

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## 2025 - 2026

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**ST CIARAN'S COLLEGE**

*Including Everyone, Inspiring all to Succeed*



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## CONTEXT

*St. Ciaran's College is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students.*

### **Full attendance is vital to:**

- Ensure success in all aspects of school life, including public examinations.
- Ensure that each student is within the care of the school.
- Secure a positive reference which will assist in securing a place in further education and/or employment.

It is a legal requirement that registered students of compulsory school age attend regularly and punctually. An explanation for every absence is required. If such explanation is not forthcoming from the student's parent/carer, the absence will be treated as unauthorized. Unauthorized absence is an absence without permission from a Head of Year or member of Senior Leadership Team and includes all unexplained or unjustified absence. Minding the house, looking after family members, shopping or going on a trip/holiday in term time will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence.

### **Our school will:**

- Encourage 100% attendance.
- Give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Establish strong home school links to be utilized whenever there are concerns about attendance.
- Investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve problems as quickly as possible.

Every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the students the importance of their education. This requires all teaching staff to attend regularly, arrive on time for lessons, be well prepared and maximize the use of class time.

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## Role of Parents

- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend school and arrive in good time for class each morning.
- A student should only be absent for an unavoidable reason which would usually mean ill-health or family bereavement.
- Except in exceptional circumstances, medical and dental appointments etc. should not be made during school hours. Parents should provide a note in the school homework planner along with an appointment card for their child to show to their Head of Year/ Senior Leader. This evidence must also be shown at the school office when signing out.
- If a student is unfit to attend, parents should contact the school before 9.15a.m on the first day of absence, and provide a written, signed note on his / her return. This can be in the form of a letter to the Form Teacher, via an absence note in the student planner or the school app.
- **The practice of parents withdrawing students during term time to go on holidays is very strongly discouraged.**
- Half-days and / or earlier departures from the school should only be requested when absolutely necessary and must always be sought by a written request.
- **It is important that the school has confidence in the person collecting the student at the school. Accordingly, except in exceptional circumstances, that person should be the parent or carer or clearly authorized deputy and should collect him/her from the school office. In such circumstances this authorization should be provided to the school in writing.**

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## Role of students

- To value education and attend all classes required by his/her timetable.
- To be punctual for school. Students must be in by 9.12 a.m. at the latest, to ensure that they are in their classroom by 9.15 a.m. Students who arrive late before 9:25a.m must go to their Form Class for registration (or assembly), where the time and reason for lateness will be recorded on SIMS by the Form Teacher. If a student arrives to school late after 9.25am he/she must complete the "Signing In" process at reception, giving a reason. Any student who is late for a valid reason must provide a note from a parent/carer.
- Students must always remain on the school premises throughout the school day. The exceptions to this rule are as follows:
- Students who live near the school and who wish to go home for lunch each day may do so on condition that they have been issued with a LUNCH-PERMIT and return to school by 12.55 /1.35pm. Such permits will only be issued on receipt of a letter from a parent/carer requesting such permission.
- In the case of an unavoidable medical or dental appointment [note required from parent/carer/appointment card], a student, having first obtained the permission of his/her Head of Year or a member of Senior Leadership, must sign out at the school office, and sign back in on his/her return. This is to ensure that, as is our legal obligation, we have an up-to-date and accurate record at all times of all who are (and are not) on the school premises.
- To bring a note from his/her parent/carer on the day of return from any period of absence.
- To catch up on any work missed.
- To undertake after school study to catch up on any work missed if he/she truant from class/school.
- Students entitled to E.M.A payment will **not** receive their payment unless they have full attendance in **all** classes except in exceptional circumstances e.g. family bereavement, close family wedding, and attendance at interviews.
- Students must be in attendance for at least 3.5 hours to be marked as present for the school day.

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# PROCEDURES

## 1a: Role of teaching staff

- To monitor student attendance in class and daily, check their absence register against summary list provided daily by email. Inform Form Teacher if there are discrepancies.
- Welcome students on their return after being absent sending a clear message that they have been missed.
- Provide advice and support so that students can catch up on their work.
- Monitor student punctuality – use the positive behaviour policy procedures for those who are persistently late for class.
- To ensure students who are leaving the premises in the morning, Period 1, to go to registration and get marked present prior to boarding transport.
- To provide the names and class grouping of students absent during registration but engaged in an authorized activity to the form teacher/ front office so that students can be coded appropriately for the duration.

## Step 1b: Role of Attendance Officer/Laura/Charlene/Siobhan (Front Office)

- Keep a register of daily absences & update it throughout the day.
- Text parent/carers daily to ascertain reasons for absence and email a copy to all staff.
- Inform relevant Form Teachers regarding students who are late/truant/absent themselves from school during the school day.
- Provide weekly absence summaries for relevant Pastoral Staff.

## Step 2: Form Teachers

- Mark the register daily using SIMs.
- Ensure your form class, are on time for registration to begin promptly at 9.15a.m.
- All students who are not present at registration should be recorded as absent on SIMS.net by the Form Teacher (even if they are engaged in an authorized activity e.g. sport, work experience, educational visit etc.)
- Monitor student attendance, checking with the Attendance Officer and the daily absentee lists; ensure reasons are supplied for absence.
- When absence notes are received encode each absentee using the relevant code.
- If no reasons for absence are supplied issue the parent/carers with a Delayed Explanation Letter (Appendix 1).
- Liaise with subject teachers as necessary.

- Identify pupils whose attendance is between 91-95% from weekly absence summary. Check for patterns of absence and persistent lateness.
- Interview those giving cause for concern for absence or persistent lateness [3 days or more] [include in deliberations, students' previous absence history] and set targets for improvement. Refer persistent latecomers to Head of Year.
- Monitor student absence patterns weekly & targeted students daily [including classes missed for appointments etc.
- Provide counselling & pastoral support for those who give cause for concern.
- Display monthly attendance rates in the form rooms.

### **Step 3: Role of Head of Year**

- Identify pupils with attendance figures between 86-90% in year group and monitor their absence patterns.
- Liaise with Form Teachers to clarify reasons for absence and to review term targets for individuals.
- Interview pupils giving cause for concern.
- Contact parent/carer by letter regarding students whose attendance is 90% -86% outlining concerns and informing them of the possible referral to the E.W.O. Letters are generated on SIMS.
- Communicate with parent/carer: where lateness /absence is persistent, present the parent/carer with a copy of the total numbers of hours/periods lost and discuss the implications for the student's education, integration into school life etc.
- Include a review of attendance/late patterns on the agenda for each Pastoral Meeting.
- Highlight the importance of excellent attendance at Year Assemblies
- Monitor catch up support during the transition back to school of absentees – Where a student is returning after an absence of more than two weeks:
  - Monitor student re-integration programmes to be as supportive as possible and with timescales for review.
  - Consult relevant subject teachers.
  - Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
  - Involve parents if necessary.
  - Consider peer support.
  - Involve the Educational Welfare Officer [EWO] if necessary.

### **Where a student is persistently late:**

- Establish the reason(s) for being late – e.g. if because of domestic/family situations, initiate school support mechanisms to talk through their difficulties / interview parents / refer to External Agencies.

### **Step 4: Role of Teacher In Charge of Attendance**

- Liaise with Heads of Year to identify students with attendance figures 85% and below.
- Contact parent/carer by letter outlining concerns and informing them of the possible referral to the E.W.O. **If improvement not evident for students whose attendance falls below 85%, initiate referral to EWO.**
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer [EWO] regarding truancy, condoned absence or recurring short absences.
- Attend meeting organized by EWO with parent/ carer and student to discuss concerns.
- Liaise with Senior Teacher Pastoral and SENCO regarding students with poor attendance.
- Prepare certificates for students with 100% attendance record.
- Monitor the production of absence notes and ensure, working through the Form Teachers that such notes are produced.
- Ensure that all reasons for absence are recorded in SIMS.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

This policy and the procedures outlined within it will be the subject of ongoing review within the Monthly Pastoral meetings. The Heads of Year and the Teacher in Charge of Attendance will review the targets for improvement and the success of the strategies for profiling high attendance on a termly basis. Feedback will also be encouraged from students and parents.



# PROFILING HIGH ATTENDANCE

Possible strategies to be explored:

- School holidays are planned to minimize disruption – thereby avoiding the wrong message.
- Attendance & medical appointments procedures are clear – copies to parents.
- All meetings of parents with staff to include an attendance summary.
- There is an emphasis on attendance to parents regularly letters/parents' nights etc.
- During the transition & induction for new students, there is an emphasis on attendance.
- Rewards System –
  - Monthly reward for the class with best attendance
  - Annually: individual Achievement certificates for 100% attendance
- Use PD and careers classes /Assemblies to reinforce the need for good attendance.

**Attendance codes that have been amended by the department of education.**

Below is a summary of the key updates:

Codes	Description	Change
F	Family holiday (agreed)	Inactive – no longer in use
( ) { } [ ]	Covid codes	Inactive – no longer in use
I	Illness	No longer in use. Replaced with I1
O	Other Exceptional Circumstances	No longer in use. Replaced with O1
I4	Illness (Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance)	New code
O2	Temporary Exceptions to the Curriculum	New code

The departments guidance on attendance is available on the DE website: [Circular 2025/09 Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording - 2025/26.](#)

# APPENDIX I – DELAYED EXPLANATION LETTER

## Student not returning an Absence Note

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

According to our records \_\_\_\_\_ was absent from school on the date(s) indicated below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am concerned that as yet I have not received any explanation although I have already requested an absence note from \_\_\_\_\_. I would therefore appreciate if you would complete the section below and return this form to me without delay.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Form Teacher**

.....

To be completed by Parent

\_\_\_\_\_ was absent on the date(s) indicated because

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX II – FORM TEACHER MONITORING

### Form Teacher Monitoring of Attendance 91%-95%

- Identify pupils between 91%-95% from attendance analysis
- Monitor absence patterns – sporadic absence, pattern of particular days etc.
- If concerned interview pupil / contact Parent/Carer

Name of Pupil (% Attendance)	Reason for Absence Yes/No	Concern Yes/No	Pupil Interview Form Teacher (Date)	Note in Planner to inform Parent/Carer (Date)	Parents/Carers Contacted Tel/Text/Letter (Date)

## APPENDIX III – YEAR HEAD MONITORING

### Year Teacher Monitoring of Attendance 86%-90%

- Identify pupils between 86%-90% from attendance analysis
- Monitor absence patterns – sporadic absence, pattern of particular days etc.
- If concerned clarify reasons for absence with Form Teacher. Check Registration Certificate (provided by Siobhan if absences are covered).
- If still concerned interview pupil / Contact parent/carer

Name of Pupil	% Attendance	Reasons for Absence Yes/No	Concern Yes/No	Pupil Interview Head Of Year (Date)	Parent/Carer Contacted Tel/Text/Letter (Date)