



COLÁISTE/GAELCHOLÁISTE CHOILM

School Attendance Policy

The School's Vision and Values in relation to Attendance

In Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm we endeavour to create the context in which the miracle of growth can happen for each person in our school.

The policy is informed by the school's mission statement which aims to enable students to reach their full potential both academically and socially.

The crest of Coláiste Gaelcholáiste Choilm represents the vision, which inspires and informs the educational practice of our school.

High attendance rates, good time keeping and participation of all students in the school community facilitate excellent teaching and learning in Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm.

The potential for individual growth and fulfilment in the here and now and in the future is best achieved when attending all classes and learning in a constructive way.

The purpose of the Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm policy on attendance and punctuality is to encourage regular/full school attendance and full participation in the education system and promote self-discipline, commitment and responsibility among students.

The School's High Expectations around Attendance

Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm has a 100% attendance policy.

Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm has high expectations with regard to attendance and punctuality as poor attendance and punctuality by a minority of students negatively impacts the teaching and learning of all students through the disruption caused by some students arriving late to class.

All stakeholders have a part to play in maintaining our high expectations with regard to attendance and punctuality. Students, Parents, Staff in Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm work together to maximise attendance and participation.

How Attendance will be Monitored

- Subject teachers take attendance using Vsware. Period 1 (9.00-9.40) and Period 7 (2.00-2.40) are designated roll call classes and attendance or absence at these classes is recorded in the students official records.
- Attendance will be taken by all teachers for each class period 1-9.
- List of student absences available to all Year Heads from the previous school day prior to the start of the next working day.
- On 2nd day of absence Parents are expected to ring the school and explain absence.
- On 3rd day of absence Year Head rings home if no contact has been made on 2nd day of absence.
- On return to school a student who has been absent must provide a signed note in the Dialann to Year Head for signature.
- Student must show signed note to each subject teacher on return to school.
- Students are expected to be in the school building at 8.55am for morning classes and 1.55pm for afternoon classes. A student who is late must sign in at the office where they will get a late stamp in their Dialann. This is also recorded in the Late Book in the office and whether or not the student had a valid note of explanation.
- Students are not allowed attend class without a late stamp.
- If a student is late without parental explanation more than 2 times a term a formal detention takes place on a Wednesday. Parents will be called in if there are no improvements.

- Students who need to leave early must provide a note to the Year Head before 8.55a.m. and they must present this signed note to the office where they will only then be signed out.
- Parents/Guardians and students are requested not to make medical or dental appointments during school hours.
- A log will be kept in both offices of (a) students who are late for class and (b) students who sign in or sign out during the school day.
- If a student returns to school following an appointment they must sign back in at the school office prior to returning to class.
- In the event of a student becoming ill while at school, the school shall contact the Parent/Guardian. The student must remain at the school office/reception until Parent/Guardian arrives to sign the student out. A note is still required on the students return to class.
- If students are participating in extra-curricular activities the organising teacher must make the list of all participating student available to the office prior to student leaving the school building. It is also the responsibility of the students to notify their subject teachers beforehand that they will be absent from class due to sporting or extra-curricular activities so they can be marked correctly on Vsware.
- The School Attendance Officer liaises with Deputy Principals and Year Heads in relation to poor attenders. A letter will be sent home prior to the student reaching 20 days of absences. This will inform parents of the schools concerns in relation to their son/daughter's attendance.

Summary of School's Approach to Attendance

(a) Target Setting & Targets

- Maintain the high attendance rate and excellent levels of punctuality of previous years.
- Improve attendance levels where irregular patterns have been identified.
- Raise awareness about attendance among all stakeholders – staff, students, parents & Board of Management.
- The use of specific targets for individual students.

(b) Supports

All the stakeholders of Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm believe that there is direct relationship between a students' success in school and regular attendance. We have always endeavoured to make school a positive experience as this is directly linked to excellent attendance records.

- Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm has implemented a whole-school approach to promoting our attendance strategy and responding where necessary.
- In the areas of Teaching and Learning, staff engage in continuous professional development in order to motivate and engage students and to make school a positive experience *e.g. (Instructional Leadership and Strategy & Skills involvement in Praise Projects with NEPS.)*
- Management and staff work as a team, with a consistent approach to attendance. Attendance is a regular item at weekly Pastoral Team meetings.
- Key personnel in the whole school approach include:
 - All teaching staff (use of Vsware)
 - Class Tutors
 - Year Heads
 - Deputy Principals
 - S.E.N. Department
 - Guidance Counsellors
 - Mentors
 - Administration Personnel

- The Attendance Strategy is linked to policies and procedures that promote quality Teaching and Learning and good attendance:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Policy on Bullying
 - Policy on Drugs
 - Healthy Eating Policy
 - Pastoral Care Policy

- Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm promotes a broad range of extra-curricular activities which encourages students to attend school and to participate fully in the life of the school. The school also facilitates a range of co-curricular activities.

(c) Responding to Poor Attendance

- Attendance is regularly discussed at weekly Pastoral Care Team and Senior Management Team meetings.
- Staff/Tutors who have a concern regarding a student's attendance/pattern of non-attendance/lateness contact the relevant Year Head who will investigate and determine response.
- A text alert system is available on the recommendation of Year Heads.
- The School Attendance Officer liaises with Year Heads prior to students reaching 20 days of absence.
- The curriculum of at risk students can be adjusted (levels/number of exam subjects/extra support) on the recommendation of the Guidance Department.
- Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm have a whole school approach to poor attendance with inputs from Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Senior Management, Attendance Officer, Learning Support, Chaplain, Guidance/Counselling Personnel.

School Roles

- **Class/Subject Teacher**

- Takes a roll in every class and enters same on Vsware.
- Discuss students' attendance with Parents/Guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings.
- Impress on students the importance of regular attendance.
- Bring any concerns regarding irregular attendance patterns/lateness to the attention of the class tutor.

- **Class Tutor**

- Ensure that students are aware of the importance of full attendance and the procedures involved in recording all partial and full day absences.
- Monitors absence notes & late notes, checking for possible truancy/unexplained absences and poor time keeping.
- Signs note if a student arrives late for school.
- Discuss students' attendance with Parents/Guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings.
- Bring any concerns regarding irregular attendance patterns/lateness to the attention of the Year Head.

- **Year Head**

- Monitor attendance in Year Group and make students aware of the importance of punctuality and of regular attendance.
- Work closely in conjunction with the Attendance Officer to follow up on consistent absenteeism.
- On 3rd day of absence Year Head rings home if no contact has been made on 2nd day of absence.
- Signs students out during school day when presented with a parental/guardian note re appointment.
- Signs all student absence notes on the morning of return to school following an absence.
- Informs management of concerns re student absences.
- When necessary makes referrals to the Pastoral Care Team to implement strategies for supporting at risk students.

- **Attendance Officer**

- Monitor Vsware to check for absences of 3 days or more.
- Parental contact for any unexplained absences.
- Communicates irregular patterns to Year Heads.
- Notify Parents/Guardians by mail when 20 days of absence have been reached.
- Notify Education Welfare Officer when 20 day absence have been reached or when 6 days of cumulative suspension have been reached.

- **Deputy Principal**

- Liaise with Principal on all issues regarding attendance.
- Monitor levels of absenteeism amongst student population.
- Liaise with relevant staff regarding student attendance issues.
- Monitor students' lateness and punctuality.

- **Pastoral Care Team**

- Take referrals from Year Heads and advise senior management on further courses of action which may be taken (Guidance, Counselling, Outside Agencies).

- **Office Staff**

- To amend Vsware to reflect latecomers to school.
- To maintain a record of students withdrawn during the school day and their return to school.

- **Parents/Guardians**

- To ensure that children attend school unless there is a legitimate reason for their absence.
- To ensure that medical/dental appointments are made outside of school time where possible.
- Family holidays should take place outside of school time.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Always notify the school as soon as possible of any absence.

- Notify the school in writing (Dialann) of the reason for all student absences.
- To support the school's Attendance Policy and to adhere to the procedures set out in this policy.

- **Students**

- Each student has a personal responsibility to attend school each day.
- Every student is expected to be in attendance at 8.55 every morning. Senior students are expected to be in attendance after lunch break at 1.55pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
- Students are responsible for bringing in notes of explanation in their Dialann regarding punctuality and attendance and producing them to their Year Head for signature on the first morning of return from school absence.
- Students who are late must sign in at the school office and receive a late stamp, without which they will not be allowed enter class.
- Students who are late for school twice without a signed explanation will have a formal detention on a Wednesday.
- Students who must leave school early during the course of the school day must have a note in their Dialann requesting permission to leave school early. Students must get this note signed by their Year Head and present signed note to Main Office in order to sign out. If the student returns to school following the appointment they must sign back into the school at the same office.
- If parents/guardians wish to contact their son/daughter during class time, contact must be made through the Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste office. Under no circumstances should direct contact be made with the student by using their own mobile phone.

Partnership Arrangements

The aim of this policy is to reduce absenteeism and to motivate students to take an active part in their education. Our partnership arrangements play a vital role in keeping absenteeism to a minimum.

- All of our feeder schools are met while students are in 6th class so that Tutors and Year Heads are aware of any concerns before the students start in September.
- An information night is held for all incoming parents where we outline our Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
- We have strong links with local community, sporting and cultural groups which helps us identify students who might be at risk.

Monitor

This policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the School Management.