



Cara Community Special School

Statement of Strategy of Attendance & Participation

Name of school	Cara Community Special School
Address	Enfield, Co. Meath, A83 X920
Roll Number	20578W
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>Cara Community Special School Board of Management recognise the positive impact high attendance has on student engagement and on teaching and learning.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that positive experiences of engagement with the school contributes positively to the quality and quantity of school attendance.</p> <p>The vision and values of Cara CSS encourages high attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of a caring and positive school environment, where every pupil, their welfare, wellbeing and health is a priority in Cara CSS. The uniqueness of each child is celebrated and individual needs identified and support personalised. • Cara CSS fosters a positive school culture, where pupils have positive and respectful interactions with their teachers and peers. Pupils are active and valued members of the school community. • Pupils are nurtured to have respect for themselves and others, and be responsible for their behaviour and their learning. • Pupils are encouraged to have high expectations for their learning and work diligently and creatively to learn knowledge and skills to prepare them for a future of life-long learning. <p>At Cara CSS, 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>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<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 Cara CSS expects a high level of pupil attendance. Children are encouraged to come to school every day and the school's approach to, and promotion of, attendance is outlined in this strategy.</p> <p>TUSLA and the Board of Management of Cara CSS 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, including; illness, urgent family reasons, expulsion, suspension, or transfer to another school.</p>
How attendance will be monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All class teachers take a daily roll call which is recorded on the school's data software programme Aladdin. • 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. • If the teacher has been made aware of the reason for absence, this is also recorded on the Aladdin system. • If a teacher is concerned about student absences, they alert the Principal. • The roll call is taken by 9:20am each morning. • The annual attendance of each child is recorded by Aladdin and is printed in the end of year school reports. • Late arrivals and early departures are discouraged unless absolutely necessary. All late arrivals and early departures will be recorded on the Aladdin system. • For early departures, a parent/guardian must collect their child and the time of collection will be recorded. • School begins at 9am and pupils who arrive after 9:20 am will be recorded as arriving late on Aladdin. The school will contact parents/guardians 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 Child and Family Agency. • Late collections will also be documented on Aladdin.

<p>Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target setting and targets • The wholeschool approach 	<p>Target</p> <p>The policy aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage full attendance at school • Highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents • 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 • Report on student attendance to Tusla — the Educational Welfare Service • Implement suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality. • Average attendance rate will continue to be monitored. <p>Whole-school approach</p> <p>Pupils, parents, staff and the Board of Management work in partnership to provide the best education for our pupils and believe that consistent attendance is necessary to facilitate the education of the children.</p> <p>The whole-school approach to attendance is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting a positive learning environment • child attendance is inputted daily by each class teacher by 9:20am • promoting a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected • encouraging full attendance where possible • encouraging punctuality • The motto, "Every Lessons Counts" is used to remind pupils and is displayed around the school. https://www.tusla.ie/every-school-day-counts/ • Teachers will document all late arrivals (arriving after 9:20am) on Aladdin. • fostering an appreciation of learning • raising awareness of the importance of school attendance • raising everyone's expectations of our school attendance
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensuring that child attendance is recorded daily• identifying children at risk• develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of attendance problems.• Notices via the Aladdin system are sent home to parents if their child has missed 15 days. Another notice is sent home if a child has missed 20 days or more informing parents that TUSLA will be notified• identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance |
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting good attendance 	<p>Promoting good attendance</p> <p>The following are strategies employed by the school to promote good school attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting a positive learning environment • Staff meet and greet with pupils every morning • Discussion about attendance at Parents' Association meetings, annual parent teacher meetings, class meetings at the start of the year and information evenings with new parents. • Regular updates on the school website • Record of attendance in child's annual school report • Distribution of Tusla's Educational Welfare Services' leaflet entitled 'Don't Let Your Child Miss Out' at new parents' information days/evenings • Sporting activities throughout the school year • <u>The</u> school calendar for each academic year is distributed in Term 3 the <u>previous</u> year to make parents/guardians aware of school holidays, to avoid holidays being taken during term time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to poor attendance 	<p>Responding to poor attendance</p> <p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with groups or individuals who may need additional support • Tailoring whole-school approaches to group or individual needs • Engaging in early dialogue with parents and students • Using school-led, multi-agency support processes • Referral to Tusla Educational Welfare Services <p>Approach to attendance concerns</p> <p>School-based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is a concern regarding a child's level of attendance or pattern of absenteeism, the Principal will speak to the parents/guardians. • A notice on Aladdin will be sent to parents/guardians informing them of when their child has reached 15 days and 20 days of absenteeism.

Parents/Guardians will also be informed when the school has made a referral to Tusla regarding attendance

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 a child is sick or is absent for another explained reason, no action is likely to be taken by Tusla. However, if there is a concern about a child's attendance at school or about the reasons given for absenteeism, families may be visited by an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss the situation. Unexplained absences are of particular concern to the school and to Tusla.
- 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.
- Any child who has missed 20 days or more, or any children about whom there are absenteeism concerns, must be reported to Tusla in these periodic reports.
- Tusla Child and Family Agency is also informed if a child is suspended for 6 days or more, or in the case of the expulsion of a child.

School roles in relation to attendance	<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>Principal</p> <p>The school 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 this policy, under the guidance of the Board of Management. The Principal will undertake the following responsibilities in relation to this plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with parents/guardians regarding attendance concerns. • Prepare a report on attendance for the Board of Management on a yearly basis, or as the need arises. • Maintain the Leabhar Tinreamh (Daily Attendance Book) and print hard copies of this monthly. • Provide opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school's Attendance Strategy. • View the attendance statistics on the Aladdin system each week • Initiate links with relevant bodies on school attendance issues • Making the periodic returns to Tusla • Notifying Tusla's Educational Welfare 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. <p>Class teachers (and substitute teachers where relevant) have responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for recording daily attendance and for inputting reasons of absenteeism on the Aladdin system.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance • Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy to promote attendance • Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality in their classrooms • Use their own punctuality to lead by example
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- Ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures, as set out above
- Alert Principal if there are concerns about student absences
- Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis
- Support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling.

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 serious reason
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Notifying the school in writing if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- 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 in writing if their child/children, are to be collected by someone other than the adult listed on the Emergency Information Form.
- Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.

Pupils

- Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

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/guardians, students, other school, community groups and Tusla, among others.
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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 doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities will be provided for staff to share experiences about how the strategy is working and to review progress towards attendance targets (in the form of staff meetings) • The principal will update on attendance levels at each Board of Management meeting, with reference to the school's attendance targets.
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 Board of Management	25 July 2024
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	

This policy has been ratified by the Single Manager of Cara CSS on 25 July 2024.

Signed: *Yvona Kilday* Single Manager Date: *25/7/24*

Signed: *Katie Callaghan* Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: *25/7/24*