assigned a class tutor who undertakes the role of caring for a class group. In addition to this each Year Group is assigned a Year Head who regularly visits classrooms, meets individual students and will contact home where the need arises.</p> <p>Attendance is the first item discussed at Parent Teacher Meetings. Attendance is discussed at Parent Information Evenings at the commencement of the school year. Attendance procedures are also included in the Parent Handbook which is sent to parents through text message in advance of the new school year.</p> <p>In Ardscoil na Tríonóide we offer a curriculum that meets student needs and gives each student the opportunity to achieve their potential. We offer Established Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied Programme and Transition Year. We have 2 special classes to meet the needs of students in our school community with ASD. We also offer targeted support to students who have English as an additional language. We have a dedicated and committed Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Team in place who react proactively to students experiencing challenges in our school. We are developing a culture of team teaching within the school to support students within their own classroom environment.</p> <p>The school is constantly evolving to meet the needs and interests of our students and the introduction of new subjects (e.g. LCPE was introduced in 2023). Subject choice in both First and Fifth Year are led by student interests where possible and then class groupings / bands are generated.</p> <p>The school positively supports and actively encourages the provision of activities outside the classroom. Extracurricular activities offer an outlet for energies and talents not always recognised in the classroom.</p>

The whole school community (Class teachers/ Tutors/ Year Heads/ Deputy Principals/ Principal) all are aware of their important role in acknowledging, supporting and welcoming students to school on a daily basis and how this helps to encourage maximum school attendance by all students.

### **Promoting good attendance**

**In Ardscoil na Tríonóide we promote good attendance in the following ways:**

1. A comprehensive care team structure with the school (Class Tutors/ Year heads / Guidance counsellors /AEN Team / Senior Management Team).
2. Year Head Team Meetings / Student Support Team Meetings weekly where attendance is reviewed and interventions discussed.
3. The provision of evening study so students can complete homework.
4. The allocation of resources to the Additional Educational Needs department who can provide targeted and specific support to AEN students.
5. A wide variety of extra and co-curricular activities at lunch times and after school.
6. The encouragement, acknowledgement and affirmation of student effort, achievement and success, e.g. by individual teachers, at assemblies, through permanent and temporary photographic display, school newsletters, school website and on social media.
7. An Awards Day to acknowledge student participation, achievement and good attendance.
8. Providing awards at Christmas for excellent attendance.
9. We hold attendance drives with individual and class prizes for both excellent attendance and most improved attendance. Part of the attendance drive may also include other initiatives e.g. Art competitions to reinforce the theme that every school day counts and attendance matters.

### **We encourage our students to be ambitious and to set goals:**

1. Attendance at College Open Days.
2. Visiting inspirational speakers as part of Wellbeing Week.
3. An extensive extra-curricular programme that includes activities to challenge and develop students, increasing their skills, self-confidence, esteem and their academic competence, and giving them an appreciation of the benefits of knowledge and skill as well as a positive attitude to school and attendance.

4. Opportunities to be involved as a student leader in our school (Cairdeas / Student Council /Prefects /Mercy Leaders).

**Responding to poor attendance**

Every effort is made to re-engage students who are finding it difficult to attend school. Individual student cases will be discussed at Year Head Team Meetings and we aim to intervene as early as possible. The Guidance Department will support the student when necessary. Additionally, the AEN Department has flexibility and can provide targeted individualised support quickly. Teachers will be provided with information in relation to students who have attendance issues and ways they can support them in class from the Year Head. The Year Head will contact parents/guardians by telephone as the 1st point of communication to home in relation to poor attendance. A letter will also be sent to parents / guardians notifying them of the school's concern re. poor attendance detailing the number of absences since the beginning of the academic year. If these initial interventions are not effective in improving attendance then a formal meeting will be convened with the parent/guardian and the student to identify influencing factors, to set targets and put in place strategies and supports for the student.

The school will inform the parent/guardian before the student meets the threshold of 20 days. When the school has exhausted all efforts and there is no improvement in attendance, a referral will be made to Tusla Education Support Services (TESS). Parents will be notified that a referral has been made.

School roles in relation to attendance

**Principal**

The Principal provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of maximum attendance. They lead the review and implementation of the School's Attendance Strategy. The Principal will ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students. The Principal will liaise with the Deputy Principals to reward students who have excellent attendance/punctuality.

The Principal makes reports to the Educational Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:

1. A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than 6 days
2. The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is 20 days or more

Students will present a written explanation on a blue slip in the school journal to the Principal/ Deputy Principals for signing if they wish to leave the premises during the day.

### **Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principal inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences or the absence of students from the school.

They remind students of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress. The Deputy Principal/s will regularly monitor the attendance records on the VSware system for the year group they have responsibility for. They will raise issues regarding attendance of particular students at the weekly Year Head Team Meetings. Additionally, at one Year Head Team Meeting a month the agenda will solely focus on addressing attendance issues and following the agreed attendance protocol for 5 days/10 days/15 days/20 days absent. They will liaise with the Guidance Department and/or the AEN Team and other agencies to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance.

Students will present a written explanation on a slip in the school journal to the Principal / Deputy Principals if they wish to leave the premises during the day. The Principal /Deputy Principal will then sign the note for the student which they can use to sign out.

The Deputy Principal with responsibility for attendance will submit two reports to Tusla and an End of Year Report. This Deputy Principal will also assist the Principal with the review of the School Attendance Strategy.

The Deputy Principals will work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Tutors, Administration Staff to implement the school Attendance Strategy. The Deputy Principals will inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance. The Deputy Principals will liaise with the Principal to reward students who have excellent attendance/punctuality.

### **Year Heads**

The Year Heads will regularly monitor the attendance records on the VSware system for their relevant year group. Year heads use VSware effectively to identify "at risk" absence figures and interventions are made early on. At the weekly Year Head Team Meeting the Year Head will identify students they are concerned about in relation to attendance. At one Year Head Team Meeting a month the agenda will solely focus on addressing attendance issues. Year Heads will follow the agreed attendance protocols/interventions when students reach 5 days/10 days/15 days/20 days absent. Year Heads will document a log of the interventions used to support students with poor attendance in the event of a TUSLA referral. Year Heads will assist the Deputy Principal in completing Tusla referrals with details of the interventions made. They will liaise with teachers/ tutors/ Guidance Team /AEN team to

address and support students with difficulties surrounding that student's attendance.

Year Heads will contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and notify the Deputy Principal if missing has occurred.

Year Heads will meet students daily and therefore will acknowledge students, welcome them and support them when they come to school. This is particularly important for students who experience difficulty with school attendance.

#### **Class Tutor**

The Class Tutor monitors attendance and reports patterns that may emerge. The Class Tutor will liaise with the Year Head if they have any concerns in relation to a student's attendance. They promote positive attendance by acknowledging and supporting students on a daily basis.

#### **Class Teacher**

Teachers have a very important role in setting high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms and to impress on students the importance of regular attendance, insist on punctuality and record those who are late for class. If a student turns up late for class during period 1 in the morning, teachers must ask students to see their late stamp and if they do not have one to send them to the office to get their journal stamped. Class teachers will record the attendance of every class every day on VShare. They will also record attendance on VShare when substituting under the S&S scheme and also when covering for a colleague on a Personal Day. They will inform the relevant Year Head if they have any concerns about a student's absences.

Class teachers have a role in acknowledging, supporting and welcoming students to class and also supporting students with poor attendance upon their return to school.

#### **Parents /guardians**

We ask that parents/ guardians support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities to ensure that their child is attending a recognised school on every day that the school is open (Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Parents/ guardians must ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unnecessary absences and where possible to arrange elective appointments outside of school time. If such appointments must take place within school hours, then students should return to school following the appointment. They must provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school using the slips in the back of the school journal or using the App. They should inform the Year Head in advance of any planned absences from school. They must provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative emergency numbers.

	<p>It is essential that parents /guardians engage with the school if there is a problem about their child’s attendance and assist us in supporting that student.</p> <p><b><u>Students</u></b></p> <p>We ask students to arrive on time and attend all scheduled classes every day unless there is a valid reason. They must present a written explanation written on a slip in the back of the School Journal for all absences to their Year Head. They must sign the late book if they arrive late to school (after 8:50), get their journal stamped late and proceed immediately to their first class. If they are late more than 3 times in 1 term then they will complete a 1 hr detention. If a student arriving late does not sign the late book they will be marked absent without explanation for the first class. Students must present a written explanation or a note on VSware to the Principal/ Deputy Principals if they wish to leave the premises during the day.</p> <p>In the event the student is feeling unwell throughout the day and needs to leave school they must speak to their Class Teacher who will give them permission to go to the Front Office to be triaged. If deemed necessary the Front Office will try to contact a parent/guardian. The student must sign out when the parent / guardian arrives to collect them.</p> <p><b>Administrative Staff</b></p> <p>The office staff will facilitate the signing out of students with dockets signed by Principal/ Deputy Principal. They input absence notes on VSware and collate notes which will be given to the relevant Year Head once logged on VSware. They facilitate the signing in of students late, stamping of journals with late stamps and recording this on VSware. They will notify the relevant Year Head if a student has 3 late stamps in their journal so that he /she can be placed on detention. They record calls from parents/guardians with regard to attendance and change the student’s attendance on VSware if required. If students are involved in school activities e.g school trips /matches they will update VSware as SChA.</p>
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<p><b>Parents</b></p> <p>With relation to school attendance, parents have primary responsibility to ensure children attend school and have responsibility to inform the school of absences and outline reasons for the same. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in their child’s education and are involved in many ways. Parents are encouraged to attend parent teacher meetings, information evenings (online and in person meetings), Open Days and other school functions.</p>

	<p>Parents are encouraged to join the Parent Council. Our school website is maintained to ensure current and relevant information is easy to access.</p> <p><b>Students</b> Students must be encouraged to be responsible for their own learning. Students are expected to participate cooperatively and constructively in the learning process. Students are encouraged to appreciate and respect the learning resources provided by the school. Student leadership roles such as Student Council, Prefects, Cairdeas and Mercy Leaders are fully encouraged in the school. An Assistant Principal I (API) has responsibility for developing student participation in leadership roles. They also ensure that the student voice is heard in the decision making process in our school.</p> <p><b><u>Outside agencies that supports Ardscoil na Tríonóide in relation to school attendance:</u></b> Through our Junior Cycle, Transition Year programme, Leaving Certificate Applied Programme and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the school has forged links with outside agencies, employers, service providers and youth services.</p> <p><b>Extern - Youth Diversion Project Athy</b> Extern Athy work with young people from our school who may need support with peer relations, leisure recreation activities, behavioural issues, attitudes and education issues including attendance.</p> <p><b>National Educational Psychological Services</b> NEPS psychologists work with our school and are concerned with learning, behaviour, social and emotional development. NEPS psychologists work in partnership with us in identifying educational needs.</p> <p><b>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)</b> are services that support young people experiencing poor mental health, or difficult feelings or experiences.</p> <p><b>Education Welfare Officer</b> The local EWO works closely with our school and supports students to improve their attendance in school.</p>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<p>One of our two Deputy Principals has overall responsibility for Attendance and will work with all partners to implement, monitor and review the Statement of Strategy.</p> <p>This policy should be read in conjunction with all school policies and in particular with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Code of Behaviour Policy</li> <li>The Child Protection Statement</li> <li>The Anti-Bullying Policy</li> </ul>
Review process and date for review	October 2026

Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2024