

# 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.
- Students should only have to leave the school during the school day for essential appointments that cannot be scheduled after school hours. 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. Student departure/collection time must coincide with the scheduled conclusion of class periods. This is essential in order to avoid unnecessary disruption to teaching and learning in classes. The times that parents/guardians will be able to collect their daughters from the school for essential appointments are as follows: 9.30am, 10.10am, 11.05am, 11.45am, 12.25pm, 1.05pm, 1.40pm, 2.20pm, 3.00pm. All students leaving school must sign out at the reception area, in either Neville House or Memorial Hall (depending on where their timetabled class is taking place), utilising the school digital sign in/sign out procedures and must be collected by a parent/guardian during the break of classes only. LCA1, LCA2, First Year, Second Year, Third Year and Transition Year students will always be located in Neville House and can be collected from this reception area. Parents/Guardians of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students, who are collecting their daughters, are required to contact the school office prior to collection to ascertain the building their daughter needs to be collected from. Parents/Guardians can access school reception by pressing the keypad outside the reception entrance door in Neville house and at the entrance gate to Memorial Hall. Students are not to exit through the school reception area, in either Neville House or Memorial Hall, until they are instructed to do so by a staff member in reception. This will then be verified through the School App. Failure to follow school procedures in relation to leaving the school premises will result in a sanction being imposed.

- All students are to enter the school through the student entrance gate. However, if a student arrives late, that is after 8.45am and are unable to be in class for 8.50 am, they must enter the school through school reception, in either Neville House or Memorial Hall (depending on where their classes are taking place.) Students can access school reception by pressing the keypad outside the reception entrance door in Neville house and at the entrance gate to Memorial Hall. 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 must then report immediately to their class. If a student's locker is situated in a classroom they are not permitted to disturb the teacher's class to access the locker. Permission may be sought at the end of the 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 school procedures 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) Parents/Guardians can access and monitor their daughter's attendance through the VShare system.
- e) Senior Management, with the assistance of the Home School Community Liaison Officer and the School Completion Co-coordinator, inform TESS and parents/guardians 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) The School App send absence alerts to parents/guardians if their daughter misses five days, ten days, 15 days, 20 days etc.
- i) Year Heads contact parents/guardians following unexplained student absences of more than three days.
- j) All records of student absences and lateness are recorded and stored on VShare and the School App.
- k) 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.
- l) A facility is available to teachers on school reports to make reference to the lack of progress made by students due to absenteeism.
- m) Teachers have the opportunity at Parent/Teacher Meeting, where relevant, to refer to the lack of progress made by students due to absenteeism.
- n) 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**

- ◆ The Board of Management ensures the policy is developed and reviewed on a regular basis.
- ◆ The Board of Management receives reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.

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

- ◆ Senior Management monitors the implementation of this policy and informs/reminds parents/guardians/pupils of attendance procedures.

- ◆ Year Heads monitor the attendance of the students in their Year Group and make contact with parents/guardians regarding their daughter's absenteeism, participation and engagement.

### **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.
- ◆ It is the pupils' responsibility to follow school procedures in relation to absences, lateness and appointments.

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

- Ardcoil Mhuire aims to embrace the educational needs of all students and therefore a wide range of curricular programmes such as JCSP, LCA, Transition Year, LCW etc. is offered by the school.
- 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.
- 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 and their engagement with and enjoyment of the educational process.
- Subject teachers play a key role in promoting and improving student attendance by regularly reminding them of the importance of good attendance in addition to incorporating into their classroom practice the agreed classroom actions outlined in the attendance section of the DEIS plan.
- The Career Guidance teacher offers support and guidance to students with poor attendance records.
- The Student Support Team identifies monitors and supports students at risk in education, in particular those with poor attendance records.
- The Year Head identifies, monitors and supports students in their Year Group with poor attendance records.
- The Check and Connect initiative offers support and guidance to students with poor attendance records.
- 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.
- Free after school supervised study is offered to First Years students in order to provide them with a positive, structured and supportive learning environment.
- After school supervised study for Second to Sixth year students is available to promote and continue the good study habits developed in First Year.
- Homework Club is offered after school for certain students in Junior Cycle Groups. This club provides practical assistance with homework. Participation is encouraged by providing refreshments to students during the first fifteen minutes of the club.
- In, out and after school and holiday supports are provided by the SCP.

- n) The JCSP promotes, encourages and supports school attendance (See JCSP Policy).
- o) 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.
- p) Fun Club is offered by the SCP for certain Year Groups. Participation is encouraged by providing activities that are attractive to teenagers such as Home Economics and Art.
- q) 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 areas such as sport, music, debating, public speaking and drama.
- r) Fun school events such as Mad Hair Day, the whole school Christmas Dinner, Sports Day etc. encourage students to come to school.
- s) Attendance initiatives and rewards e.g. HERO 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
- ◆ Student Support Meetings
- ◆ Home School Community Liaison Officer
- ◆ SEN Team Meetings
- ◆ Attendance Coordinator
- ◆ DEIS/SSE Team
- ◆ JCSP Coordinator
- ◆ LCA Coordinator
- ◆ The School Completion Programme
- ◆ Student Representative Council – Focus Groups with Students

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

- Staff training in VSware during staff development day.
- Staff training in School App during staff development day.
- DEIS CPD session at the beginning of and throughout the academic year.
- 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**

- ◆ Code of Behaviour
- ◆ Bi Cinealta Policy
- ◆ HSCL Policy
- ◆ DEIS/SSE Plan
- ◆ Education Welfare Act 2000
- ◆ Information Booklet drafted by HSCL

Signed: Sr. Ena Quinlan  
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026