



Athleague N.S., Athleague, Co. Roscommon, F42 VF95 Phone: 090-6663420 / 085-8388694

Principal: Avril Hickey

Roll Number: 15308M / Reg. No.: 20133474

Email: [info@athleaguenationalschool.ie](mailto:info@athleaguenationalschool.ie)

Website: [www.athleaguenationalschool.ie](http://www.athleaguenationalschool.ie)

## **Statement of Strategy for School Attendance**

### **Athleague N.S.'s Vision & Values in relation to School Attendance:**

- The vision of Athleague National School is to foster the spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing of the children entrusted to our care.
- We endeavour to provide a sound education which is holistic in approach and tailored to the individual child's needs.
- The vision of our school however, may only be recognised through positive school experiences and high attendance levels. Athleague National School aims to work together with parents and guardians to foster positive attitudes to regular school attendance and learning.

### **The Aims of this Statement of Strategy are:**

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation

### **The school's high expectations around attendance:**

- In Athleague National School, we recognise the importance of school attendance. It is the aim of all stakeholders that all pupils have full attendance at school if no understandable illness/sickness or urgent family situations have occurred. To this end our school aims to be a safe, caring and stimulating place of education for all pupils. We endeavour to develop a supportive, positive and welcoming school environment where the needs of every individual child are met.

### **How attendance will be monitored:**

- Athleague National School recognises the importance of recording, tracking and monitoring attendance. As such the school will utilise the following methods to monitor attendance:
  - Daily roll call input electronically by class teacher no later than 10am
  - Once the roll is recorded it should not be changed (Rules for National schools under the Department of Education/1965)
  - Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as absent albeit late arrival
  - Attendance added to data base is checked by the school secretary at 10.30 each morning
  - Attendance monitored by class teacher
  - Teachers will discuss concerns re attendance at parent teacher meetings and will alert Principal about concerns
  - Teachers will monitor children who may be at risk of poor attendance
  - General school attendance as well as individual attendance is monitored by the Principal.
  - Reason for absences are recorded on the school database
  - Arriving late at school is recorded daily. If for whatever reason a child is late for school. The parent/ guardian of the child must present themselves at the school office to sign the



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child in. They must also give a reason for the late arrival. This information is then filed in the office for future reference.

- Leaving school early is recorded in the same manner. Parents/Guardians are asked to present themselves at the school office and sign the child out. They must also provide an explanation for early leaving. This will be used for analysis and tracking purposes
- A letter informing parents that their child has been absent from school on 15, 18 and then 19 days is sent by the school
- Report made to TUSLA after 20 days' absence according to Section 21 of Education Welfare Act using Referral Form
- Good communication between the Principal and the Educational Welfare officer is maintained

### **Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:**

1. Target setting and targets
2. The whole-school approach
3. Promoting good attendance
4. Responding to poor attendance

#### **Review:**

- Review the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance for Athleague National School
- Submit Statement of Strategy for School Attendance to the BOM for ratification
- Submit Statement of Strategy for School Attendance to Tusla

#### **1. Targets:**

- Examine the school's previous year attendance data as a baseline for target setting by:
  - recording the number of pupils who missed 20 days in each academic year
  - recording the total days absent in each academic year
  - recording the % of absences in each academic year
  - Consequently, our target is to decrease the number of pupils who miss 20 days in each academic year
  - to decrease the total days, absent in each academic year
  - to decrease the % of absences in each academic year
  - Raise awareness about the importance of attendance among management, staff, pupils and parents

#### **2. Whole-School Approach to Attendance**

- The school has a comprehensive attendance policy which sets out its systems and procedures for ensuring regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance. This policy is reviewed regularly
- Roles and responsibilities of those working with the school are clearly defined in relation to attendance



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- Attendance and its importance is emphasised at the open evening and to those whose attendance is being monitored
- The staff record and monitor attendance on a daily basis
- Attendance is recorded electronically via the Aladdin system. This enables more efficient monitoring of attendance on a daily basis as well as allowing the identification of longer-term trends in absence which can be used to inform school policy and practice
- There is continuous analysis of individual pupil attendance and of whole school attendance
- The school emphasises parents' prime responsibility for ensuring attendance by asking parents to inform them as soon as possible if their child will not be attending school on a particular day
- Attendance is promoted through the use of parent-teacher meetings and school newsletters
- When welcoming new parents/guardians and pupils, the Principal raises awareness of the importance of punctuality and attendance
- New staff members are briefed on the school's philosophy on attendance and they are informed of their responsibilities for attendance management

### **3. Promoting Good Attendance**

- The following strategies will be employed to promote good attendance:
  - The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child
  - Highlight the importance of attendance and positive affirmation of attendance when the roll is being taken
  - Record attendance in students' Parent Teacher Meetings and also in their end of year School Reports
  - Celebrate students with good attendance by acknowledging their achievement with a reward and certificate
  - Distribution of Tusla's Educational Welfare Services' leaflet entitled Don't Let Your Child Miss Out (January of each year)
  - Involve parents in all aspects of school life and promote good communication between home and school
  - Provide curricular and extra-curricular activities such as art, drama, music, sporting and IT enrichment activities to encourage high levels of attendance
  - Offer skills programmes in the areas of behaviour, confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing. Eg. Friends For Life, Welcome to Well-Being, Weaving Well-being, Life Skills, Transfer Programmes etc.
  - Athleague National School develops leadership skills and a sense of responsibility by involving children on school committees eg Green Schools, Active Flag and Student Council
  - Track and celebrate whole-class attendance
  - Provision of healthy snacks and hot lunches for children in school
  - Foster links with other schools, youth organisations and local organisations
  - Equality of Participation: Children are not excluded from participating in activities because of inability to pay, e. g. school tours



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- Curriculum: Understanding and support are given to children who have difficulty with or who are reluctant to engage in certain aspects of the curriculum
- To engage with support agencies such as the Department of Education and Youth, National Psychological Service (NEPS), National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the HSE and TESS - the Child and Family
- Athleague National School will promote the development of good self-esteem and self-worth in its pupils (see Code of Behaviour and BÍ Cineálta Policy)

#### **4. Responding to Poor Attendance**

- Early dialogue with parents is critical to ensure that non-attendance does not persist. In Athleague National School, we aim to respond to poor attendance in the following ways:
  - At the start of each school year (and throughout the year), teachers are alerted to children we are concerned about to monitor attendance
  - Class teachers will inform the Principal of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil
  - Contact between school and parent/guardian to express concern re attendance, late arrival or early removal e.g. phone call, letter, discuss at parent teacher meeting
  - Specific meeting in school with parent/guardian to identify problems and agree interventions
  - Concerns and agreements communicated in writing to parent/guardian
  - Implementation of any appropriate in-school measures (e.g. 'contact person' in school, support in class etc.)
  - Use of appropriate interventions with pupil (e.g. attendance charts/ attendance report, incentives, rewards etc.)

#### **Athleague National School other school interventions:**

- Children will be included on school committees
- Principal / Deputy Principal will work closely with various agencies who are involved with such students
- Contact TUSLA to assist with issues, where necessary
- Informal correspondence with parents will be initiated by telephone calls or note in the diary by the class teacher inviting parents to a meeting to discuss attendance. At these meetings the class teacher will try to ascertain the cause for the child's lateness or non-attendance and inform the parent what has been missed in class during the child's absence
- Teachers may commence reward certificates or/and targeted attendance charts at this stage e.g. Reward Certificates for targeted pupils who have shown significant improvement in their attendance
- A standard school letter will be sent to the parent after the child misses 15, 18 and 19 days,
- Attendance targets for improved attendance are set in collaboration with parents and monitored with them. When there is no improvement in attendance, a referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare



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Services will be activated by the school. A pre-referral checklist will be provided to Tusla demonstrating the efforts already made to address the attendance problem

- The E.W.O. has meetings with parents in school and / or at home to discuss concerns regarding attendance and to encourage pupils to attend
- An individual planned approach may be considered that will involve staff, pupil and parents together if the needs of a pupil are particularly complex
- Chronic attendance issues may point to the need for support from a range of agencies. In consultation with the Education Welfare Officer, National Educational Psychological Service, National Behavioural Support Service, National Council Special Education, Tusla- Child and Family Agency, the Health Service Executive, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, as well as child welfare organisations such as Barnardos and the ISPCC may be consulted.

### **Athleague National School's Roles & Responsibilities in relation to attendance:**

#### **Board of Management:**

- Ensures that a comprehensive attendance policy is in place in the school and that this policy is reviewed regularly
- Ensures that all school records are established and maintained in accordance with the Education Act and The Education Welfare Act. Under sections 20 and 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, recognised schools are required to:
  - establish and maintain a school register and school attendance records
  - monitor the attendance of all pupils enrolled

#### **School Principal/ Deputy Principal**

- Promotes good attendance at school assemblies, meetings with parents, end of year events
- Updates the BOM about attendance in the school
- Ensures that the electronic version of the 'Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil' (Daily Attendance Book - records summary information in relation to daily, monthly and annual attendance of Athleague National School is filled, printed and filed on a monthly basis
- Keeps in regular contact with parents where attendance is a concern
- Follows up on any issues regarding attendance
- Makes the quarterly and annual statistical return to Tusla
- Makes referrals to Tusla when deemed necessary
- Advises parents of the importance of regular school attendance
- Inform TUSLA every time:
  - A pupil has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
  - A Principal is concerned about a pupil's attendance
  - The Board of Management decides to expel a student
  - A pupil has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
  - A pupil's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason



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### **Teachers**

- Class teachers ensure children in the class are registered on the electronic roll book at the beginning of the school year
- Teachers take the class roll no later than 10am each morning. Attendance is recorded on Aladdin.
- When a teacher is absent the school secretary records the roll for that class.
- Encourages and commends good attendance
- Implements any whole school plan to promote good attendance
- Provides a busy and stimulating classroom where children feel valued
- Notes any queries or concerns re absence
- Records individual patterns of attendance
- Consults with parents where there are concerns around attendance or where parents have not provided explanations regarding absences
- Makes Principal aware of concerns with regard to the attendance of individual children, specifically when a pupil's absences approaches or exceeds 20 days
- The class teacher records strategies in use in the classroom to promote good attendance and to improve individual attendance

### **Parents / Guardians**

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason
- Making sure that children understand that parents/guardians support good school attendance
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- 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
- Instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- Ensuring, in so far as possible, that their 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 school related matters
- Notifying the school, in writing, if their children, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher. This applies particularly to children in junior classes
- Working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance issues
- Parents/guardians make every effort to ensure that the child attends school every day and is on time for school.

### **Pupils**

- Have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually
- Should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence



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## **Partnership Arrangements (parents, pupils, other schools, youth and community groups)**

### **Parents**

- A calendar of the school closures and other school events
- Parents are notified of the schools opening and closing times. Parents are informed that children should arrive at school for 9.00am and be collected promptly at 1.40pm (Infants) 2.40pm (all other classes)
- It is the parents' responsibility to inform the class teacher if a child is going to be late arriving to school or if the child has to leave school early
- A text to parents of a pupil who has missed 15, 18 days and/or 19 days will be sent automatically from the School Data Base informing parents that the school is obliged to report to Tusla after 20 days
- Close contacts between the school and the families will be established if non-attendance or poor attendance pattern prevails following a letter from the school. Meetings between parents and school will try to identify and remove any barriers to attendance
- The school strongly discourages parents from taking pupils on holidays during term time

### **Other Schools**

- Constant links with local schools are fostered
- Provision of relevant information e.g. School reports, educational information (SEN) to other primary or second level schools to which a student may be transitioning or transferring
- Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in our school:
  - TUSLA
  - NEPS
  - Local GAA clubs, soccer clubs, etc.
  - Community Gardaí

### **Local Organisations**

- Pupils are encouraged to participate in local organisations outside school
- Providing rewards of achievement in pupil's chosen activity
- School encourages pupils to bring in any awards

### **How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored:**

- Athleague National School will monitor the strategy by discussing attendance at meetings during Croke Park hours with all staff. The Principal will discuss children at risk and possible solutions.
- The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:
  - Improved attendance levels as measured
  - Through Aladdin database and Leabhar rolla records
  - Happy, confident, well-adjusted children
  - Positive parental feedback



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- Teacher vigilance
- A satisfactory level of accountability for all absences
- Regular review of the Statement of Strategy
- Continuous awareness of the School Attendance Strategy by all stakeholders
- Focused implementation of strategies
- Review of targets and setting of new targets

### **Review process and date for review**

- In-school Review March 2027 or earlier if deemed necessary
- Analysis of current strategy and listing of successes / challenges
- Action Plan with reviewed targets
- Strategy discussed and approved at Board of Management meeting
- School Statement of Strategy communicated to all stakeholders on [www.athleaguenationalschool.ie](http://www.athleaguenationalschool.ie)

### **Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management**

- Strategy to be reviewed by Staff and Board of Management annually

### **Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla**

- 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2026

### **Ratification and Communication**

This strategy was reviewed and implemented on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2026.

This strategy will be reviewed in March 2027 or earlier if required.

### **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management of Athleague NS ratified this strategy on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2026.

This strategy is available to view at the school by the parents.

Signed: Anthony Flaherty

Signed: Avril Hickey

Chairperson

Principal

*For and on behalf of Board of*

*Management*

**ATHLEAGUE N.S.**

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2026

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