

# **Attendance Policy**

## **May 2017**

### **1. Scope**

1. This document sets out the attendance policy of the school.
2. The policy reflects the school's ethos and mission statement which is committed to the pursuit of excellence, encouraging students to develop their full academic and intellectual potential and to enhancing each student's sense of dignity and self-worth.
3. The policy covers all aspects of attendance.

### **2. Rationale**

The policy is necessary to:

- Provide a reference point for parents, students and teachers.
- Provide transparency and accountability.
- Comply with the requirements of the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Clarify procedures.

### **3. Goals / Objectives**

The policy aims to:

- Support teaching and learning.
- Develop a positive attitude towards school attendance.
- Encourage regular attendance at school.
- Foster in parents and students the benefits to be derived from education.
- Promote and foster an environment that encourages students to attend school and participate fully in the life of the school.
- Set out a statement of strategies aimed at fostering an appreciation of learning among students.
- Set out the procedures for the maintenance of Attendance Records and Attendance Registers.

### **4. Implementation Procedures**

- A student shall be entered on the School Register on the first day that he enters the school.
- The school shall maintain a daily record of attendance or non-attendance for each student registered in the school. Students' attendance or non-attendance will be recorded as follows:
  - Subject teachers will record attendance or non- attendance on VSWARE and in their Teacher Diary for all classes.

- When a student fails to attend school, his Parents / Guardians must specify the reason for the absence and the period of absence in the student's School Journal. The reason for the absence shall be entered in the Attendance Records by the School Office staff.
- Subject Teachers will record attendance or non-attendance for all of their classes in their Teacher's Diary and on VSWARE.
- Students absent from class because of school related activities will be recorded as follows:
  - The teacher responsible for the organising of the activity will submit a list of students involved to the Principal / Deputy Principal who will post the list on the Administration Notice Board in the staff room. Subject teacher who has student marks him absent and office staff enter the appropriate reason for absence.
  - Students who are absent due to resource teaching will be marked present/absent by the resource teacher.
  - Students who arrive to school late shall sign the Late Book at the School Office.
- Students who arrive persistently late will be sanctioned as follows:
 

|                             |   |           |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------|
| 3 lates (first instance)    | - | Detention |
| ➤ 3 lates (second instance) | - | Detention |
| 2 lates                     | - | Detention |
| 1 late                      | - | Detention |
- Failure to attend detention will incur two detentions.
- Where a pattern of arriving late emerges, the Parents/Guardians of the student in question will be contacted with a view to resolving the problem.
- Students who need to leave school early or leave school for a period of time during the school day must furnish a note in their School Journal from their Parents/Guardians stating the reason why and the time they wish to leave. They must sign out and sign in at the School Office in the Sign In/Sign Out Book.
- Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be in full attendance throughout the school day.
- Medical, dental or other appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside of school hours and to minimise absence from school.
- Students should not be removed from school to go on family holidays.
- The Deputy Principal and Year Heads review and monitor attendance weekly and report to the Principal. Staff are reminded to update VSWARE.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Teachers**

- Record attendance or non-attendance for all their classes in their Teacher's Diary and on VSWARE.
- Check reason for absence in student's School Journal.
- Liaise with the year Head / Deputy Principal when a student fails to produce a reason for absence in the School Journal.

## 5.2 Students

- Show their School Journal to all teachers when they return to school so that the reason for their absence may be noted.
- Sign in at the office when late.
- Sign in and sign out when it is necessary to leave the school premises during the day.
- Report to the Year Head following an absence or period of absence, so that the note in their School Journal can be recorded formally.

## 5.3 Parents/Guardians

- Ensure that students attend school regularly.
- Write a note explaining any absence and detailing the period of the absence in the student's School Journal.
- Inform the school if the student is going to have a long absence for some reason.
- Inform the school if a student is going to be absent on the day of the absence and keep the school informed if the student is going to be absent for a period of time.

## 5.4 Principal

- Oversees the implementation of the policy.
- Maintains a Register of all students.
- Maintains an Attendance Record.
- Consults with staff.
- Receives reports from the Deputy Principal / Year Heads.
- Meets parents when required.
- Liaises with the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Informs, by notice in writing, the Educational Welfare Officer, where –
  - a) a student is suspended for a period of not less than 6 days.
  - b) the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than 20.
  - c) a student is, in the opinion of the Principal not attending school regularly.
- Submit, not less than 6 weeks after the end of the school year, a report to the Educational Welfare Officer and the Parents' Association on the levels of attendance at the school during the school year.

## 5.5 Deputy Principal

- Liaises with the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Liaise with the Year Heads and Teachers
- Consults with staff.
- Contact and meet parents.
- Interviews students.
- Reports to Principal.

## 5.6 Year Head

- Monitors non-attendance records.
- Ensures that complete records are maintained.
- Collates information on individual students.
- Reports to Principal and Deputy Principal.

## 6. School Attendance Strategies

- The school provides a broad curriculum to endeavour to cater for the needs of all students. Enabling students to grow in self confidence and self esteem is central to the school's objectives. Students are motivated and encouraged to attend school as the curriculum and school climate caters to their needs.
- The School Homework Policy aims to support students to stay in school and achieve to their potential. Parents / Guardians are contacted at an early stage when students encounter difficulties with doing homework.
- The school operates a Pastoral Care Programme through the Year Head / Year Tutor System. The focus is on monitoring the academic and personal development needs of students. Supporting and helping students to stay in school is a central aspect of this system.
- The School Guidance Counsellor is available to advise and counsel students. Focus on career paths and advice on careers and personal development issues can motivate students to attend school.
- The Special Educational Needs Department provides learning support and resource teaching for students and thus supports students to stay in school and make progress.
- The school organises Study Skills Seminars for students in Junior and Senior Cycle thus helping them to organise and plan their study in a meaningful way.
- All students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities so that students' personal development and social needs are catered for. Where possible students must get their homework when absent due to extra curricular activities.
- The School provides after school study facilities for students.
- This policy encourages students to attend school regularly. The procedures for return to school after absences for late arrival in school and for absences during the day are aimed at improving students' attendance and discouraging non-attendances. Students and Parents / Guardians are aware of these procedures.

## **7. Suspension and Expulsion**

1. The suspension or expulsion of a student shall be in accordance with the procedures set out in the school's Code of Behaviour.
2. The Principal shall, prior to registering a student, provide the Parents / Guardians with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and they shall be required to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them.
3. Where a student is suspended for not less than 6 days, the Principal shall inform, in writing, the Educational Welfare Officer. Following the notification, the Principal shall consult with the student, his Parents, the Educational Welfare Officer and other such persons as deemed appropriate by the E.W.O. to ensure provision for the continued education of the student and his full participation in the school.
4. Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that a student should be expelled from the school it shall, before expelling the student, notify the Educational Welfare Officer of its opinion and the reasons therefore.
5. The Principal or a person nominated by him or her shall consult with the student and his Parents / Guardians, the Educational Welfare Officer and other persons as the Welfare Officer deems appropriate to ensure that provision is made for the continued education of the student.
6. A student shall not be expelled from the school before the passage of 20 days following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer.
7. The Board of management reserves the right to take other such reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school and that the safety of students is secured.

## **8. Success Criteria**

- All students attend school regularly.
- Students and Parents develop a positive attitude towards school attendance.
- Students at risk of developing poor attendance patterns are monitored and encouraged to attend regularly.

## **9. Monitoring**

- Attendance and non-attendance will be monitored regularly by Year Heads, Deputy Principal and Principal.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal will consult regularly with and receive reports from the Year Heads.
- Attendance and non-attendance will be discussed at staff meetings.

## **10. Review Procedures**

- The policy will be reviewed once a year.
- The Review Group shall consist of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads and two representatives from the staff.
- The Students' Council and the Parents' Association will be consulted.

