

Coláiste de hÍde



Meas - Bród - Comhar

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

1. General

1.1 Content:

Scope: The policy applies to all students, parents and guardians and staff of Coláiste de hÍde, Bóthar Chaisleán Thigh Motháin, Tamhlacht, Baile Átha Cliath 24.

1.2 Relationship to the School Ethos and Values:

In Coláiste de hÍde, we aim to empower and facilitate the individual student to reach his/her potential intellectually, physically, spiritually, culturally, socially and emotionally through the medium of the Irish language. A special effort is made in the school to promote a positive self-image in all individuals together with respect for every person, their community and their environment.

1.3 Context:

This policy has been devised in consultation with all members of the school community and in keeping with the school's characteristic spirit. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Health and Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Protection Policy.

1.4 Rationale:

This policy was devised to

- a) Work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and well-being of the students;
- b) Facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process;
- c) Ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them;
- d) Ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance;
- e) 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 have been 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 which 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/she is registered, not attending school regularly.

2. Objectives

2.1 The Objectives of this Policy are:

- a) To maintain accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours;
- b) To encourage students to learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance;
- c) To encourage parents to appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance;
- d) To ensure minimum rates of absenteeism;
- e) To detect and correct the patterns of poor attendance;
- f) To support the development of a school environment where student well-being is core;
- g) To highlight and encourage regular attendance;
- h) To encourage good communication between parents/guardians and school;
- i) To establish and successfully implement procedures for monitoring attendance and good record keeping;
- j) To develop working relationships with relevant agencies such as the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB);
- k) To support students and parents where attendance issues arise.

3. Strategies to encourage good attendance

- a) Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class.
- b) 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 Well-being programme.
- c) The Year Head and/or Class Teacher meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue.
- d) A breakdown of attendance is available to parents through Vsware.
- e) Through the promotion and nurturing of a friendly, caring environment in which human flourishing is prioritised and by encouraging all students to realise their potential, it is hoped that students will attend regularly. By rewarding good attendance, it is hoped to encourage all students to attend school regularly. Awards are presented for excellent attendance.
- f) Through monitoring and effective recording of non-attendance students with attendance issues to be identified support is offered to both parents/guardians and students through teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Home School Liaison Officer and School Completion Officer.
- g) Through the provision of a wide range of subjects, the school aims to cater for the diverse needs of all its students.
- h) As part of our commitment to being an inclusive school, to not only respect differences but to provide the support services necessary for students with additional educational needs. It is hoped that such provision will enable all students to feel part of the school community, thus encouraging them to attend regularly.
- i) By provision of an extensive co-curricular and extra-curricular programme, students are strongly encouraged to participate and thus, attend school regularly.

- j) To liaise with local and feeder primary schools to identify potential attendance problems and to receive information and advice which might help to develop strategies to improve attendance.
- k) To reflect the school's characteristic spirit by dealing with all cases of regular non- attendance in a fair and sensitive manner.
- l) To achieve the DEIS targets annually.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

Student:

- To punctually attend all scheduled classes every day on time unless there is a valid reason for not doing so.
- If arriving late for school, to have a note from his/her parent/guardian on the school app.
- Student's must sign in and out on the school tablet in cases of lateness and leaving school early.
- Permission must be sought from the yearhead or tutor to leave school in the absence of a note on the school app.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- To support the school's Attendance Policy in compliance with their legal responsibilities (Education Welfare Act 2000);
- To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences;
- To provide an explanation note for your son/daughter on the school App if they are arriving late to school or in regards to absenteeism.
- 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;
- To adhere to the procedures set out in this policy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day and to arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays;
- To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues;

Principal:

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students;
- To monitor attendance records regularly;
- To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000;
- To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.

Deputy Principal:

- To work in cooperation with the school staff to implement this School Policy;
- To liaise with the Year Head to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.

Subject Teacher:

- To record the attendance of every class every day on VS Ware.
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.

Year Head:

- To regularly monitor the attendance records on VSware.
- To liaise with the Student Support Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance;
- To meet, along with the Deputy Principal, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue;
- 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;
- To remind the pupils during the assemblies of the year group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- To amend the Vsware system regularly regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To send attendance letters to inform parents when a certain amount of absences has been reached.

Class Tutor:

- To emphasise the importance of attendance in the Wellbeing class.
- To work in a pastoral capacity with students that have poor attendance.
- To liaise with the Yearhead if they notice a pattern of absenteeism or if any other attendance issue arises.

School Completion Officer:

- To attend meetings with the Principal and Yearheads to discuss attendance issues.
- To meet students that are refusing to attend school.
- To develop a strategy/plan to improve certain students' attendance.

Home School Liaison Officer :

- To liaise with the School Support Team in supporting parents as a result of school refusal or poor attendance.
- To have regular contact with parents to put in place a plan/strategy in identifying causes of and solutions to attendance issues.
- To identify and support parents to engage with in school and out of school supports to address attendance issues;
- To promote positive engagement between the home and school;
- To contribute to ensuring a whole school approach to improving attendance.

Student Support Team:

- Identify and support students at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of poor attendance, participation and retention.
- Work in partnership with school staff and community agencies to provide best possible outcomes for targeted students and their families.

School Secretary:

- To enter details on the Vsware system concerning attendance and punctuality
- To manage students signing in and out of school on the tablet.

5. Procedures

5.1 School Procedures

- a) The roll is recorded at the start of each class on VSware. Notes are sent to the Yearhead regarding absences.
- c) Students who arrive at school late are required to sign in at School tablet and they will be marked *Late* on Vsware.
- e) Students who leave the school during the day due to appointments must sign out in the school office on the school tablet. A note must be sent on the app explaining the reason for leaving and the time.
- f) Students who leave the school during the day due to illness must seek permission from the Yearhead or Tutor. The school secretary will ring home on their behalf.
- e) Where students are absent from school for school-related extracurricular activities, this is entered in the system by staff as *school activity*. The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names and sends it to staff.
- g) The school will provide a calendar for the opening and closing times of the school, the school holidays and information about parent teacher meetings.
- h) Parents are advised not to take their children on holiday during school term.

5.2 Medical Appointments/Illness

If a student has permission to leave school early e.g. in advance for a medical appointment, parents/guardians ensure that he/she has an explanation note on the school app. He/she must have the note approved before leaving the school by the Yearhead.

If a student becomes unwell at school he/she must make the Yearhead or Class Teacher aware. If he/she needs to leave school as a consequence, the school secretary will make contact with home to arrange the collection of the student.

5.3 Contacting the School in cases of Absence

Parents/Guardians should contact the school as soon as possible to inform the school that your child is absent. This can be done through the school App.

For extended absences contact should be kept with the Yearhead and if the extended absence is for medical reasons a doctor's note should be sent to the school.

6. Recording of Continuous Absenteeism

When a child is absent for a prolonged period, parents/guardians will be contacted by the school. The primary concern of Coláiste de hÍde is the welfare of the child and regular contact and communication is vital.

6.1 If a student is suspended:

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.

6.2 Partnership Arrangements:

The school will liaise with relevant bodies and engage with services where there is a concern regarding attendance.

6.3 Punctuality:

In line with the school Code of Behaviour, students will be sanctioned appropriately for continuous lateness.

Date of Revision of this Policy

April 2022