

BAILIEBOROUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



1. NAME OF THE SCHOOL

Bailieborough Community School

2. ADDRESS

Bailieborough Community School

Virginia Road

Bailieborough

County Cavan

A 82 P585

3. ROLL NUMBER

91351S

4. BAILIEBOROUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL'S VISION AND VALUES IN
RELATION TO ATTENDANCE

Bailieborough Community School is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in all areas of education. Our aim is to generate and maintain an inclusive climate of learning within which each student is enabled to develop and fulfil his/her unique potential. It is our hope that every student who leaves Bailieborough Community School will be equipped not only to make his/her way into the world

but also to make a particular contribution to society and at the same time continue a process of life-long learning.

We cannot fulfil these aims without a high attendance rate from our students. Bailieborough Community School acknowledges the direct link between regular school attendance and academic progress.

The school takes cognisance of the research indicating that good attendance enhances school connectedness, engenders a positive attitude towards learning, encourages school completion and increases student attainment.

5. BAILIEBOROUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL'S HIGH EXPECTATIONS AROUND ATTENDANCE

Students in Bailieborough Community School are encouraged to come to school every day and full attendance is expected from them.

Absence from school interferes with a student's education and impacts negatively upon the student's fulfilment of his or her true potential.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 every child must attend school regularly up to 16 years of age or complete at least three years of education in a post-primary school, whichever comes later.

Parents/Guardians have a legal obligation to ensure that their son/daughter is at school on each day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him/her not to attend. (Section 17 of the Education Welfare Act 2000).

Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal. (Section 21(9) of Education Welfare Act 2000).

Tusla and the Board of Management of Bailieborough Community School strongly advise that parents do not take their son/daughter out of school for holidays during term time. Holidays should be taken during the allocated holiday time as outlined in the school calendar.

The Board of Management acknowledges that there are cases where a student has a genuine reason for being absent including illness, urgent family reason, suspension, expulsion or transfer to another school.

6. HOW ATTENDANCE WILL BE MONITORED

An attendance register for all students enrolled in Bailieborough Community School is maintained.

Morning roll call (during period one) and class attendance is recorded on E-portal by individual teachers. When a student is absent during the first period, a text message is sent to his/her parent or guardian where relevant.

If a student is absent from school, he/she will present a written note (= green note entitled "explanation for absence" at the back of the student journal) from his/her parent or guardian on return with the reason for the absence clearly stated. The note is given to the tutor who then forwards it to the year leader. The year leader submits it to the general office for processing.

Details of students under 16 years of age with recorded absences of 20 days or more are reported to Tusla as required by law. Parents/Guardians receive a standard letter from the school explaining that a report has been made.

If a student arrives late to school he/she signs the "Late Book" in the general office. If a student has to leave school during class time they have to be signed out by a parent/guardian using the "Absence during School Day Book" in the office. If the student is coming back, the parent/guardian must sign him/her in on return.

Attendance is monitored by the class teacher, the tutor, the assistant year leader and the year leader. If a pattern of absence is causing concern, the student's home is contacted. Students at risk or in need of additional support are referred to the care team where specific interventions will be put in place to meet their specific needs or circumstances.

7. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF BAILIEBOROUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO ATTENDANCE

7.1 Target Setting and Targets

The total number of days lost through student absences in the 2014-2015 academic year was 8341 out of 98028 = 8.5 %.

The total number of students under sixteen who were absent for twenty days or more during the 2014-2015 academic year was 70 out of 587 = 11.9 %.

The total number of days lost through student absences in the 2015-2016 academic year was 9151 out of 101035 = 9 %.

The total number of students under sixteen who were absent for twenty days or more during the 2015-2016 academic year was 80 out of 605 = 13 %.

The total number of days lost through student absences in the 2016-2017 academic year was 9843 out of 103373 = 9.5 %.

The total number of students under sixteen who were absent for twenty days or more during the 2016-2017 academic year was 97 out of 619 = 15 %.

The total number of days lost through student absences in the 2017-2018 academic year have yet to be determined out of a total of 105043 days.

Upon reflection of these statistics Bailieborough Community School has set the following targets:

- to reduce the number of days lost through student absences by 1% in 2017-2018 and 2% in 2018-2019
- to reduce the total number of students under sixteen who were absent for twenty days or more by 2% in 2017-2018 and 3% in 2018-2019
- to reduce the number of students whose absenteeism has not been explained by a parent/guardian and who have failed to submit the relevant green note entitled explanation for absence at the back of the student journal (greater emphasis on collection of these notes)
- to include student attendance rates in school reports

7.2 The Whole School Approach

At Bailieborough Community School students, parents/guardians, teachers, external agencies and the Board of Management work in tandem to provide the best possible educational opportunities for students and believe that consistent attendance is central to achieving excellence in education as outlined in the

school's mission statement. The whole school approach to attendance is as follows:

- Fostering a climate where learning and an appreciation of learning prevails
- Placing greater emphasis on these three rights:
 - (a) All who come to Bailieborough Community School have a right to be educated in an atmosphere of respect in an organised learning environment. Bailieborough Community School is an inclusive school which respects, values and accommodates diversity across all nine grounds in the equality legislation - gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.
 - (b) Everyone at Bailieborough Community School has a right to work in a clean, safe and healthy environment.
 - (c) Each person has a right to come to Bailieborough Community School to pursue his/her education without interference, bullying or intimidation, harassment or sexual harassment.
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Raising expectations of all stakeholders regarding school attendance
- Encouraging punctuality and full attendance as good habit forming practices relevant to the world of work
- Inputting student attendance data daily prior to the end of period one via E-portal and subsequently each period thereafter
- Highlighting good attendance and improved attendance
- Improving communication with parents/guardians
- Establishing links, subject to resources, between the school and families of students at risk of attendance problems
- Referring students at risk to the care team
- Identifying and removing where possible obstacles to attendance

7.3 Strategies to Promoting Good Attendance

7.3.1 General awareness-raising strategies:

- Discussion of attendance at parent/teacher/student meetings, student council meetings, parents' association meetings, information nights, staff meetings, year leader meetings

- Highlighting the importance of attendance in tutor class, SPHE, Wellbeing in first year
- Positive affirmations by the year leader or assistant year leader in the mornings when students are at lockers organising themselves for the day ahead
- Incorporating attendance rates in students' academic profiles
- Displaying good attendance rates from classes on posters e.g. LCA classes
- Highlighting school calendar via our website, letters, student journal, BCS facebook page to make parents/guardians aware of school holidays in order to discourage holidays being taken during term time
- Distributing Tusla's Educational Welfare Services leaflet entitled: "Don't Let your Child Miss out at parent - teacher - student meetings"
- Gathering data from the education passports of incoming first year students regarding previous attendance patterns and flagging concerns early

7.3.2 Involving parents in setting high expectations

- Encouraging parental involvement in all aspects of school life
- Creating opportunities for parents to participate in and review school policies and curriculum
- Highlighting how missed classes can impact negatively on student achievement and can cause stress
- Drawing attention to the impact of poor attendance on the others in the class as well as the class teacher
- Raising awareness of the problems lateness causes for the smooth running of classes
- Seeking advice with parents from the Education Welfare Officer, NEPS, HSE in relation to appropriate referral for students

7.3.3 Providing support programmes to enhance attendance

- Breakfast is available from the school canteen at 8am in the morning
- Homework drop ins are available at lunchtime
- Wide range of extra and co-curricular activities
- Variety of lunchtime clubs involving art, music, games, debating, TED talks, sporting activities

- Green Schools Programme
- Comhairle na nOg
- Young Environmentalists
- Young Scientists
- Student Council
- School Bank
- Social Skills Group
- Mentoring in 2018-2019

7.3.4 Promoting good attendance

- Educational Trip with Year Group
- Awards at Prize Giving Ceremony
- Certificates
- Attendance Charts

7.3.5 Building linkages with others

Bailieborough Community School encourages its students to participate in local community groups and organisations. It recognises achievements by students in these activities informally and formally via daily notices, website, facebook page, local media,...

7.4. Responding to Poor Attendance

Where poor attendance is identified, the year leader will intervene by contacting the parents/guardians in an effort to rectify the situation. A referral to the care team can be made and additional supports implemented. This may involve seeking the advice of external agencies.

If these interventions fail, a referral to Tusla's Education Welfare Service will be made using the standard reporting form. All students under the age of sixteen who have twenty or more absences are reported to Tusla. Parents/Guardians are notified of this in writing by the school.

8. SCHOOL ROLES IN RELATION TO ATTENDANCE

The Board of Management acknowledges a collective responsibility for the promotion of attendance.

Students

Students are expected to be in school by 8.40am, arrive promptly to and remain in all classes. Junior Cycle students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day.

Students are responsible for bringing in and handing up the green note at the back of the journal explaining the reason for their absence by a parent/guardian on the day they return to school following an absence.

Students need to ensure the accuracy of the note.

All students are expected to comply with this strategy.

Catching up on work missed is the student's responsibility.

Parents/Guardians

They have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their sons/daughters of compulsory school going age attend school regularly and punctually. They can do a great deal to support this by:

- Ensuring that all contact details are up to date
- Taking an active interest in their son's/daughter's school life and work
- Checking and signing the student journal weekly
- Attending the parent-student-teacher meetings and other school related events
- Being aware of the content of letters the school sends or asks their son/daughter to bring home
- Ensuring their son/daughter arrives on time each day, is dressed in the proper school uniform, presents well organised and is ready to learn
- Making appointments e.g. medical, dental for their sons/daughters outside of class time where possible
- Notifying the school regarding their son's/daughter's absenteeism
- Avoiding the booking of holidays during term time

- Talking to the school if they are concerned their son/daughter seems reluctant to attend
- Minimising the collection of their son/daughter when classes are in operation as this disrupts teaching and learning

Teachers

Teachers will endeavour:

- To create a classroom climate and classroom management that supports participation and engagement
- To ensure the daily roll call and class attendance are accurately recorded using E-portal/Staff Handbook
- To mark students involved in school related activities appropriately
- To regularly remind students of the importance of full and punctual attendance for effective learning in their classroom
- To use their own punctuality as a means to lead by example
- To give particular attention to students whose families are experiencing difficulties
- To make contact with parents
- To assist in identifying at risk students
- To encourage and reward students with full attendance in their subject
- To implement this strategy fully

Management

The senior management team will regularly monitor attendance and participation. They will co-ordinate the identification of students who may need assistance in order to fully participate or attend school regularly. An annual report will be furnished to the Board of Management in relation to attendance rates, targeted progress and interventions tried.

Board of Management

The board is responsible for the preparation of a school attendance strategy and for reviewing its implementation.

9. PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Board of Management of Bailieborough Community School acknowledges the importance of partnership arrangements and a multi-disciplinary approach in supporting the attendance and punctuality of its students.

The school community may seek the involvement of staff members, parents/guardians, students, other schools, community groups, Tusla, Child Development Team, CAMHS, NEPS, EWO, Bounce Back, Gardai, Meitheal among others.

10. HOW THE STATEMENT OF STRATEGY WILL BE MONITORED

The Board of Management and the principal will monitor the implementation of the statement of strategy for school attendance on an ongoing basis by:

- Creating opportunities for staff at staff meetings to share experiences about how the strategy is working and to review progress in relation to attendance targets
- Seeking input from the student council and the parents' association regarding the strategy's effectiveness and achievement of targets
- Keeping the Board of Management informed and update/amend the strategy accordingly

11. DATE FOR REVIEW

The next review of this strategy will be conducted in August 2018.

12. DATE THE STATEMENT OF STRATEGY WAS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

This statement of strategy for school attendance was ratified at the Board of Management meeting on 19th February 2018.

Signed: Frank McBrearty

Chairperson, Board of Management.

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. J. ...', written over a horizontal line.

Secretary, Board of Management.

13. DATE THE STATEMENT OF STRATEGY WAS SUBMITTED TO TUSLA

The draft statement of strategy was submitted to Tusla on Monday 22nd January 2018.

BAILIEBOROUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RUBRIC



Name:	
Class:	
Tutor:	
Number of lates to date:	
Number of absences:	
Reasons for absences	
What are the main causes?	
What have I done to make the situation worse?	
What can I do to help improve my attendance?	
What can my parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) do to help improve my attendance?	
What is the school doing to help improve my attendance and/or punctuality?	