

## Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	MARYFIELD COLLEGE
Address	GLANDORE ROAD DUBLIN 9
Roll Number	60840K
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>In Maryfield College we believe that it is through our relationships with others that we grow to our full potential. Therefore we aspire to create an educational environment where students come to learn and to understand themselves, their abilities and their world. In this environment they learn to take responsibility for themselves and others and so they can become independent adults.</p> <p>Good attendance is habit forming and makes school a meaningful experience for every student. It not only improves performance in academic subjects but aids all other areas of school life; the nourishing of interests, sports and life-long learning, and promotes feelings of inclusiveness, self-esteem, resilience and confidence. It is seen as one of the most significant factors in a student's success in school and beyond. Good attendance helps pupils obtain secure employment and allows others to perceive them as mature, reliable and responsible citizens. Good attendance complements our ethos which stresses the significance of "relationships with others" in the "development of the full potential of our students".</p> <p>Maryfield College is committed to the implementation of education legislation. In particular we are committed to the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (Pr.111 S 18 /22) which relates to absence from school, school registers, school attendance records and school attendance strategies.</p>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>Maryfield College considers regular attendance and punctuality to be key to success at school. Maryfield College expects each student to be in school every day and to be on time. Awareness about attendance and time keeping is raised each day at roll calls, at PT meetings, through twice yearly reports, through FT contact with class, through assemblies etc. Attendance is a regular item on agendas for Year Head meetings.</p> <p>Parents have a role to play in setting high standards for the students regarding attendance and time keeping. The school calendar is made available to parents in the summer of the upcoming school year. The school day is set out in the student's timetable. Parents are reminded of the importance of arranging holidays, family events, dental and medical appointments etc. outside school time. Parents are also asked to prevent loss of school contact time as a result of events like Debs Nights, Pre Debs Nights, by shopping trips. etc. Parents are obliged in law to inform the school of the reasons for all absences.</p> <p>Parents have an opportunity to become more involved in the life the school through the Parents' Association. Through an involvement with the school, parents may develop a stronger sense of belonging to the school community and have a deeper commitment to the school and the education it provides.</p>
How attendance is recorded and monitored	<p>Two registrations are taken each day; one between 8.45 and 9.15 and the second between 1.45 and 2.05. The school attendance of individual students is entered into ePortal. If a student is not present they are marked "absent" by the teacher. If a student arrives later during that class period she is marked "Late". A text is sent in the morning alerting parents to any absence recorded during registration period and a fire register is compiled.</p>

A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence and a booklet of pre printed notelets is provided to each household. Unexplained absences are followed up by Year Heads. Notes from doctors/ dentists are requested in the case of repeated/prolonged absence. Parents/guardians must also provide a written explanation if a student departs early during the school day. The student must present the note to the Year Head prior to departure and sign out in the front office on departure.

On ePortal the absence that the teacher has entered appears as Unexplained Absence until the Year Head amends it. The options for the Year Head are

- Ill
- absent (for doctor, dental and other appointments)
- other (for holidays, religious observance)
- urgent family reason ( a crisis at home, bereavement)
- school activity ( for sporting or other activities related to or approved by the school)
- late
- excused late

The last three options do not result in an absence for the student. The first four are statistical absences.

Students who arrive late must get late 'slip' in the school office. Latecomers are required to do a short detention at lunchtime. If they do not report for detention, they are requested to attend for a longer detention after school, usually on Friday.

Being absent from class or from school without permission is considered a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.

Attendance data is used to monitor overall attendance and punctuality levels. This allows Year Heads and Deputy Principal to identify trends and patterns both for the whole school and for vulnerable individuals. Students may be referred to pastoral care/guidance counsellor/learning support.

The school is obliged to inform the Education (Welfare) Officer, where a student has missed 20 or more days in a school year, when attendance is irregular, when there are concerns regarding the pattern of attendance, when a pupil is removed from the school register, when a student is suspended for 6 days or more and when a student is permanently excluded. The Tusla referral process is followed in these cases.

Tusla EWB is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form. Interim reports are filed four times a year.

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

**Target setting and targets**

year	ave no. of days missed per student (National figure in bracket )	% of student days lost (National figure in bracket)
2015/16	11.77	7.00 (n/a)
2014/15	11.6	6.95 (n/a)
2013/14	11.3 (13)*	6.76 (7.5)
2012/13	10.2	6.11 (7.7)
2011/12	5.2	3.13 (7.7)
2010/11	7.5	4.5 9 (7.8 )

2009/2010	9.3	5.58 (7.9)
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\* Only 2013/14 available n/a=not available.

Attendance in Maryfield College seems to be better than the National average with approximately .5% less students days lost. However, the trend, both for student days lost and for average number of days missed shows a slippage since 2010. The target for 2016/17 is to reverse the trend in percentage of student days lost by .1%

### **The whole-school approach**

This can be achieved by continuing to promote good attendance and responding appropriately when there are concerns about attendance. The whole school community (students, teachers, parents, Year Head and management) has a role. The roles are detailed below.

### **Promoting good attendance**

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe, friendly and welcoming environment
- ensuring that students reach their full potential through access to sufficient resources, support and services
- having full and equal opportunity for all students to participate in school life.
- setting high expectations for students
- the quality of relationships between teachers and students
- helping students to see the value in what is taught and learned
- promoting a sense of belonging and inclusion
- encouraging student “voice” in school life through Student Council, Prefect system, Green School etc and providing opportunities for student inclusion in drafting of school policies
- providing opportunities for home-school communications
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- a fair and consistently administered Code of Behaviour
- providing appropriate interventions to students with SEN
- mixing of ability groups throughout the school
- putting systems in place for dealing with absenteeism and lateness
- providing programmes to promote positive attitudes to the reporting of Bullying
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance are identified early
- ongoing analysis of lateness and non attendance patterns
- an Induction Programme for incoming first years
- Whole school Events (like School Mass, Dress UP days for charity, Christmas Fair Events and concerts ,Annual Sports Day, Pay it forward Day, Intercultural day)
- Year Group/Class Group Events like Bonding Days, class outings, retreats
- acknowledging and rewarding good attendance
- providing a varied, engaging and relevant curriculum
- encouragement to students to join in extra curricular and co-curricular activities
- Circulating the school calendar in plenty of time to facilitate parental planning of family events so that school days can be avoided
- Sending letters to parents flagging potential attendance issues.

### **Poor Attendance**

In dealing with poor attendance the student’s welfare is of paramount importance and interventions are taken with the student’s interest in mind. Responses to poor attendance include the following  
Year Heads and Tutors remind student of outstanding absence notes

Year Heads make phone calls home regarding absences

	<p>Year Head /DP arrange meetings with parents/guardians regarding possible causes of absence  Letters home regarding absences  Letter regarding referral to EWB  Referral EWB</p> <p>Staff maintain vigilance so that ‘students who are at risk of school refusal are identified early. Such students may have a(n)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lateness record. Lateness is often an indicator of a problem</li> <li>• pattern of frequently “falling out” with friends</li> <li>• experience of being bullied in the past</li> <li>• low level of expectation and achievement</li> <li>• difficulty in settling in and making friends</li> <li>• background of educational disadvantage</li> <li>• pattern of presenting in sick bay</li> <li>• emotional, behavioural difficulty</li> <li>• tendency to avoid certain classes</li> <li>• poor family experience of school</li> <li>• part time job</li> <li>• special educational needs</li> <li>• low level of achievement and success in school</li> </ul> <p>Contact with the school from which the student transfers may also identify potential ‘at risk’ students.</p> <p>When students have been identified as at risk, parents /guardians are contacted and arrangements are made to meet in school. If the student has been absent for some time a school return plan is put in place. The plan is devised in collaboration with the student and parent and may include such measures as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A phased return</li> <li>• A reduction in number of subjects for house exams</li> <li>• An “open book” exam</li> <li>• Check and connect with Counsellor or other teacher</li> <li>• Support with self-esteem, friendships and resolution of conflict where appropriate</li> <li>• Further contact with SEN team where appropriate</li> <li>• Educational assessment where appropriate</li> <li>• Referral to and collaboration with other agencies where appropriate</li> </ul> <p>While the school is mindful that a ‘quick fix’ is unlikely and that continuing support is required, it is also cognisant of the need to involve the Educational Welfare Service. If the issue remains unresolved despite all efforts being made by the school and in collaboration with the home, a formal, written and signed referral is made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).</p>
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p>Teachers record class attendance on ePortal on a daily basis. The rolls entered by teachers at 8.45 and at 1.45 are the official school attendance for the student and as such ensure that the school is compliant with its duties and responsibilities under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Teachers also record attendance at every other class contact period in line with Health and Safety best practice. School administrative staff identify, twice daily, which rolls have not been called, compile the daily Fire register and ensure that all rolls have been entered. Teachers also call rolls on class outings, field trips. Retreats etc.</p> <p>Year Heads collect notes from parents, monitor attendance and punctuality and update ePortal</p>

	<p>accordingly. Year Heads look at trends and contact parents in the first instance regarding absences / lateness.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal generates the morning report, sends SMS message and handles follow up queries that morning. The Deputy Principal also compiles reports for Year Head meetings. Following consultation with the Year Head, attendance letters which flag potential attendance issues are sent to parents at intervals during a term where it is deemed appropriate. Attendance and punctuality information is also reported to parents as part of every school report. The Deputy Principal also has responsibility for making returns to Tusla should a student be absent for more than 20 days or should a student's attendance be of concern to the school. The Deputy Principal also compiles the end of year attendance return to Tusla and for the Principal. The Deputy Principal also works with Year Heads and School Counsellor with respect to students who do not attend regularly.</p> <p>The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring the school is compliant with legislation in respect to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintenance of an accurate register of enrolment and attendance</li> <li>• maintenance of accurate register of students on site in case of emergency evacuation</li> <li>• reports to Tusla of students with more than 20 days absence</li> <li>• reports to Tusla students who have been suspended for 6 days or more</li> <li>• annual report to Tusla</li> <li>• report to Board of Management on levels of attendance at year end</li> <li>• report to Parents' Association on levels of attendance at year end</li> </ul> <p>The Principal also has responsibility for the analysis of trends, the provision in so far as possible programmes, timetables and any other strategies that encourage regular attendance.</p> <p>The Board of Management is responsible for the ratification, following consultation with teachers, students, parents and Principal, and implementation of an Attendance Strategy which encourages regular attendance and an appreciation of learning among students.</p> <p>Students are required to attend school every day, to ensure that they arrive on time and to follow any instructions given by the school regarding the delivery of attendance notes to the appropriate place. They are bound by school policies including the Code of Behaviour, Uniform and Anti Bullying policies.</p> <p>It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their daughters attend every day and are on time. Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 parents are obliged to inform the school in writing of the reason for all absences. The letter should be directed to the appropriate year head.</p>
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	Close contact with feeder school and other primary schools regarding transition Local youth organisations PA School Council Prefects Green Schools Committee
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	Yearly
Review process and date for review	Through Policy review Group, PA, Student Council, BOM. April 2019
Date the Statement of Strategy was	04/04/2017

approved by the Board of Management	
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	26/09/2017