

Coláiste Choilm Tullamore



Attendance Policy 2017

Coláiste Choilm Attendance Policy

Scope:

Board of Management, Teaching Staff, Administration Staff, Parents Council, Student Council.

Relationship to School's Mission Statement:

At Coláiste Choilm, we are committed to encouraging our students to develop a pattern of regular and punctual attendance in order to benefit fully from the education provided.

Consistent and regular attendance at school is vital for worthwhile educational development to take place. Without such a pattern of regular attendance, it is very difficult to achieve the holistic development and the full potential of each student.

Rationale:

- To work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and welfare of the students
- To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process
- To ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that the school offers them
- To ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance
- To ensure the school fulfils its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant acts. Under the Act, Education Welfare Boards are established to oversee school attendance nationwide and each school has been assigned an Education Welfare Officer whose duty it is to liaise with the school in relation to any attendance problems that may emerge. The Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:
 - i. A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days
 - ii. The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than twenty
 - iii. A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the Principal
 - iv. A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school in which he is registered, not attending school regularly.

Goals

To achieve:

- Accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours
- That students learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance
- That parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance
- Minimum rate of absenteeism
- The early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance.

A positive approach to attendance and punctuality:

Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class. Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance. This is also promoted through the Pastoral Care programme.

The Deputy principal/Year Head and/or member(s) of the Pastoral Care Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue. Reports to Parents/Guardians include a detailed breakdown of attendance for the period in question. All members of the school community will support the implementation of the Attendance Strategy.

Strategy Content

Roles and responsibilities:

Student:

- i. To punctually attend all scheduled classes every day unless there is a valid reason for not doing so
- ii. Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation in the designated section of the School Journal on the day of return to class to the Class Tutor
- iii. If arriving late for school, to be accompanied by a parent/guardian or to present a written explanation to the Administration Staff.

Parent/Guardian:

- i. To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities (Education Welfare Act 2000)
- ii. To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences
- iii. To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school
- iv. To inform the school in advance if your son is going to be absent for a particular reason e.g. medical appointment, dental appointment etc. This should be followed up by a note on his return to school
- v. To inform the school if your son is ill and unable to attend school for a number of days; this makes it possible for us to note the absence and help him on his return
- vi. All messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible for the attention of the Class Tutor
- vii. To provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the school may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary
- viii. To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day
- ix. To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues
- x. Any student who arrives late for school must be either accompanied by a parent /guardian or provided with an explanatory note.

Principal:

- i. To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students
- ii. To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.

Deputy Principal:

- i. To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences and withdrawal of students from the school
- ii. To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- iii. To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Pastoral Care Team, Class Teachers, Administration Staff to implement the School Policy
- iv. To monitor attendance records regularly
- v. To administer the signing in and out of students
- vi. To provide students who arrive late (after 8.50am) with a late note
- vii. To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences/withdrawal of students from the School
- viii. To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress
- ix. To liaise with the Year Head, Class Tutor and pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance
- x. To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.

Subject Teachers:

- i. To input the attendance for all class periods into the VS Ware system for all classes (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school)
- ii. When substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave, the attendance must be recorded electronically on VS Ware
- iii. If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually in his/her diary
- iv. To impress on students, the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.

Year Heads:

- i. To monitor regularly the attendance records on the VS Ware system for the given year
- ii. To check absence notes from parents/guardians in liaison with the Class Tutors
- iii. To liaise with the deputy Principal and the Pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance
- iv. To meet, along with the Deputy Principal, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue
- v. To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/or when patterns of absences are developing and to notify the Deputy Principal of same.

Administrative Staff:

- i. To input attendance data when required
- ii. To work in conjunction with the Deputy Principal to submit the four reports to the NEWB.

Day to day implementation:

- i. The roll is recorded electronically in each class on VS Ware
- ii. Those arriving after the start of Assembly at 8.50am are recorded as late
- iii. Students who have to leave the school during the day due to illness must be collected by a parent/guardian at the Main Office and must then sign out. The signing out is filed for use of the relevant Year Head. The Deputy Principal will not give permission to any students who may be feeling ill to leave school unaccompanied
- iv. Students who need to leave school for an appointment must have a signed permission note from home. They must also be signed out by the Deputy Principal
- v. The attendance is also entered into VS Ware in all classes by the relevant subject teacher
- vi. If a student is absent for 3 consecutive days without parental contact with the school, contact will be made with the parents by phone to see why the child is absent
- vii. When a student accumulates an absence of 10 days for no real reason, his parents are asked to call to the school to discuss the matter
- viii. If a student's rate of absenteeism does not improve the school authorities will contact other local agencies in an effort to get the student to come to school
- ix. Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, the teacher who is taking students away on an activity prepares a list of the names and, prior to departure, emails the list to all staff
- x. When teachers are going on trips that extend beyond the duration of the school day, please email the Administration Staff with the times of departure and arrival back at the school; in such cases, a letter giving details about the purpose of trip, the date and the departure and arrival times should be given to each student in advance for parents to sign off on.

Information Letter for Parents / Guardians

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to tell you a little about the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and about some of the responsibilities we now share under the Act.

As you know, a good education gives your son the best possible start in life. It will help him to possibly obtain secure employment and also help him grow and develop into a mature and responsible citizen. The purpose of the Act is to encourage regular school attendance and to remain in school until he completes his Leaving Certificate.

The Act clearly states however, that he must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school, whichever comes later. It is the role of the National Educational Welfare board (NEWB) to support school attendance and to follow up on children who do not attend school regularly.

Here in Coláiste Choilm your son's attendance is recorded on a daily basis at the beginning of the first class each morning. Should he not be in for this class due to an appointment etc, but arrives in later he must let the Deputy Principal know as soon as possible so that his attendance record can be amended. A note of explanation should accompany this.

If your son is absent from school through illness etc., please use a note of explanation to be found in his School Journal. If he is going to miss a number of days for whatever reason we would very much appreciate if you would contact the school and let us know, otherwise after an absence of 3 consecutive days the school will have to issue a letter requesting you to give us an explanation.

When your son has missed a total of 10 school days we will let you know this in writing. When he has missed a total of 20 days we will make you aware of this and also of the fact that we will be informing the NEWB. It is school policy that you let us know when your son is absent and that you do so in writing preferably through the School Journal.

If your son is sick or absent for some genuine reason, the NEWB will take no action. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about reasons given for his absence you may be visited by an Educational Welfare Officer to discuss his education. He/she will work with you to ensure that your son receives his entitlement to an education.

Yours sincerely,

Gearóid O' Regan
Deputy Principal

Review

This policy will be reviewed and revised in light of any change in circumstances should such changes occur. Otherwise the plan will be updated annually (September of each year).

Signed:

Date: _____

Chairperson (BOM)

Date: _____

Principal