

Attendance Policy

Adopted by the Board of Management 7th June, 2016

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE:

In accordance with The Education Welfare Act 2000, this policy has as its purpose the promotion of maximum attendance by each pupil. It is a whole school policy in that it applies to students, parents/guardians and school staff.

The importance of regular attendance cannot be overemphasised as poor attendance affects all aspects of school life. We aim to be pastoral in approach as evidenced in our pastoral policies, structures, procedures and practices. This pastoral approach is infused by the guiding ethos of the school as expressed in our Mission Statement. Through the collaboration of class teachers, tutors and in particular year heads, and the pastoral team we strive to maximize attendance among all pupils, paying particular attention to those at risk.

Douglas Community School recognises the importance of having an attendance policy to encourage:

- all students within our catchment area to attend school in order that they can achieve high educational outcomes and pursue an educational programme, which is broad, balanced and challenging in preparation for their adult lives.
- students come to school to gain friendships, learn communication and other social skills while engaging in a range of educational and social programmes.
- students to experience the opportunities to participate in a variety of school activities giving them a broadly based educational experience.
- regular and full attendance by each student so they can maximise the benefits listed above.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- to ensure we maintain high levels of achievement by each student.
- to encourage positive participation in school life.
- to encourage students to form and maintain good habits around attendance.
- to encourage parents to send children to school in all but exceptional circumstances.
- to be proactive in encouraging attendance and focus on preventative strategies.
- to maintain and keep a register of student attendance
- to record all absences and reasons for absence.
- to comply with regulations set down in the Educational Welfare Act 2000 regarding notifying Educational Welfare Officer re student absences and making returns to NEWB.

POSITIVE MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE:

- year heads contact parents after student is absent for 3 days.
- attendance will be recorded on school reports sent to parents/guardians during the school year.
- certificates of full/excellent attendance are awarded at end of the year.

ROLE OF THE STUDENT:

- to come to school every day unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- to be on time and ready for school assembly at 8.40 a.m.
- to ensure that they are marked present on the official roll especially if you are late reporting to school.
- to sign out with the Deputy Principal with a note and permission if leaving the school during the day.
- to provide absence notes for day(s) missed and a medical certificate where applicable.

ROLE OF CLASS TEACHER:

- class teachers to maintain a class register in each class using eportal.
- to encourage and promote good attendance among all students.
- to highlight any concerns they may have about a student's attendance to year head

ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN:

- to collect students from the school office that require signing out.
- to ensure that days are not missed unnecessarily.
- to make appointments, where possible, outside of school hours.
- to notify the school in writing of all absences. This should be done on the day of the child's return to school.
- the school should be informed as soon as possible where absence is likely to be more than 3 days.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES (DAILY BASIS):

- class teacher to take roll and record on school eportal system.
- students will show note from parent/guardian to year head re: days missed, and/or appointments for that day. Year Head will countersign note.
- class teachers to record attendance/absences before every class using school eportal system.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES (ONGOING):

- informal monitoring on an ongoing basis by all staff.
- year heads, deputy principal or principal contact and liaise with parents/guardians/NEWB where there are concerns.
- to meet with NEWB officer when she/he is available to call to the school and discuss current situation at any given time.

SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS UNDER “EDUCATIONAL WELFARE ACT 2000”:

In order to comply with legislation and in accordance with NEWB guidelines any pupil under 16 who has not completed three years in post primary and has accumulated 20 or more days absence from school, regardless of circumstances, must be reported to the NEWB. We are aware schools are obliged by law to report on school attendance since the inception of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and accept that this obligation exists to protect children’s educational welfare.

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

- a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- a Principal is concerned about a student’s attendance
- the Board of Management decides to expel a student
- a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- a student’s name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason.

We are aware that it is not necessary to report students who:

- are following Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) or Adult Education Programmes.
- have reached the age of 16 years and completed 3 years post primary education, unless the student has been suspended for 6 days or more.

There are four student absence reports and one annual attendance report due each year and these can be submitted online on www.schoolreturn.ie or in writing to NEWB.

COMMUNICATION:

All school policies are available to parents. Students are informed of their obligations in the student journal and at assemblies during the year. At meetings during the year, the importance of school attendance is regularly discussed with parents.

EVALUATION:

- comparing attendance on a year to year basis within each year group.
- discussion of attendance strategies by school principal, deputy principal, year heads, staff and NEWB officer when available.
- this policy is open to review and evaluation on an annual basis.