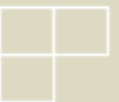


2021

St. Colman's Community College, Midleton.

Attendance Policy



Scope

This strategy applies to the students, staff and parents of St Colman's Community College and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality.

Relationship to the school's mission statement

St Colman's Community College

- ❖ seeks to provide the best possible education for students, where the talents of each student are developed in a positive atmosphere of respect, effort and fairness.

In the light of our Mission Statement, St Colman's Attendance Policy aims to promote good attendance through 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. Progress at school requires the best level of attendance and punctuality because both are essential to optimise educational outcomes.

Aims

- ❖ To provide an environment that encourages all students to attend regularly and punctually.
- ❖ To encourage full attendance at school.
- ❖ To highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents.
- ❖ To ensure that adequate records of attendances and absences are maintained by the school as per the Education Act 2000 in respect of each individual student.
- ❖ To report on student attendance to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).
- ❖ To implement suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality

Rationale

- ❖ To work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and welfare of the students.
- ❖ To facilitate continuity and progression in teaching and learning.
- ❖ To ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them.
- ❖ To ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance.
- ❖ To 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:

- A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days
 - The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than twenty
 - A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the Principal
 - A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school in which he/she is registered, not attending school regularly
- ❖ Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school whichever comes later.

A positive approach to attendance and punctuality

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware that learning takes place incrementally and that irregular attendance will impact on outcomes.
- ❖ The Pastoral Care programme promotes good attendance. The class teacher/Year head structure supports students and monitors attendance.
- ❖ Member(s) of the Student Support Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue and implement strategies to change poor attendance habits.
- ❖ Parents/Guardians have access to vsware which includes a detailed breakdown of attendance for each day.
- ❖ The DEIS retention group implements an attendance reward system which acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality.
- ❖ A sense of belonging and connectedness in school is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities.

Roles in implementing the attendance policy

School Principal

- ❖ Provides leadership for the creation of a school climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance;
- ❖ Leads the review and implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy
- ❖ Puts arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy;
- ❖ Notifies Tusla's Education Welfare Services and the EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensures support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.
- ❖ To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.

Deputy Principals:

- ❖ To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Class Tutors , Administration Staff and to implement the School Policy.
- ❖ To liaise with the Year Head and Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- ❖ To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.

Year Head:

- ❖ Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms;
- ❖ Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about a student
- ❖ Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis;
- ❖ Liaise with class teachers, HSCL, SCP, DP and P around students of concern.

Teachers

- ❖ Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance;
- ❖ Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy to promote attendance;
- ❖ Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms;
- ❖ Ensure attendance data is recorded accurately for each day of the school year:
- ❖ Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about student absences;

- ❖ Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis;

The role of the Parent/Guardian

- ❖ Set high standards of their child in relation to attendance and punctuality;
- ❖ Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem;
- ❖ Download the vsware app to monitor their child's attendance
- ❖ Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time;
- ❖ Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason;
- ❖ Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time;

The role of the School Completion Team

- ❖ Identify and support students at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of poor attendance, participation and retention via a suite of initiatives such as breakfast clubs, in-class supports, student support programmes, Traveller mentoring programme, attendance monitoring and tracking programme, MAP programmes, and therapeutic interventions using evidenced-based programmes.
- ❖ Work in partnership with school management, school staff, HSCL Coordinator, BFL and community agencies to provide best possible outcomes for targeted students and their families
- ❖ Gather and analyse attendance data and share as appropriate with school staff and management.

The role of the HSCL Coordinator

- ❖ To assist parents 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;
- ❖ Analyse attendance data and share as appropriate with school staff, management and the Educational Welfare Services as appropriate.
- ❖ To promote positive engagement between the home and school;
- ❖ To contribute to ensuring a whole school approach to improving attendance.
- ❖ Liaise with Principal, Deputy principal's, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Parents etc

The role of the BFL Teacher

- ❖ To use targets, rewards and strategies to help students overcome challenges and improve outcomes in the areas of attendance and punctuality
- ❖ To monitor progress and offer support to help change patterns of failure and indifference when attendance and punctuality is an issue
- ❖ To outline to students the negative consequences of poor attendance and tardiness

Monitoring Attendance and Retention

- ❖ The school day runs from 8:50 until 3:40 each day except Wednesday when school finishes at 1.05pm
- ❖ Students are expected to be in school for 8.45am and classes begin at 8.50am.
- ❖ A roll call will be taken on VShare in every class.
- ❖ A text will be sent to parents by 11:00 a.m. approximately if a student is marked absent on VShare.
- ❖ If any teacher is taking students out of their normal class for any activity they will mark that student as being on a school activity 'S' on VShare system. This means that when a teacher takes the roll call on VShare they will see who has a legitimate reason to be out.
- ❖ If a student arrives late into school in the morning the office will mark them late 'L' on the VShare system.
- ❖ If a student signs out early then the office staff will put this into the system and teachers will be able to see that they left early with permission.
- ❖ The office will approve notes of explanation for absences each day
- ❖ Class teachers will review class attendance on a weekly basis. They will follow up on any notes not received from the previous week with a phone call home.
- ❖ Class teachers should inform year heads if there is a pattern emerging or a concern regarding attendance.
- ❖ The Year head will liaise with the HSCL. Contact will be made with parents/guardians and plans will be put in place to improve attendance.
- ❖ Once students have missed 15 days the HSCL will send home a standard warning letter that students will soon have missed 20 days and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed will be sent to parents.
- ❖ If any student misses 20 days the HSCL will arrange a meeting with parents. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be informed.

The school accepts that there is a difference between a student missing 10 days by the end of October and a student missing 10 days by the end of March and this is taken into account

VShare, VS Mail and App

- VShare is the platform used by St Colman's Community College to monitor and record student attendance, to record assessment records, to track behaviour and to communicate with parents.
- It is the responsibility of each parent/guardian 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.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that they have downloaded the VShare App as this is the mode of communication used by the school to communicate all information regarding school activities and updates to parents. Failure to download and use the VShare App will mean that they do not receive information about their child's educational progress.
- Attendance is recorded daily for each class on VShare. Parents will have access to VShare and are asked to download the vshare app to monitor their child's attendance online.

Absenteeism

Procedures to be followed if a student is absent from School

- ❖ If a student is marked absent on the roll first thing in the morning parents/guardians will receive an alert from the school via the school app noting that he/she is absent.
- ❖ If a parent/guardian believes that their son/daughter is actually in school they are asked to contact the office immediately.
- ❖ Following a student's absence from school, parents/guardians are obliged by the Education Welfare Act (2000) to provide an explanation for the absence.
- ❖ All explanations of absenteeism must be recorded on the vshare app using the following codes only
- ❖ It is important not to give personal information via the App. If for any reason a parent/guardian wishes to explain the absence in detail or has any concerns that they would like to bring to the attention of the school, they are asked to contact their son/daughter's class teacher or year head.

Punctuality

Procedures to be followed if a student is late for school

- ❖ Students are expected to be in school for 8.45am and classes begin at 8.50am.

- ❖ Students are expected to be at their classroom ready before 8.50 as this is when class begins.
- ❖ Students arriving late for school should be provided with a note of explanation by their parent/guardian via the school journal or an email to office@colmans.ie.
- ❖ All students who arrive to class or to school after 8.50am must sign in at the main office. The student will sign in on the late book, the student's journal will be stamped and the late arrival will be noted on VShare.
- ❖ Students who arrive late are escorted to their class by a Deputy Principal.
- ❖ Student's who arrive late without a note of explanation will receive lunchtime detention. The date, time and location of the detention will be noted in the student's journal. A late text will be sent to parents/guardians.
- ❖ Students are expected to be punctual to all their classes throughout the school day.

Students who are late to school or to class disrupt the teaching and learning for themselves and others and miss out of class contact time.

Sign Out Procedures

Procedures for Leaving School Early

- ❖ It is essential that wherever possible appointments are made for outside of school time and students should only leave early in unavoidable circumstances.
- ❖ Students may not leave class during the school day without permission from the teacher and a note in their journal from their parent/guardian.
- ❖ The student must present written consent from a parent/guardian to their class teacher/year head.
- ❖ This note is countersigned by the class teacher/year head.
- ❖ Parents of students in Years 1, 2 & 3 must be collected by a parent /guardian or nominated adult at all times if they are leaving early.
- ❖ All students will present the note to the admin staff and the parent will sign them out.
- ❖ Any student, who becomes unwell during the day, including a student who drives to school, must be collected by a parent /guardian.
- ❖ On return from an appointment the student must sign in at the office again.

Leaving School Without Permission

- ❖ Leaving school without permission is a breach of school rules and a health and safety concern. If a student is absent from a class without permission, this will be noted on vsware and this information can be accessed at any time via the vsware app.
- ❖ Students who leave school without permission will be given lunchtime/after school detention.
- ❖ This will be noted in the students' school journal. The class teacher/year head will communicate with parents in relation to leaving school without permission. If your student leaves school without permission on a regular basis a referral will be made to the Home School Community Liaison and the Education Welfare services.

Interventions to Promote Attendance

Universal Interventions - Level One Interventions

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ First years will be provided with a transition to post primary programme.
- ❖ DEIS Attendance and retention initiatives promote a culture of good attendance, these include initiatives such as 'Count Every Day' participate in a reward system which acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality.
- ❖ All students are provided with a SPHE and wellness programme to assist them throughout their schooling.
- ❖ All students are offered the support of a class teacher and year head as part of the pastoral care system.
- ❖ The school provides a school meals programme for all students.
- ❖ The school offers a wide range of extracurricular activities to all students in sport, creative arts, etc.
- ❖ All parents are provided with a unique username and password which allows them to go look at their son/daughter(s) attendance information on VSware.
- ❖ Students are provided with a broad curriculum with subjects that suit the talents of all.
- ❖ All parents get an alert home on the app or a text home if their son/daughter is absent.

Targeted Interventions - Level Two Interventions

- ❖ The school provides a homework club for targeted students where possible.
- ❖ JCSP students participate in initiatives that promote positive learning experiences in schools.
- ❖ The guidance counsellor may work with targeted students who are having anxiety or mental health based absenteeism.
- ❖ Families may be supported by the Home School Community Liaison Teacher.
- ❖ Meetings may be held with the year head/class teacher/deputy principal/principal, the parents/guardians and the student(s) concerned.
- ❖ The HSCL may provide activities/courses for the parents of targeted children.
- ❖ The SCP project worker and co-ordinator may work with targeted students.
- ❖ The school may offer a differentiated curriculum to certain targeted students.
- ❖ The school may seek the assistance of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Barnardos, Tusla – The Child and Family Agency and any other organisation that may be of assistance.
- ❖ The Student careteam meets weekly and the best supports for students of concern are put in place.

Intensive Intervention - Level Three Interventions(In conjunction with Level Two interventions already in place)

- ❖ Students may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for support and will work closely with the EWO to support the student.
- ❖ Students may with the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer be offered modified timetables or alternative educational programmes. (any modified timetable will be reviewed weekly with the parent/guardian).
- ❖ Students who are out of school will be offered the assistance of the School Completion Programme Co-ordinator.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Implementation Date 28th June 2021

This policy is in effect after being signed by the Board of Management

Signed Margaret O'Connell

Acting Chairperson of Board of Management

_____ Acting Chairperson

Date 28/06/2021