

Appendix B

This appendix provides sample ideas which may be adapted by schools to respond to attendance needs. Based on assessment of need, schools may at times aim to improve whole school attendance (as demonstrated below) or focus on particular student cohorts/classes identified by data gathered, analysed and aligned to School Development Planning. It is recognised that consistent praise and support of those with satisfactory attendance is important, but it is critical when running an attendance approach that it seeks to include and motivate students with unsatisfactory attendance to encourage improvement over time.

Examples from Primary



Supporting Attendance Through Experiences of Success

Context: A primary school noted that some pupils with irregular attendance lacked confidence in learning. They also noted that several parents had unmet literacy needs and/or had experienced limited success within the education system.

Action: Teachers introduced small-step learning targets. A proportion of the attendance budget funded progress charts, certificates, and simple rewards (e.g. bookmarks, pencils) to recognise effort and improvement. The class teacher sent home a certificate to the parent in praise of their child's progress. This was followed up with a phone call home to praise the parents for their efforts. Over time parents were encouraged to attend a celebration of their child's achievements which fostered a positive relationship with the school.

Outcome: Pupils experienced regular success, confidence improved, and attendance became more consistent. Parents were more likely to contact the class teacher or principal for support or to offer reasons for absenteeism.



Raising Awareness of Cultural Diversity to Support Attendance

Context: A group of Traveller boys in 4th and 5th class had inconsistent school attendance.

Action: The concept of culture was covered in SPHE classes, and all students (multiple cultures in the class group) were asked to express aspects of their culture in text or by composing a poem or song or through the medium of art. These inputs were printed and recorded and made into a book/collage using a proportion of the

school attendance funding. This could also be used as an exhibition or celebration event for parents to attend.

Outcome: All the students felt included and supported to engage in the project. Engagement increased, and attendance improved over the course of the project among the target cohort.



Promoting Improved Attendance Through Whole-School Incentives

Context: The school identified a need to further promote regular and punctual attendance through a positive, whole-school approach. It was recognised that engaging students, families, and the wider community would help to foster a shared responsibility for attendance and increase student motivation.

Action: A four-week attendance promotion drive was implemented as part of the school's approach to improving attendance rates. To launch the approach, students, with support from their families, designed posters to promote the importance of attendance. The top three posters were awarded vouchers. These posters were displayed throughout the school and shared on the school's social media platforms. In parallel, the school engaged with local businesses to donate spot prizes for an attendance raffle. A wide range of prizes was secured, including sports equipment, vouchers, and educational toys. Prizes were also allocated to recognise improvement among students and families.

Throughout the four-week period, class teachers issued raffle tickets each morning to students who were present and on time. Students recorded their names on the tickets, which were retained in a class collection box for the duration of the approach. Weekly incentives were also introduced, with the class achieving the highest attendance receiving a "Bumper Breakfast." All prizes were displayed prominently within the school to maintain motivation and visibility.

Targeted supports were incorporated to ensure inclusion of students with higher levels of absenteeism. These students received raffle tickets for daily attendance, with additional bonus tickets awarded when agreed improvement targets were achieved.

Outcome: The approach generated a strong sense of enthusiasm and engagement across the school community. Attendance and punctuality improved, with students demonstrating increased motivation to attend school regularly and on time. The targeted element ensured that students with historically high absenteeism were supported in a fair and inclusive manner, while the involvement of families and local

businesses strengthened community connections and reinforced positive attendance behaviours.



Encouraging Attendance Through Monitoring, Recognition, and Incentives

Context: The school sought to promote consistent attendance while also providing targeted encouragement for students with lower or improving attendance levels. It was recognised that visual tracking, regular feedback, and public recognition could support student motivation and foster a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for attendance.

Action: An Attendance Passport approach was introduced, whereby each student received a passport that was stamped daily by the class teacher to record attendance. The system was adapted to support students with lower attendance levels by awarding stamps for daily attendance and bonus stamps for achieving agreed targets, such as consecutive days of attendance. Parents of targeted students were supported to engage with the approach through the HSCL Coordinator. Students who met their individual attendance targets were entered into school-based draws, which were organised at whole-school or class/year-group level.

In addition, a structured monthly monitoring and recognition system was implemented. Each class maintained an attendance sheet, recording daily attendance throughout the month. At the end of each month, students with full attendance and those who demonstrated improvement were presented with attendance certificates at a whole-school assembly attended by the principal, class teachers, peers, and the HSCL Coordinator. With parental consent, photographs of certificate recipients were displayed on the school's attendance noticeboard and shared via school social media platforms.

Outcome: The combined approach increased student engagement with attendance tracking and encouraged a strong sense of ownership and pride in regular attendance. Students responded positively to the visual and reward-based elements of the approach, while targeted supports ensured inclusivity for those with historically lower attendance. Regular celebration of attendance achievements strengthened motivation, reinforced positive behaviour, and contributed to improved attendance patterns across the school.



Partnering with Parents/Guardians to Improve Attendance

Context: A group of pupils had inconsistent attendance in fifth year at Senior Cycle and were becoming disengaged with the school. The students expressed that they did not see the schooling system as responding to their needs. A focus group and individual conversations with the students identified that they were interested in continuing Senior Cycle and sitting the Leaving Certificate but wished to explore alternative pathways within the education system.

Action: The school Attendance Team used a small budget to fund information leaflets for students and parents about alternative education pathways and opportunities outside of the points system. In addition to the school guidance service, they ran short workshops with local employers and Further Education and Training services highlighting and exploring alternative education pathways and training opportunities.

Outcome: Family engagement strengthened as shared goals were agreed with students and their parents. Student attendance improved and where absences were recorded the parents were more inclined to engage and explain the absence.



Addressing Attendance Trends Across Larger Cohorts

Context : Attendance data from a post-primary school showed a higher percentage of second year students arriving late in the morning and missing the first class.

It was also noted that a number of students across all year groups were more likely to miss Mondays and/or Fridays. A focus group of students was arranged to see what could be done in response.

Action: Activities such as team sports and group singing were offered from 8:30am to 9am on Mondays and Fridays to encourage students to attend earlier in the morning. It was hoped that the team/ group dynamic would encourage and motivate students to continue to attend.

Outcome: There was an increase in attendance on the target mornings/days and generally a greater connection among the year group and teachers. The school are looking at ways to continue this approach going forward.



Strengthening Attendance Through Targeted Student Support

Context: The school identified a group of students whose attendance was consistently below expectations but not at a critical level. It was recognised that early, supportive intervention could help these students and their families to improve attendance patterns before difficulties became more entrenched. To coordinate this work, an Attendance Committee was established, made up of ten staff members representing a range of roles across the school.

Action: The attendance committee met regularly to plan approaches, review current practice, and identify areas for improvement. A targeted programme was introduced for eighteen students identified as mid-level in terms of poor attendance. Parents were contacted and informed that the school would be working closely with their child to provide support. Each committee member was assigned two students. Initial student–teacher meetings involved reviewing VSWare attendance data together, using a worksheet and survey to guide discussion. This process helped students understand their attendance patterns and reflect on changes they could make. Attendance was monitored over a three-week period, with brief check-ins taking place throughout. At the end of the intervention, a follow-up worksheet was completed with each student and parents were contacted to provide feedback. The programme was designed to be manageable, ensuring the additional workload for staff was reasonable and sustainable.

Outcome: Students developed a greater awareness of their attendance and took increased ownership of improving it. The structured, supportive approach helped to strengthen communication between school and home, while the manageable design ensured it could be maintained over time. The attendance committee was able to clearly identify effective practices and areas for further development, supporting ongoing improvement in attendance across the school.



Building Relationships to Support Attendance

Context: A group of students in first year showed declining attendance linked to disengagement.

Action: The School Attendance Team were each assigned one student to check-in with on a regular basis. A meeting was convened with the student and parent(s) to explain the approach and outline the attendance concerns.

A modest budget supported the photocopying of the *Managing Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour: A Good Practice Guide* (available for

primary and post primary schools)¹ which was worked through with each student during structured check-ins. Refreshments were provided also.

Outcome: The students and parents were more aware of the scale of the issue. They felt supported and valued, re-engaged with learning to a greater degree, and attendance improved to some degree in all cases and to a significant degree in some cases. A positive relationship was formed between the students identified for support and their assigned teacher.



Whole School Monthly Attendance Drive with Prizes [adaptable for primary or post-primary contexts]

Context: A school identified a need to improve their whole school attendance data and attitudes towards attendance across their school community. The school established an Attendance Committee and analysed attendance data in line with the *Department of Education and Youth (DEY) and the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) National School Attendance Campaign* guidance and resources available [HERE](#). Data analysis enabled Senior Management, along with the Attendance Committee, to identify areas for improvement and these were included in the School Improvement Plan (DEIS Action Plan).

Aims identified for the 3-year plan:

- To increase the number of students with excellent attendance (1- 3 days missed).
- To reduce the number of children absent for 10+ days per year.
- To increase awareness of the link between attendance and attainment.
- To increase awareness of the issues surrounding poor attendance.
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning.
- To ensure that attendance concerns are dealt with in a supportive manner.
- To comply with attendance reporting procedures for TESS.

Actions: Regular attendance committee meetings were held to plan contact with students/parents, agree actions, allocate resources for rewards, plan in-house attendance clinics and gather, monitor and analyse data. The actions were whole-school and targeted.

On a whole-school level (tier 1), winners of full attendance and most improved in each class received a small prize/certificate every month to promote good

¹ The *Managing Reluctant Attendance and School Avoidance Behaviour: A Good Practice Guide* for Primary and Post-primary are available [HERE](#).

attendance. Larger prizes were awarded at the end of every term for students who had (almost) full attendance.

For students identified for targeted intervention (tier 2)- parents of students with unexplained absences were followed up with, to check reasons for absence and to encourage better communication by email and phone to the school office.

15 students were identified as requiring a high level of intervention (tier 3). To support these students individual attendance plans were created, monitored and updated accordingly.

In-house school-based attendance clinics were held for 6 families, these were formal meetings in the school with senior management, the parents, the child, and a member of school support staff (where available). Short-term targets were agreed by all, with a follow-up meeting scheduled. These meetings were a preventative action for children at risk of an EWS referral.

Outcomes

- Attendance levels improved by 4.1% in year 1
- Students with 95-100% attendance improved by 3.6% in year 1
- Students with 0-90% attendance improved by 3% in year 1