

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Castleknock Community College



Review Dates

Staff	Oct '09 –Feb '10	Reviewed
Parents	February '10	Reviewed
Student Council	February '10	Reviewed
BOM	May '10	Ratified
BOM	January 2014	Reviewed without amendments.
BOM	October 2015	Reviewed with amendments.

Due for next review January 2018

Attendance & Punctuality Policy (2015-2018)

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1. Mission Statement

In serving the needs of our community we, the pupils, parents and staff, in all our endeavours aspire towards excellence in a caring and supportive environment. By growing and developing through co-operation this will enable all to realise their full potential.

2. Introduction

A meaningful education provides every student with the best possible start in life and it helps them to mature and develop into responsible young adults. The purpose of our ***College Policy on Attendance and Punctuality*** is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in the education system. Moreover it endeavours to promote self-discipline, commitment and responsibility.

3. The Education Welfare Act 2000

The main provisions of the Education Welfare Act are as follows:

- 1) Schools are required to establish and maintain a school register, showing attendance or non-attendance for each student.
- 2) Every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years of education in post primary, whichever comes later.
- 3) The act established a National Educational Welfare Board. The NEWB has appointed Education Welfare Officers to work with schools to encourage school attendance.
- 4) The act stipulates that the school is obliged to report to the NEWB every time:
 - It decides to expel a student
 - A student has been absent for 20 days or more cumulatively
 - A student's attendance causes concern for the school
 - A student's name is removed from the school register
 - A student has been suspended for six days consecutively
- 5) Schools must prepare a student absence report. This information must be submitted five times a year in summary format for all students.
- 6) Absences must be categorised under six headings:
 - A. Illness
 - B. Family Business
 - C. Expelled
 - D. Suspended
 - E. Other
 - F. Unexplained
 - G. Transfer to another school

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4. School Policy on Attendance

Attendance & Roll System

- Students are required to swipe in using their student Swipe Card before 8.50a.m. and 1.10p.m. each day except Wednesdays when they are required to swipe in by 8.50a.m. only.
- A student who is present but fails to swipe in will be deemed to be late. Two lates in any week will result in detention. Students will sit detention on Fridays from 3.50 – 4.50 p.m.
- Students are expected to have their swipe cards in their possession at all times. If a swipe card is lost a replacement swipe card must be ordered through the office (Cost €10.00).
- Tutors and teachers have a duty of care in the completion of attendance details on a daily basis. The system that is followed:
 - i. Tutors to take and update attendance roll each morning at 8.50am on the VS Ware System
 - ii. Each teacher will register the class attendance within the first five minutes of class.
- Lists of students who will be absent on any activities should be logged on the VS Ware or in exceptional circumstances posted on the noticeboard in the staffroom and communicated on the staff email system. These activities may include: practical exams, work experience, extracurricular activities etc.
- Accurate roll attendance sheets are maintained by tutors and subject teachers. Absences are followed up and notes are checked in the next class.

Attendance & Student Responsibility

1. Students are required to be in the school building by 8.50 a.m. each morning and 1.10 p.m. after lunch. Students are required to swipe in using their student Swipe Card before 8.50a.m. and 1.10p.m. each day except Wednesdays when they are required to swipe in at 8.50 a.m. only.
2. In the event of an absence the student must present a written note of explanation on her/ his return to her/his Class Tutor and the individual Subject Teacher (when requested)
3. Students who wish to leave the school early for an appointment (e.g. Doctor, Dentist etc.) must present a note of explanation in advance to their Tutor. This note is signed by the Year head/Assistant Year head and must be produced at the office by the student before they can sign out for their scheduled appointment. Their absence is then recorded on the VS Ware system by the office.
4. In the event of a student becoming ill while at school, parent/guardian's permission must be received before they sign out through the office. He/She must remain at reception until contact is made with the student's parents/guardians.
5. Full attendance and participation in timetabled PE classes is required. Students who are unable to participate in PE classes due to medical circumstances may be asked to furnish their PE teacher with a parental note/medical note.
6. To facilitate the above process the School Journal must be in the possession of students at all times.

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Lunchtime Information

Staying in School

Students, who request to stay in school for lunch, are expected to remain on the school grounds. There is a lot of traffic in the vicinity of the College and for their safety; we request that students who stay in College for lunch do not leave the school grounds for any reason. We regret that we cannot accept responsibility for their safety if they ignore this instruction.

Only senior students (Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Years) may go to the shop at lunchtime. No students are permitted to go to the shops during the Wednesday break.

Going Home for Lunch

Students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) wish them to go home for lunch may do so, once their parent(s)/guardian(s) has noted this request in the school journal. We ask that students going home for lunch do so promptly and do not loiter around the shops or go to friends' houses without prior permission from parents.

Attendance & Parental Responsibility

The primary responsibility for a student's attendance in school lies with the parents (The Education Welfare Act 2000).

- When a student is absent from school for any reason, parents must notify the school by telephone on or before the third day of absence. If no communication is forthcoming then the College will endeavour to make contact with the parents of the absent student.
- Parents are required to provide a note of explanation for any absence in their sons/daughter's Journal. These notes are checked by the tutor on the child's return to school.
- The Department of Education & Science recommends that parents must try to ensure that family holidays are scheduled during holiday times.
- Parents should always write a note of non-participation from PE classes.

Attendance Strategies

The following is a list of strategies that we have put in place in Castleknock Community College in order to encourage attendance:

1. Building a caring, respectful and compassionate atmosphere in which every person feels accepted and valued
2. The provision of an excellent extra curricular activity package which has something for everyone and encourages the participation of all students

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3. A modern meaningful curriculum, which is inclusive of all students
4. Well-structured pastoral care system
5. Rewarding and certification of good attendance [*see appendix 1*]
6. A comprehensive roll attendance system
7. Comprehensive supervised evening study

The Role of the Year Head Team

The Year Head and her/his team promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- 1) Ensuring that the attendance system is operating effectively and efficiently
- 2) Liaising with Principal, Deputy Principals and the College care structures
- 3) Contacting parents on the third day of absence if no contact has been made with the College
- 4) The Year Head in certain circumstances contact parents when their child has reached ten days of cumulative absences reminding them of the twenty-day rule
- 5) Notifying the Principal or Deputy Principals to contact the Education Welfare Officer:
 - a. once a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
 - b. when a student has been suspended for 6 consecutive days or more.
- 6) Liaising with the Principal/Deputy Principals in preparing the annual report for the NEWB and ensuring that student absence reports are submitted 5 times a year on designated dates
- 7) Rewarding good attendance through certification at the end of year Awards' Ceremony.

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5. Summary of School Policy on Attendance

- 1) The Year Head team will co-ordinate attendance and punctuality.
- 2) Students are requested to be in school at 8.50am each morning and by 1.10 pm after lunch.
- 3) Classes begin at 8.50am
- 4) School finishes at 3.45pm except on Wednesday when school finishes at 1.40pm.
- 5) Lunch break is from 12.15pm to 1.10pm.
- 6) Students who arrive late with a satisfactory note of explanation from parent/guardian must swipe in and it is the duty of the student to present the note to his tutor or subject teacher.
- 7) Students who arrive late to class during the day will be dealt with by the subject teacher using the following steps:
 - i. Documented in teacher's journal/ VS Ware System and sanction given by the subject teacher
 - ii. Documented in journal to parent/guardian
 - iii. Re-occurrence to be communicated to the class tutor
 - iv. Students speaking with a member of staff must have a signed note of explanation in journal from that member of staff excusing their absence/delay from class
 - v. Parental/guardian's signature(s) are requested as acknowledgement of all communication in the journal
 - vi. Senior management will be notified by the Year Head of persistent offenders and sanctions to deal with such students may include suspension from the College.

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Information for Parents

1. The importance of good attendance

- It enables you child to keep up with schoolwork and makes school a more positive learning experience.
- It teaches them good habits for the future.

2. The Education Welfare Act (2000)

- The purpose of the act is to encourage regular attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible, preferably until he/she completes his/her education.
- Every child must attend school regularly until the age of sixteen or complete at least three years post primary education, whichever comes later.
- It is the central responsibility of parents to ensure that they comply with the regulations stated in the Education Welfare Act 2000, with regard to the attendance and participation of their child in the school to which they have been enrolled.

3. The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB):

- The National Education Welfare Board was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.
- The NEWB has appointed Education Welfare Officers to work with schools to encourage school attendance.

4. What the NEWB expects from the school

Under the Act, a school is obligated to report to the NEWB every time:

- It decides to expel students
- A student's name is removed from the school register
- A student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- A student has been suspended for six days
- A Principal is concerned about a student's attendance

Schools are asked to submit information about individual student absences five times a year.

- Where there is concern about your child's attendance or about reasons given, you may be contacted by the schools Year Head/Assistant Year Head/Tutor or a member of Care Team
- Visited by an Education Welfare Officer

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5. Attendance & Parental Responsibility

The primary responsibility for a student's attendance in school lies with the parent's (Education Welfare Act 2000).

- When a child is absent from College for any reason parents must notify the school by telephone by the third day of absence.
- Parents are expected to provide a note of explanation for any absences in their son's/daughter's journal. These notes are inspected on the child's return to school.
- Parents are requested to forward a note to their son/daughter's PE Teacher if they are unable to participate.
- Where possible all medical appointments should be made outside school time.
- Should your son/daughter have occasion to leave school early for an appointment or otherwise the school requires a signed note of explanation in the journal.

6. Attendance & Student Responsibility

- Students are requested to be in school by 8.50am each morning and 1.10pm after lunch.
- In the event of an absence the student must present written note of explanation on his/her return to her/his Tutor and the Subject Teacher (When requested)
- Students who wish to leave school early for an appointment or otherwise must present a signed note of explanation in advance to the Tutor.
- The note must be signed by a Yearhead, Assistant Year Head or Tutor and must be produced at the office by the student before they can sign out officially.
- In the event of a student becoming ill while at school, parental/guardian permission must be received before they sign out through office. He/She must remain at reception until collected.
- Students are expected to always have their journals in their possession.
- Students are expected to be on time for class throughout the school day.
- Students are expected to have full attendance and participation in timetabled PE classes unless a medical certificate to the contrary is supplied.

7. Lunchtime Information

Staying in School

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Going Home for Lunch

Students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) wish them to go home for lunch may do so, once their parent(s)/guardian(s) has noted this request below. We ask that students going home for lunch do so promptly and do not loiter around the shops or go to friends' houses without prior permission from parents. If a student is unable to return to College for afternoon classes due to illness/family circumstances it is very important that the parents notify the College immediately.

8. Parents Role in Punctuality & Attendance

The primary responsibility for a student's attendance in school lies with the parent's. (*Education Welfare Act 2000.*)

- Promote regular attendance
- Ensure that your child is in school on time
- Make contact with the school on second day of absence.
- Ensure that a note of explanation is written in their journal on returning to school signed by a parent/guardian.
- Highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Attend annual parent teacher meetings to find out how your child is progressing.
- Organise family holidays outside school term.
- Ensure that part-time work doesn't affect your child's progress.
- Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who leave school to work must register with the National Education Welfare Board, so as to ensure that they can be helped with further education and training.

Notes:
