



## **Attendance Policy** **November 2020**

### **1. Scope**

- This document sets out the attendance policy of the school which applies to the students, staff and parents and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality.
- The policy reflects the school's ethos and mission statement 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.
- 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.
- Highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents & teachers.
- 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 parents/guardians are obliged by the Education Welfare Act (2000) to provide a note explaining the absence, to specify the reason for the absence and the period of absence in the student's School Journal or the School App or by ringing the office. The reason for the absence shall be entered in the Attendance Records by the School Office staff.
- If a student is marked absent in the first class in the morning or first class after lunch, a text message will be sent home to parents to notify them. If a parent/guardian believes that their son/daughter is actually in school they are asked to contact the office immediately.
- Subject Teachers will record attendance or non-attendance for all of their classes in their Teacher Diary and on VSware. If a student arrives late into school in the morning the student should go to the office first to sign the Late Book. They will be marked present but late on the VSware system by the office staff.
- 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 Deputy Principal who will record the absence.
  - Students who are attending learning support/ resources classes will be marked present/absent by the SET 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 - 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 or the School App from their Parents/Guardians stating the reason why and the time they wish to leave. Parents/Guardians may also ring the School Office in advance. Students 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 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 the reason for absence in the student's School Journal or School App.
- Liaise with the Year Head / Deputy Principal when a student fails to produce a reason for absence in the School Journal or School App.
- Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy to promote attendance
- Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.

### **5.2 Students**

- Show their School Journal to all teachers when they return to school if reason has not been explained on School App or input on VSware by office staff 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 or Deputy Principal following an absence or period of absence, so that the note in their School Journal or School App can be recorded formally.

### **5.3 Parents/Guardians**

- Ensure that students attend school regularly.
- Set high standards of their child in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Write a note explaining any absence and detailing the period of the absence in the student's School Journal or on the School App or by ringing the School Office.
- Inform the school if the student is going to have a long absence for some reason and provide any documentation necessary for school records.
- 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.
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason.

### **5.4 Principal**

- Informs Parents/Guardians at the beginning of each academic year of the school policy on attendance and punctuality and parent responsibilities in relations to attendance and punctuality
- 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 the 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 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/Class 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.
- The school will endeavour to provide a safe and orderly environment for students in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
- The school will deal with all bullying related matters in accordance with the Anti-Bullying policy.

## **7. Suspension and Expulsion**

- The suspension or expulsion of a student shall be in accordance with the procedures set out in the school's Code of Behaviour.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- A student shall not be expelled from the school before the passage of 20 days following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer.

- 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 regularly reviewed.
- 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.

### **Policy Review:**

This policy will be reviewed as necessary and particularly to comply with any relevant legislative changes. Policy adopted by the board of management.