# TÜSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

# Template for the Statement of Strategy
# for School Attendance

| Name of school | Comeragh College |
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| Address | Tinvane, Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary, E32X402 |
| Roll Number | 72400V |
| The school's vision and values in relation to attendance | As a DEIS school, attendance is integral to our DEIS plan. We recognise the role of consistent attendance in fostering student success, enhancing retention, and promoting academic achievement. Our vision is to cultivate a culture where regular attendance is valued by all stakeholders. |
| The school's high expectations around attendance | Our school sets high expectations for attendance. We strive to ensure attendance is a shared responsibility among families, students and staff fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment in line with the school ethos. |
| How attendance will be monitored | <ul><li>All parents have individual access to the VSware platform. Where needed, parents are offered 1:1 support on how to use the platform.</li><li>Parents are asked to log any student absences or partial absences, via VSware, prior to the start of the school day.</li><li>Absences are approved by the student director or HSCL daily.</li><li>Where a student presents late, they are met by a member of the Student Support Team. Reason for lateness is recorded; their journal is also signed. Where there is a query, the parent may receive a phone call for clarification.</li><li>VSware attendance is taken for every class during the school day.</li><li>A daily text message is forwarded to parents notifying parents of absence where no notification has been logged on Vsware.</li><li>Where a student does not present in class but has been recorded as present in the previous class, the school has an internal system of checking the whereabouts of the student at that time. E.g. with a guidance counsellor, meeting briefly with a teacher, extracurricular activities.</li></ul> |

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| | • If a student is unwell; they are to notify their class teacher who will notify the student director who will then contact home. |
| Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:<br><br>• Target setting and targets<br>• The whole-school approach<br>• Promoting good attendance<br>• Responding to poor attendance | **Targets:**<br>**Promoting Good Attendance:**<br><br>• Good attendance is promoted through the wellbeing classes daily. Students meet with tutors each morning, attendance is discussed, absences are reviewed and accountability for absences are sought.<br>• The student learning journal has a dedicated section to support the attendance strategy in Comeragh College.<br>• A member of the Student Support Team and HSCL meet with the students who are late, provide support, promote attendance and make sure they are ready for class.<br>• Class teachers affirm positive attendance.<br><br>Visual reminders are present in the journal and on school corridors to promote the benefits of attendance.<br><br><br>The promotion of attendance is primarily divided into 3 categories:<br><br>1. Universal initiatives<br>2. Targeted initiatives<br>3. Intensive initiatives<br><br><br>**Tier1: Universal Initiative (Whole School Approach)**<br><br>• Foster a culture of attendance through visuals, celebrations, and regular communication.<br>• Wellbeing time every day with tutors and students to connect and monitor.<br>• Engage staff, students, and families in shared responsibility for attendance.<br>• All students are actively encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities. Any costs for these are currently covered by the school.<br>• Class activities and trips are organised to local events. E.g Ice Skating etc.<br>•<br>**Tier 2: Targeted initiatives: Promoting Good Attendance**<br>• Positive greetings and relationship-building activities. |

- Regular communication with families through phone calls, meetings, newsletters, and digital platforms and HSCL involvement and BFL.
- Junior Cert Schools Programme (JSCP) initiatives.
- Increased extra-curricular activities; e.g. lunchtime clubs,
- Learning hub is available to support students with homework before school.
- Afterschool homework club is available.

## Tier 3: Intensive initiatives: Responding to Poor Attendance

- Early identification of attendance issues through consistent monitoring.
- Wellbeing class, referrals to director, referrals from director to HSCL.
- Home visits.
- Meetings with student director, HSCL and student.
- Meeting with key personnel with Student Support Team and students and parent.
- Attendance clinics with parents and tailored plans for chronic absenteeism, TUSLA - EWO.
- School Completion Programme (SCP) referrals where needed.
- Quiet spaces, time outs or other appropriate recommendations from the SEN department.
- Behaviour for Learning (BFL) interventions where deemed appropriate e.g. Access to Cubbie
- One on one check in: Check and connect.
- Alert programme.
- Friends for life programme

### Responding to Poor Attendance:

Tutors monitor attendance during daily wellbeing class. Concerns around attendance are reported to the student director, who may refer to Student Support Team and HSCL.

The school has a legal obligation to report students who have missed 20 full school days or more regardless of the reason to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for Tusla.

**As a result, the TESS strongly not to take students on holidays during school term.**

The EWO will be contacted directly where students have missed accumulative total of 20 days.

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| | EWO referrals will be made by the HSCL Coordinator through the Tusla portal.<br>Parents will be informed of the referrals beforehand and where necessary requested to produce a medical cert/letter stating a student is unfit to attend school.<br><br>In extreme cases the principal will refer to child protection guidelines and decide on the appropriate referral to use. |
| **School roles in relation to attendance**<br><br><br><br>DECIDE ON NUMBER OF DAYS WHEN INTERVENTION NEEDED | **Class Teacher:**<br>• Attendance is recorded by the class teacher at the beginning of each class on the VSware platform. Students whose parents have not submitted a reason for absence either via VSware or the school office will be marked as 'absence unexplained'. (ABS)<br>• The class teacher will keep note of any patterns that may be developing with regards to regular student absenteeism on a particular day or at a particular class time.<br>• This information will then be passed to the class tutor and student director.<br><br>**HSCL:**<br><br>• Parents of students who have an unexplained absence will be sent a text message from the school before 11am each morning to remind parents to upload an explanation/reason for absence on the VSware platform.<br>• It is school expectation from the parents to provide an explanation for any unexplained absences for accountability.<br><br>**Tutor or student director:**<br><br>• The tutor will monitor the weekly attendance of each student in their care and refer any incidents of regular unexplained absences to the student director.<br>• The tutor will also check the 'lates' marked in the student journal and encourage punctuality.<br><br>**Student Director:**<br><br>• The student director will contact parents of students who are developing a pattern of regular absenteeism both explained and unexplained.<br>• In the case where the student director is concerned that a pattern of school refusal or |

avoidance is developing they will contact the **HSCL to form a supportive link to the family.**

**HSCL:**

- The HSCL will offer regular support to parents of students who are struggling with school attendance.
- The HSCL maintains regular contact with the parents through phone calls and home visits.
- The HSCL works closely with Student Support Team and guidance counsellors to ascertain ways to encourage the student and their parents to improve school attendance.
- The HSCL will refer students who need extra encouragement and monitoring to the (SCP).
- The HSCL will link in with other community services when necessary and initiate a Meitheal process to obtain extra support for families where the parent and/or student willingly volunteer to participate.
- In the cases where a student exceeds 20 days and all other strategies have been used to no avail, the HSCL will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) through the Tusla portal.

**SCP (School Completion Programme):**

- SCP is a programme to support children and young people who are at risk of early school leaving and students of school going age who are not currently attending school.
- SCP will receive a referral where there is a concern around a child's attendance.
- SCP will provide a targeted intervention to children and young people with significant support needs who have been identified through the SCP framework.

**Senior Management**

- Senior Management promote good attendance at school assemblies, meetings with parents and at school events.
- Senior Management support attendance by providing resources where deemed appropriate.
- The principal and HSCL arrange for TUSLA referrals.

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| **Procedures for reporting (lates, absences, leaving early for appt etc)** | **Lateness:**<br><br>• Where a student presents late, they are met by a member of the Student Support Team.<br>• Reason for lateness is recorded; their journal is also signed.<br>• Where there is a query, the parent may receive a phone call for clarification<br><br>**Absences:**<br><br>• All parents have individual access to the VSware platform<br>• Parents are asked to log any student absences or partial absences, via VSware, prior to the start of the school day.<br>• Absences are approved by the student director or HSCL daily.<br><br>**Leaving School during the school day:**<br><br>• If a student must leave school during the day, a note must be entered on VSware indicating the time the student is leaving and if they intend to return. This comment will be approved by their Student Director or HSCL.<br>• Students must be signed out by the Student Director or the office and collected by a parent at the main reception.<br>• Parents must notify the school if a student is not being collected by an adult and has permission to exit the building unaccompanied.<br>• Students who are returning to school before the end of the day must sign in at the office on their return.<br>• Students who are 18 years or over do not need to be accompanied by an adult when leaving the school building during the day.<br><br>*Over 18 students must have completed an over 18's form once they turn 18.* |
| **How school informs whole school community and parents about attendance expectations.** | • The attendance expectations for the school are expressed by teachers and management during daily wellbeing classes, the school learning journal and during whole year assemblies.<br>• Students are also reminded of the benefits of good attendance through school displays on |

| | entrance and around the school building. e.g. 5mins late per day poster. |
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| | <ul><li>Parents are informed about attendance expectations through information evenings.</li><li>In cases of concern, Parents may be contacted directly by student directors and if deemed appropriate HSCL to be reminded of attendance expectations and the benefits of attending school.</li><li>Senior management also remind class tutors to reiterate the importance of attendance and punctuality. Staff are encouraged to model this behaviour.</li></ul> |
| Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups) | **Role of Parents in Supporting Attendance in Post-Primary School**<br>Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's attendance in post-primary school. Here are some key ways they can help:<br>1. **Set Clear Expectations**: Communicate the importance of regular school attendance and set clear expectations for their children.<br>2. **Establish Routines**: Create consistent morning and evening routines to ensure students are prepared for school each day.<br>3. **Monitor Attendance**: Keep track of their child's attendance and address any absences promptly to prevent patterns of absenteeism.<br>4. **Communicate with the School**: Maintain open communication with the school to stay informed about their child's attendance and address any concerns with teachers or administrators.<br>5. **Support Academic Success**: Provide a supportive home environment for studying and homework to help students stay engaged and motivated to attend school.<br>6. **Encourage Involvement**: Encourage their child to participate in school activities and clubs to increase their connection to the school and improve attendance.<br>7. **Address Barriers**: Identify and address any barriers to attendance, such as health issues or transportation problems, to ensure students can attend school regularly.<br>8. **Promote a Positive Attitude**: Encourage a positive attitude toward school and education to help students understand the value of attending and participating in school.<br>9. **Utilize the VSware Platform**: Use the VSware platform to monitor and log any instances of absenteeism. This allows parents to keep track of their child's attendance, stay informed about their |

|  | school activities, and promptly address any attendance issues that may arise.<br>By actively supporting their child's attendance, parents can contribute to their overall academic success and well-being.<br><br>Comeragh College will endeavour to maintain its strong partnership with the agencies listed below to help communicate its high expectations around attendance.<br><br>These include:<br><br>• The Parents Association<br>• The Student Ethos Council<br>• Primary schools<br>• TETB schools<br>• An Garda Siochana<br>• The Edge<br>• Foroige<br>• Nano Nagle Resource Centre<br>• Barnardos<br>• Local organisations |
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| **How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored** | The implementation of the Statement of Strategy will be monitored by school management and designated school personnel. |
| **Review process and date for review** | The Attendance Strategy is a schoolwide initiative and will be reviewed annually.<br><br>This Attendance Strategy is then noted by the Board of Management. |
| **Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management** | 12th February 2025 |

Chairperson:

Secretary:

Date: 12 | 2 | 2025