

# ATTENDANCE POLICY



## 1. Introduction

The following policy and procedures have been drafted to promote and emphasise the importance of student attendance in Ardscoil Mhuire and to outline the structures that are in place to support and ensure that each student attends school on a very regular and consistent basis. If students are to progress and achieve academically and personally in Ardscoil Mhuire very good attendance is essential.

## 2. Relationship to Mission Statement

### School Mission Statement

*In this school we aim to provide a Christian environment, where each person is valued and assisted to reach full potential.*

In order that a student be “assisted to reach full potential” student’s consistent attendance and participation in school is vital.

## 3. School Procedures for dealing with Absenteeism

### a) School Procedures for dealing with Absenteeism

Procedures for reporting sickness, appointments and absences.

- Students must attend school in accordance with the school calendar. In the case of a necessary absence, a note must be submitted by the parent/guardian via the School App on the morning of their daughter’s absence. The note must specify clearly the reason for their absence, as is required by law. This note will be forwarded to the relevant Year Head through the App for his/her approval. If a parent/guardian does not submit an absence note on their daughter’s behalf through the School App, on the morning of her absence, a notification will be sent to the parent/guardian to inform them that their daughter is absent from school and to remind them to send a note, if the absence is legitimate. Parents can then notify the school through the School App of their daughter’s absence or alternatively communicate with the school that they are unaware as to why she is not in school. The system, which aims to provide and sustain a very robust mode of communication between the school and home regarding student attendance, compliments systems already in place such as VSware.
- If a student wishes to leave school during the school day for any purpose, a note must be sent by the parent/guardians via the School App. This note will be forwarded to the relevant Year Head through the App for his/her

approval. The permission to leave school note from the parent/guardian must be sent by 8.15 am on the day in question. This is to afford the Year Head time to approve the permission to leave note on the School App. All students leaving school must sign out at the reception area utilising the school digital sign in/sign out procedures and must be collected by a parent/guardian. Failure to follow school procedures in relation to leaving the school premises will result in a sanction being imposed.

- During school hours students are forbidden to leave the school premises without permission.
  - Sixth Year students only are allowed to leave the school for lunch once a week, with Board of Management approval. If on this day a Sixth Year student leaves the school for lunch and does not return for the remainder of the day, the school must be contacted immediately and/or a note outlining the reason for her absence sent through the School App.
  - Students arriving late in the morning that is, after 8.45am, must enter the school through the school reception entrance and sign in as late. Students are to sign in late by utilising the school's digital sign in/sign out system at reception. Once they have completed this process they can report to class. Notes for lateness must be submitted by parents/guardians via the School App.
  - All notes received via the School App are recorded for each student on VShare.
  - Students who have not submitted notes to explain why they are late must attend detention on Monday after school from 3.40pm to 4.40pm, if they are late any day in the previous week.
  - Failure to attend detention will constitute a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and warrant a sanction.
- b) Each teacher records his/her class attendance daily on VShare. A full roll call is taken at the beginning of each class.
- c) All absences and latecomers to class are recorded by the teacher on VShare.
- d) Parental access to VShare was granted at the beginning of the academic year 2017/18.
- e) Senior Management, with the assistance of the Home School Community Liaison Officer and the School Completion Co-coordinator, inform the Education Welfare Board and parents of all absences over 20 days.
- f) A record of all students who are absent or arrive late to school can be viewed daily on VShare.
- g) The School App, on a daily basis, notifies the parents/guardians of students who are absent without a note being submitted. This affords the school the opportunity to check/verify student absenteeism with home each day.
- h) Year Heads contact parents/guardians following unexplained student absences of more than three days.
- i) All records of student absences and lateness are recorded and stored on VShare.
- j) Students who need to absent themselves from class at any time during the day must do so with teacher permission only. The teacher must sign the student's journal and the student must bring it with them when leaving class.

- k) A facility is available to teachers to make reference to the lack of progress made by students due to absenteeism on school reports and at Parent/Teacher meetings. A record of days absent is provided on the student's assessment reports in December and May. A record of the number of classes missed in each subject area by students is given on the October and Easter Progress Reports. This is to highlight the impact that partial daily attendance has on student progress.

#### **4. Recent Legislation**

The staff of Ardscoil Mhuire is committed to the successful implementation of recent education legislation in particular the 1998 Education Act, The Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities in relation to developing and implementing Policy and Procedures**

##### **Board of Management**

- ◆ To ensure policy is developed and evaluated on a regular basis.
- ◆ To receive reports from Principal on implementation of the policy.

##### **Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head**

- ◆ To monitor the implementation of policy
- ◆ Year Heads to inform parents/guardians and pupils of procedures and any absenteeism.

##### **Parents**

- ◆ It is the parents/guardians duty and responsibility to follow and support school procedures in relation to absenteeism.

##### **Pupils**

- ◆ It is the pupils' responsibility to attend school regularly and to be on time.
- ◆ To follow the school procedures in relation to absences, lateness and appointments.

#### **6. Strategies in place to promote School Attendance**

- a) Ardscoil Mhuire aims to embrace the educational needs of all students and therefore a wide range of curricular programmes such as JCSP, LCA, Transition Year, LCVP etc. is offered by the school.
- b) Strong links exist between the home and school via the Home School Community Liaison Officer. One of the key roles of the HSCL Officer is to encourage, advise and support parents and students in the area of school attendance.
- c) The DEIS/SSE Team lead a whole school focus on improving school attendance by identifying, setting and implementing SMART targets and actions. These actions are

devised to improve student attendance, in addition to their engagement with and enjoyment of the educational process.

- d) The Career Guidance teacher offers support and guidance to students with poor attendance records.
- e) The identification, monitoring and supporting of students at risk in education, in particular those with poor attendance records, by the Care Team (Student Support Team).
- f) The Check and Connect initiative offers support and guidance to students with poor attendance records.
- g) Initiatives such as the Merit Card System and Academic Progress Cards motivate, encourage and affirm students and are key in providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- h) Free after school supervised study for First Years to provide a positive supportive learning environment.
- i) After school supervised study for Second to Sixth year students to promote and continue the precedent for study established in First Year
- j) In, out and after school and holiday supports are provided by the SCP.
- k) The JCSP promotes, encourages and supports school attendance (See JCSP Policy).
- l) The LCA coordinator monitors the attendance of the LCA students on a daily basis and, in cooperation with the Year Head, consistently encourages and supports students to attend school.
- m) Homework/Fun Club is offered by the SCP for certain Year Groups. These clubs provide practical assistance with homework. Participation is encouraged by providing activities in the last half hour that are attractive to teenagers.
- n) Fun Club is offered by the SCP for certain Year Groups. Participation is encouraged by providing activities that are attractive to teenagers such as horticulture and art.
- o) A wide and inclusive range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are offered to students. A strong emphasis is placed on extra-curricular activities in the areas such as sport, music, debating, public speaking and drama.
- p) Fun school events such as Mad Hair Day, the whole school Christmas Dinner, Sports Day etc. encourage students to come to school.
- q) Funding is sourced to employ a qualified art therapist to whom students at risk in education are directed for ongoing support. Parental permission is required.
- r) Attendance initiatives and rewards are presented a number of times a year to encourage and reward school attendance.

## **7. Review and Audit**

The situation is constantly monitored and reviewed by:

- ◆ Year Head Meetings
- ◆ Pastoral Care Team Meetings
- ◆ Home School Community Liaison Officer
- ◆ SEN Team Meetings
- ◆ Attendance Coordinator
- ◆ DEIS/SSE Team

- ◆ JCSP Coordinator
- ◆ LCA Coordinator
- ◆ The School Completion Programme

## **8. Relevant In-service Training**

- Staff training in VSware during staff development day.
- Staff training in School App during staff development day.
- Whole school implementation of actions devised to meet the attendance targets of the DEIS/SSE plan.
- HSCL in-service on their role in monitoring attendance.
- EWO Staff Information session.

## **9. Suggested Appendices**

- ◆ School Code of Behaviour
- ◆ HSCL Policy
- ◆ DEIS Plan
- ◆ Education Welfare Act 2000
- ◆ Attendance Letters to Parents
- ◆ Information Booklet drafted by Home School Liaison

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sr. Ena Quinlan  
Chairperson  
Board of Management

*Reviewed on:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date of next review:* \_\_\_\_\_