



**Statement of Strategy for School Attendance
DOMINICAN COLLEGE MUCKROSS PARK**

Name of school	Dominican College Muckross Park
Address	Marlborough Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
Roll Number	60710U
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>Relationship to School's Mission & Vision Statement At Dominican College Muckross Park we are committed to ensuring that all students benefit fully from the education provided by encouraging regular and punctual attendance. Such a pattern of attendance is essential <i>"to create a progressive learning environment of the highest quality"</i>. (Ref. School Mission and Vision Statement).</p> <p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and welfare of our students. • To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process. • To ensure that students benefit fully from the opportunities that Muckross Park offers them. • To ensure that our students have the best possible chance of reaching their potential in school. • To ensure all parents/guardians, students, teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality. • To ensure the school fulfills its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant legislation. • Under the Act, schools are obliged to submit reports on school attendance to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency, TÜSLA. The principal must inform the TÜSLA

Education Welfare Officer where any of the following occur: (The Board of Management will also be informed)

- A student is suspended from school for a period of more than six days.
- The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during the year is 20 days or more.
- A student's name is, removed from the register by the Principal for any reason other than transfer to another school.
- A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school, not attending school regularly.

Goals

- To achieve accurate records of students' attendance at all times during school hours.
- That students learn to take responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality.
- That parents/guardians appreciate the vital role they play in ensuring their daughter's attendance in school.
- That parents/guardians appreciate the vital role they play in their daughter's punctual arrival to school.
- Minimum rate absenteeism.
- Improved punctuality to school and to class.
- The early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.

A positive approach to attendance and punctuality

Good attendance is promoted in Dominican College Muckcross Park by a culture of high expectations, where each student is encouraged to take responsibility for her own learning and to recognise the necessary link between achievement, the potential to achieve and regular attendance in class.

Steps taken by the school to positively encourage attendance and punctuality:

- Talking about attendance and punctuality and raising awareness at meetings with the Student Council, parents/guardians and the Parents Association.
- Highlighting the importance of punctuality and attendance at Year Group Assemblies.
- Positive affirmation for excellent punctuality and attendance in tutor class. Attendance is also recorded on school reports.
- Year Head, Class Tutor and/or Care Team members meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue and if necessary make contact with parents/guardians.
- Reports to parents/guardians include a record of attendance and punctuality.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the Deputy Principal's is assigned to support the implementation of the Attendance Strategy • Making students aware of their attendance record so that they can take pride in improvement. • Encouraging parents/guardians to set high standards for their daughter around attendance and punctuality. • Raising awareness of the impact of lateness on the teaching and learning process for the whole class. • Seek advice and intervention from relevant professionals where persistent absences become the norm 								
<p>The school's high expectations around attendance</p>	<p>We actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all students in Dominican College Muckross Park. We aim to ensure that all students arrive to school on time and strive for attendance that is consistently outstanding.</p> <table data-bbox="689 571 981 715"> <tr> <td>Outstanding</td> <td>98%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good</td> <td>94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acceptable</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cause for concern</td> <td>90%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Classes begin at 8.40a.m. Students are expected to be in school by 8.30a.m. to ensure that they are on time for their first class.</p> <p>We are committed to working in partnership with parents and students, seeking to identify, understand and overcome any issues or problems that are contributing to absence or punctuality.</p> <p>Students from 1st to 5th year are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours. 6th Year students have permission to leave the school grounds during lunch time.</p> <p>No student may leave the school premises during the school day without permission from one of the following: Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal, and must sign the Egress Book.</p>	Outstanding	98%	Good	94%	Acceptable	92%	Cause for concern	90%
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How attendance will be monitored

- a) The class teacher or substitute teacher will record attendance at the start of each class on the electronic administration system. Those arriving after the start of class are recorded as late.
- b) The attendance recorded during the 8.40 class and the 1.40 class will be used as the official Roll Call, (used to inform TÜSLA returns to the Education Welfare Officer).
- c) A student arriving into school after 8.40am will be recorded as Late for School on the system and will receive a 'Late for School' stamp in her Student Journal. Class teachers insist that a late stamp is obtained before accepting students' who are late to class after the bell at 8.40am and 1.40pm.
- d) Any absence from the school for all or part of the day, for any reason, requires a note giving detailed information about the reason for the absence, written and signed by a parent/guardian. This note should be written on the 'Explanation for Absence' section of the School Journal. In the case of illness this note should be handed to the Form Tutor at Pastoral Care period on the day the student returns to school. In all other cases this note should be handed to the Form Tutor at Pastoral Care period on the day before or the day of the absence. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to be strict and to allow absence in exceptional circumstances only and are requested to inform the school by telephone on the morning of any absence.
- e) Explanation of Absence/Late notes are submitted to the Class Tutor during Pastoral Care time and subsequently passed on to the Year Head who will amend the electronic attendance records from absence/late unexplained to absence explained /late with note where relevant.
- f) A list of student absences and lates is printed by the Admin Office every week. Each Year Head will use this list to monitor attendance and punctuality for a given year.
- g) In the event of a student becoming ill during the school day she should speak to her Year Head, the Deputy Principal or Principal, who will arrange for her parent/guardian to be contacted **by the school** so that they can collect their daughter. Students who are ill may not leave the school unaccompanied, without parental consent. Note: In the case of a medical emergency, if the parents/guardian cannot be contacted, the school will call an ambulance.
- h) Before leaving the school during the school day due to illness or an appointment, a student must sign the 'Egress Book' and sign back in on her return (should it be the same day)
- i) Teachers organising out of school activities should prepare a list of names to be posted on the

staffroom noticeboard and these should be recorded by the teacher or Year Head as 'school business'.

Authorised and Unauthorized Absence

In reporting on student attendance the following distinctions will apply:

Absences that may be authorised providing the school is satisfied with the reason presented, include: illness; medical, doctor, dentist, optician, psychologist, hospital appointment; excluded by school; religious observance; compassionate absence - for school authorised absence agreed with family in exceptional circumstances of need (i.e. bereavement or wedding); University interviews

Reasons for Absences that will not be authorised/sanctioned/excused include: Caring for younger siblings; parents' or carers' illness; activities such as shopping, visits to relatives, birthday celebrations or anniversaries; family holidays (these should be organised during school holiday times); oversleeping

Parents will be required to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, if their child is absent frequently or for a prolonged period due to illness or if their child is to be excused from PE due to injury. Truancy and parentally condoned absence will, without exception be recorded as unauthorised absence. Truancy will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour. Holidays during school term time will not be authorised or facilitated in any way.

- Responding to poor attendance

Year Heads pay particular attention to poor attendance for their year group. Contact is made with parents of students with poor attendance on the third consecutive day. Detention is given to students with 2 or more lates in a week.

If a student absents herself from class/school, without a note, she is deemed to be 'absent without leave'. Sanctions from the schools' Code of Behaviour will be applied, this breach of school rule carries a serious sanction which could include suspension.

School roles in relation to attendance

Student:

- To take responsibility for her own attendance and punctuality.
- To be punctual to all classes.
- To present a written explanation in the designated section of the Student Journal on the day of return following an absence from school.
- To present a valid written explanation if arriving late to school or to class.
- If a student absents herself from school for all or part of a school day without the permission of her parent/guardian or a relevant teacher and/ or does not sign the Egress Book the student will be *subject to a sanction*.

Parent/Guardian:

- To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities.(Education Welfare Act 2000)
- To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences.
- To provide a written excuse for the student's absence in the Student Journal on the first day of return to school.
- All messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible for the attention of the Class Tutor.
- To provide to the school reliable contact telephone contact numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the school may contact parents/guardians or other authorized parties if necessary.
- To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the day.
- To engage with the school in relation to attendance issues.
- To provide an explanatory note to a student arriving late for school.
- To arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays.
- To ensure that family holidays are taken within scheduled holiday times.

Principal:

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- To monitor attendance and punctuality records regularly.
- To ensure reports are made to the Education Welfare Officer, via TÜSLA returns, as required by the Education Welfare Act (2000).

- To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences/ withdrawal of students from school.
- To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.

Deputy Principals:

- To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Tutors, Class Teachers and Administration Staff to implement the school's Attendance Strategy.
- To monitor punctuality in the morning and during the school day.
- To liaise with the Year Head, Class Tutor and Pastoral Care Team (SEN/Guidance Counsellor) to address difficulties around a specific student's attendance.
- To address, with the Year Head, unauthorised absences from school through the relevant policies.
- To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer, via TÛSLA returns, as required by the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Year Head:

- To monitor regularly the attendance and punctuality records for students in the given Year Group through the electronic administration system.
- To amend, ideally on a weekly basis, the electronic attendance records from absence/late unexplained to absence explained with note where relevant.
- To liaise with the Pastoral Care Team (Class Tutor and SEN/Guidance Counsellor) and the Class Teachers to address difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance.
- To meet with those students and their parents/guardians for whom attendance and punctuality is a problem to discuss the issue.
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/or when patterns of absences are developing and to notify the relevant Deputy Principal.
- To notify the Deputy Principal where patterns of absences are developing which would require interventions and or referrals to TÛSLA .
- To liaise with the Administration staff in preparing the relevant reporting sections of the Referral Forms where reports are to be returned to TÛSLA .
- To constantly remind pupils during assemblies of the Year Group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

Form Tutor:

- To record absences at Pastoral Care period every day.
- To check absence notes from parents/guardians and to pass these to the Year Head regularly.
- To check Student Journals for Late Stamps and to communicate with the Year Head if Detention is required.
- To liaise with the Year Head in the event of absences not being explained or where any other problems may arise in relation to attendance and /or punctuality.

Class Teacher:

- To record attendance every class every day on the electronic administration system.
- When substituting for absent colleagues or when covering personal leave, to take a roll call of all students present in the classroom on the electronic administration system. (This is essential in the event of an evacuation).
- In the event of technical difficulties Class Teachers will manually record the attendance and hand into the Admin Office.
- To insist that a late stamp is obtained before accepting students who are late to class after the bell at 8.40am and 1.40pm.
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance.

Guidance Counsellor:

- To liaise with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Head, Class Tutor or SEN department coordinator to address difficulties around a specific student's attendance.
- To support students identified as having difficulties with attendance and punctuality.

Administrative Staff:

- To input attendance data from Class Teachers when required.
- To record students as Late for School or Late for Class on the electronic administration system and to stamp their Student Journals.
- To administer the signing out and signing in of students in the Egress Book.
- To bring the Egress Book in the event of an evacuation.

Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	Students are seen by Year Head. Parents meet with Year Head and /or Guidance Counsellor and/or Deputy Principal and/or Education Welfare Officer.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<p>Reports on poor attendance (90% or less) will be prepared by Year Heads and discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Assistant Principal meetings and at meetings of Principal, Deputy Principals and Year Heads and/or • At meetings between Year Heads and Class Tutors and/or • By all staff at Staff Meetings and/or • By the Board Of Management.
Review process and date for review	January 2019
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	January 2018
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	13 th December 2017