

Coláiste Muire Attendance Policy

Our school is a Christian community of students, staff, parents, chaplaincy and management, who work together towards the common goal of preparing young people for living life to the full, as committed Christians, as concerned and loving people and as responsible members of society.

We believe that 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.

Scope

This policy applies to the students, staff and parents of Coláiste Muire and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality.

Rationale

The policy is considered necessary because of:

- The educational interests of the students.
- Legislative requirements arising from the Education Welfare Act 2002.
- The role of the National Education Welfare Board.
- The requirements of the Department of Education and Skills.
- The computerisation of the roll taking system in Coláiste Muire.
- The School Improvement Plan has identified attendance and punctuality as a target area.

Aims and Objectives

This school policy sets out to:

- Encourage full attendance where possible.
- Identify pupils at risk of leaving early
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance and punctuality
- Improve communication with parents.
- To maintain an effective attendance record keeping system through VSWare
- To clarify intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:

- Has overall responsibility for students including attendance.
- Will inform the Educational Welfare Officer that a student is suspended from a Coláiste Muire for a period of not less than six days
- Will inform the Educational Welfare Officer the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a Coláiste Muire during a school year is not less than 20 days.

Deputy Principal:

- Will liaise regularly with Principal on attendance.
- Will liaise with Year Heads on attendance
- Will liaise with school secretary on attendance and punctuality
- Will have a particular responsibility for identifying students at risk. Students at risk include students whose non attendance must be reported home in a timely fashion and students whose attendance has markedly deteriorated.

Year Head:

- Will monitor attendance in Year Group
- Will remind students aware of importance of regular attendance.
- Will maintain contact with parents/guardians in an effort to improve attendance and ascertain reasons for non attendance.
- Will take referrals from Principal and Deputy Principal and keep them informed on progress
- Will encourage parents/guardians to adopt a positive attitude to school attendance.
- Will work with Pastoral Care Team to set in place appropriate supports to keep students at school.
- Recommend to the Principal that a referral should be made to the N.E.W.O.

Class Teacher:

- Will ensure that students are aware of the importance of good attendance and the procedures involved in noting absences.
- Will assist the year head in identifying students with particular attendance concerns.

Subject Teacher:

- Is responsible for taking the students roll in the first ten minutes of every period on the VShare MIS system.
- Will bring any concerns regarding student attendance to the appropriate year head.

School Secretary

- Will obtain and check absences on a daily basis through the VShare system
- Will monitor half day absences.
- Will notify home when 15 unexplained absences have been reached.
- Will inform the Principal when 20 unexplained absences or 6 days (cumulative) suspension have been reached.
- Will inform Principal; Deputy Principal or Year Head of serious punctuality issues with a student.
- Will inform parents if a student at risk is reported as absent on VShare
- Will monitor the sign-in sheet for students who are late – and record lateness in VShare.
- Will liaise with parents if students are unwell and are seeking permission to go home. The Deputy Principal or Principal will be consulted
- Will monitoring the pink slip system for allowing students home with parental permission

Parents:

- Have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence.
- Have a responsibility to note in their child's student journal the reason they were absent upon return to school.
- Are required to contact the school office and inform the secretary of the likely duration and reason for being out of school in the event of a student being absent for a prolonged period.

Students:

- Each student has a personal responsibility to attend school each day.

Procedures:

- Every student is expected to be in attendance from 8.45 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and from 8.45 am to 1.05 pm on Wednesdays. 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 provide the school with a signed and dated note outlining the date and reason for every absence. Such notes will be recorded in VSware and used in returns to the E.W.B. as outlined in the Educational Welfare Act (2002). Parents are requested to ensure all discretionary absences occur outside term time. School management will furnish them with a calendar of the school year to assist them in this regard.
- Students arriving late for class at 8.50 a.m. and /or 2 p.m. must sign the late sheet in the office before proceeding to class. The secretary will record the time into VSware. 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 subject teacher who may send them to the Secretary, Principal or Deputy Principal to obtain permission to go home. If such permission is granted the student receives a 'pink slip'. Contact with their parents/guardians should be through the school office. Students should not contact home via a mobile phone or prior to getting permission to leave the school premises. Parents/guardians 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.
- During the school day every student must attend every class according to their timetable unless prior permission has been received from the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Sports Coach or Coordinating Teacher.
- On occasion students may be absent from class due to school related activities. Such absences are sanctioned on the understanding that students ensure all homework is sourced and completed. 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 secretary. The secretary enters these names into VSware.
- A student wishing to leave the school premises for a legitimate reason during the school day must have a signed note from their parent/guardian. This note should include the reason for the absence and the time the student is leaving. The student must then sign out at the school office and receive a 'pink slip'. No student will be permitted to sign out without producing a signed note. On return to school, they must sign back in.

Communication:

- In the event of a student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises the school must be notified immediately by a Parent / Guardian.
- Parent(s) / Guardian(s) may be notified via phone call or text messaging if the school has a concern about a particular absence any time on any given date.
- The Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal will write to the Parent(s) / Guardian(s) if there is a concern about a particular absence.

Sanctions for Breaches of School Attendance Policy:

- The student may be placed on a Punctuality Card if regularly late for class. If there is failure to improve, the student may receive a second Punctuality Card. Failure to complete a second Punctuality card may result in a report card.
- The student may be placed on detention.
- Un-authorized absence during the school day – out of class without permission – leaving school without permission – truancy – will result in a report card as per the Code of Behaviour.
- Absences will be notified to the E.W.B. as per the Education Welfare Act 2002.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19th May 2015.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____ Date: _____

Review Date: February 2017