



November 2017

# Attendance Strategy

A copy of this strategy was submitted to TUSLA.

**Good Counsel College, New Ross**  
AN AUGUSTINIAN SCHOOL

## **Scope:**

Board of Management, Teaching Staff, Administration Staff, Parents and Students

At Good Counsel College we are committed to encouraging our students to develop a pattern of regular and punctual attendance in order to benefit fully from the education provided.

## **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 the learning process.
- To ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this College offers them.
- To ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to encourage high levels of attendance.
- To ensure the College 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 more than 5 days
  - II. The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is twenty or more
  - 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 College not attending school regularly.

## **Goals**

To achieve:

- Accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours.
- That students learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance.
- That parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance.
- Minimum rate of absenteeism.
- The early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance.

## **A positive approach to attendance and punctuality:**

1. 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.
2. 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 Pastoral Care programme.
3. The Year Head and/or member(s) of the Care Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue.
4. Reports to Parents/Guardians include a detailed breakdown of attendance for the period in question.
5. Records of attendance are available to parents to view on ePortal by logging in using the unique password for that student. (To be made available in Term 1 2017)

## **Strategy Content**

### **Roles and responsibility:**

#### **Student:**

1. To punctually attend all scheduled classes every day unless there is a valid reason for not doing so.
2. Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation in the designated section of the School Journal on the day of return to class.
3. When leaving the school during the school day to present a Permission to Leave Slip to the office where the student should be signed out by their parent/guardian.
4. If arriving late for school, to be accompanied by a parent/guardian **or** to present a written explanation. (Sign in)

#### **Parent/Guardian:**

1. To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities. (Education Welfare Act 2000)
2. To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unnecessary absences.
3. To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school.

4. All messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible.
5. 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.
6. To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
7. To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.
8. To arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays.
9. Any student who arrives late for school must be either accompanied by a parent /guardian or provided with an explanatory note.

### **Principal:**

1. To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
2. To monitor attendance records regularly.
3. To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
4. To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences withdrawal of students from the School.
5. To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.

### **Deputy Principal:**

1. To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Tutors and Administration Staff to implement the School Policy.
2. To liaise with the Year Head and Pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance.
3. To meet, along with the Year Head where possible, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.
4. Manually take the roll call between 9:00am and 9:40am each morning and submit to the admin office in order that parents can be contacted by text where students are absent.

### **Class teacher:**

1. To record the attendance of every class every day. When substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave, the teacher will take a list of the names of every student in the classroom (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school.)

2. To input the attendance into the ePortal system for each class. If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually on paper and submit to the School Office. If the class teacher is substituting during these periods the attendance should be recorded either electronically on ePortal or on the class list available for that time and then submitted to the School Office.
3. To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.

### **Year Head:**

1. To monitor regularly the attendance records on the ePortal system for the given year. To liaise with the Pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance.
2. To meet, along with the Deputy Principal where possible, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue.
3. To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/ or when patterns of absences are developing and/or to notify the Deputy Principal of same.
4. To remind the pupils during the assemblies of the Year Group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
5. To present Attendance Awards at key points in the school year.

### **Tutor:**

1. To monitor the students journal including attendance notes and permission slips.
2. To liaise with the Year Head in the event of absences not being explained or where any other problems may arise in relation to attendance.

### **Administrative Staff:**

1. To input attendance data from Class Teachers when required.
2. To work in conjunction with the Principal/Deputy Principal to submit reports to the NEWB.
3. To administer the signing in and out of students. (hard copy and ePortal)
4. To provide students who sign late with a late stamp.
5. Send parents/guardians an email indication absence from school based on the teacher submitted roll calls.

## Day to day implementation:

1. All students attend class at 9am. The roll is recorded electronically on ePortal by the class teacher and manually by the Deputy Principal. Absence Notes and Permission to Leave Slips are submitted to the Deputy Principal. The Administration Office will subsequently amend the *absence unexplained* to *absence explained* on ePortal.
2. The attendance will be recorded into ePortal at 9.00am. **Those arriving after the start of class are recorded as late.**
3. Students who arrive late are required to sign in at the School Office. The Administrator on duty will amend to record from *absence unexplained* to *late explained/unexplained*. The student will be given a late stamp in their Student Journal from the School Office confirming that signing in has taken place.
4. A text message will be sent to the parents/guardians of students who are absent at the 9am roll call taken by the Deputy Principal and not recorded as late.
5. Students who leave the school during the day due to illness or appointments must be collected by a parent/guardian at School Office and must then sign out. The signing out is inputted to ePortal by the Admin Staff.
6. Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by their teacher as *school business*. The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names and, prior to departure, posts this on the Staff Notice Board and provides a copy of the list to Reception. If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Admin Staff of same.

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

Chairperson BOM

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

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

Principal

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

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