

School Attendance Policy

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential for all students so that they may reach their potential. Our school aims to foster a culture of regular attendance at school for all pupils. In addition we seek to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing problems with attendance at school. The provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2002 inform and support this policy.

Rationale

The policy is considered necessary because:

- There are a number of legislative requirements arising from the Education Welfare Act 2002.
- The changing fabric of our society.
- The role of the National Education Welfare Board.
- The requirements of the Department of Education and Skills.
- The educational interests of the students.

Aims and Objectives

This school policy sets out to:

- Encourage full attendance where possible.
- Reduce the current level of unexcused absences.
- Identify pupils at risk.
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Improve communication with parents.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to all mainstream students of Columba College regardless of age.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:

- Overall responsibility for students including attendance.

Deputy Principal:

- Liaise with Principal on all issue re. students including attendance

Class Teacher:

- Responsible for student registration each morning.
- Collect absence notes from students on the day they return to school and every Friday sent them in an envelope, dated with class groups name on it to Ms. Coady for recording on the Anseo System.
- Ensure that students are aware of the importance of good attendance and the procedures involved in recording partial and full day absences.
- Monitor attendance in Year Group and make students are aware of importance of regular attendance.
- Make contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) in an effort to improve attendance and ascertain reasons for non-attendance.
- Bring any concerns re: student attendance to the Principal.
- When necessary make referrals to Home School Liaison Officer/Pastoral Care Team.

Care Team: (Principal/Deputy Principal, Guidance Counselor, HSCL, Class Tutor, SNA .

- Take referrals from Class Teacher and advise Principal on further courses of action which may be taken. These include intervention by P.C. team; referral to Student Support Workers or referral to E.W.O.
- Monitor students referred on an ongoing basis.

School Attendance Officer:

- To check attendance/absences on a daily basis.
- Detain students that are present in school but did not swipe in on any particular day.
- Monitor half day absences.
- Notify E.W.O. when 20 absences or 6 days (cumulative) suspension have been reached.
- Inform Principal of serious late coming.

Home School Community Liaison (HSCL):

- Take referrals from Principal.
- Establish contact with parents/guardians.
- Try to establish reasons for student absences.
- Nurture confidence and trust.
- Encourage parents/guardians to adopt a positive attitude to school attendance.
- Work with Care Team to set in place appropriate supports to keep students at school.
- Maintain contact with parents/guardians.
- Keep Principal informed
- If no improvement suggest to Attendance Officer/ Principal that student should be referred to the E.W.O.

Parents:

- As the primary educators parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence.
- Make contact with the school on the morning that their son/daughter is absent from school.
- Provide their son/daughter with a note explaining their absence on the day their son/daughter returns to school.

Students:

- Each student has a personal responsibility to attend school each day.
- Ensure on the day they return to school from being absent they bring a note explaining their absence signed by their parent(s)/guardian(s) and give it to their class teacher at assembly.
- If a student arrives late to school, he/she must have a note signed by their parents(s)/guardian(s) explaining reason for lateness.

Procedures:

- Every student is expected to be in attendance from 9.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. from Monday to Thursday and 9.00am until 1.20pm on Fridays.
- Every student must swipe in between 8.50am and 9am every morning and between 1.50pm and 2pm from Monday to Thursday.
- Students may not be absent from school except when the absence is unavoidable due to illness, urgent family reason or other legitimate and unavoidable reason.
- It is the responsibility of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to furnish the school with a signed and dated note outlining the date and reason for every recorded absence. Such notes will be collected and recorded on the Anseo system and used in returns to the E.W.B. as outlined in the Educational Welfare Act (2002). School management communicates regularly with parents outlining their concerns re: holidays; medical & dental appointments etc being scheduled during term time. Parents are requested to ensure all discretionary absences occur outside term time. School management furnishes them with a calendar of the school year to assist them in this regard.
- Students arriving late to school must sign the Late Sheet outside the front office before proceeding to class. Students are expected to produce a note from their parent(s)/guardian(s) explaining the reason they were late. Late arrival to school on a repeated basis may be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions may apply.
- In the event of a student becoming ill or getting injured during the day they should inform their class teacher who may send them to the Principal or Deputy Principal to obtain permission to go home. If such permission is granted contact with their parent(s)/guardian(s) should be through the school office ONLY. Students should not contact home via a mobile phone or prior to getting permission to leave the school premises. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to make arrangements for the collection of their son/daughter at the school office in the event of a student being ill or injured. When a student returns to school after such an absence a note of explanation should be presented on the day they return.

- During the school day every student must attend every class according to their timetable unless prior permission has been received from the Principal or Deputy Principal or Class Teachers. The unauthorised absence of a student from any class during the school day will be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions may apply.
- On occasion students may be absent from class due to school related activities such as sport and field trips. Such absences are sanctioned on the understanding that students ensure all homework is sourced and carried out to a satisfactory standard. Students may be removed from such activities if they are having an adverse effect on their academic progress. Where a teacher is organising an approved activity which necessitates the absence of students from class a list of such students is posted in the staffroom and a copy given to the school principal.
- A student wishing to leave the school premises for a legitimate reason during the school day must have a signed note from their parent(s)/guardian(s). This note should include the reason for the absence, the time the student is leaving and a parent(s)/guardian(s) signature. The student must get this note signed by the Class Teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal. When the student is leaving the school they must sign the Leaving School Early sheet outside the front office and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must also sign this Leaving School Early sheet outside the front office. Any student who leaves the school premises without such authorisation will be deemed to have breached the school code of discipline and appropriate sanctions may be applied.
- On rare occasions a student may be absent from school due to suspension for breach of discipline. In such instances parents will be consulted in advance and students are expected to use their time productively by applying themselves to their studies. In such instances, where a student is suspended, they should not be on the school premises or engaged in any school activity as there may be insurance implications. When a student return to school from a suspension, they must report with their parent(s)/guardian(s) to the principal on the morning they return to school before 9am.

Communication:

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be notified via phone call or text message if the school has a concern about a particular absence any time on any given date.
- The school Principal will make contact to the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) if there is a concern about a particular absence or absences as they come to our attention.
- The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be requested to make an appointment to discuss the matter with us.
- The Schools Home School Liaison Officer will inform Parent(s)/Guardian(s) by phone call/meeting when a student exceeds 10 absences or more. The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be invited to contact the school or the Home School Liaison Officer will offer to meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the matter if they may wish to do so.

Sanctions for Breaches of School Attendance Policy:

- If a student forgets to swipe in before 9am or 2pm on any school day or do not bring their swipe card to school they will do a Lunch Detention. If a student fails to turn up to lunch detention they will be put on After School Detention on Friday of that week. If a student fails to turn up for after school detention they will be suspended for one day.
- Late-comers without an explanation note may be placed on Lunch Detention.
- Un-authorized absence during the school day may result in After School Detention or Suspension.
- Absences will be notified to the E.W.B.as per the Education Welfare Act 2002.

Rewards:

- If a student does not miss a day in a week their name will go in once into a hat for a draw.
- Like-wise for each week in any given month.
- If a student does not miss a day in four weeks their name will go into the draw 4 times at the end of the month.
- If a student misses one day or more in a week their name will not go into the draw for that particular week.
- If a student misses one day in a week, and has full attendance for 3 out of 4 weeks in the month their name will go into the draw 3 times at end of month.
- At the end of each month one junior student and one senior student will win €10.
- Certificates will be awarded for full attendances at the end of the current school year.
- Randomly all students that had perfect attendance for a week will be rewarded with small prizes such as lollipops, pencils, rubbers etc

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed every two years.