



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Introduction

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.

## The Education Welfare Act 2000

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

- Schools are required to establish and maintain a school register, showing attendance or non-attendance for each student.
- 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
- The act established a National Educational Welfare Board. The NEWB (now TUSLA) has appointed Education Welfare Officers to work with schools to encourage school attendance.
- The act stipulates that the school is obliged to report to TUSLA 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
- Schools must prepare a student absence report. This information must be submitted five times a year in summary format for all students.
- Absences must be categorised under six headings:
  - ✓ Illness
  - ✓ Family Business
  - ✓ Appointment
  - ✓ Other (Religion, Holiday etc.)
  - ✓ Unexplained
  - ✓ Suspended
  - ✓ Transfer to another school

## School Policy on Attendance and Punctuality

- Students are required to be in school by 08.20
- Students must attend Daily Assembly
- Students who arrive late are required to sign in in the main office and have their dialann stamped. Three late stamps in a two week period will result in a letter home. Persistently poor punctuality may result in meetings with Parents/Guardians and students not being permitted into class.
- Students who arrive late to class during the day will be dealt with by the subject teacher using the following steps:
- Documented in teacher's diary and sanction given by the subject teacher.

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- Documented in dialann to parent/guardian.
- Re-occurrence to be communicated to the caomhnóir
- Students speaking with a member of staff must have a signed note of explanation in dialann from that member of staff excusing their absence/delay from class
- Parental/guardian's signature(s) are requested as acknowledgement of all communication in the dialann.
- Principal/Deputy Principal will be notified by the Attendance Officer of persistent offenders and sanctions to deal with such students may include non-admittance to class or suspension.
- Students who wish to leave the school early for an appointment (e.g. Doctor, Dentist etc.) must present an early excuse note in advance to their Moltóir. This note is signed by the Moltóir and must be produced at the office by the student before they can sign out for their scheduled appointment. In the event of being unable to find their Moltóir the note must be signed by another Moltóir or Deputy Principal
- In the event of an absence the student must present a written note of explanation on her/ his return to:
  - ✓ Caomhnóir
  - ✓ The individual Subject Teacher (when requested)
- In the event of a student becoming ill while at school, Students must inform their Moltóir or Deputy Principal who will contact the parent/guardian before a student signs out. All Junior students must be collected from the school by a parent/guardian. All students, junior and senior, must remain at reception until contact is made with the student's Parents/ guardians.
- Full attendance and participation in all timetabled classes and exams is required. Students who are unable to participate in PE classes due to medical circumstances will be asked to furnish their PE teacher with a medical note.
- In keeping with the school ethos all students must attend all ceremonies and prize-giving ceremonies. Failure to do so may lead to sanctions and withdrawal of privileges including the graduation ceremonies and end of year activities.

**To facilitate the above process the School Dialann student must have their Dialann with them at all times.**

## **Attendance & Student Responsibility**

- Students are expected to always have their dialann in their possession.
- Students are requested to be in the school building by 08.20 each morning.
- Assembly begins at 08.35 All students must attend.
- School finishes at 15.30
- Students who arrive late for school must sign in at the main office and receive a late stamp
- In the event of an absence the student must present written note of explanation on his/her return to:
  - ✓ The Caomhnóir
  - ✓ The Subject Teacher (When requested)



- Students who wish to leave school early for an appointment (e.g Doctor, Dentist etc.) or otherwise must present an early excuse note in advance to their Moltóir. This note must be produced at the office by the student before they can sign out officially. In the event of being unable to find their Moltóir the note must be signed by another Moltóir or Deputy Principal
- In the event of a student becoming ill the student must inform their Moltóir or a Deputy Principal who will make contact with their parent/guardian. Parental/guardian permission must be received before students sign out through office. Junior students must remain at reception until collected.
- Students are expected to have full attendance, attend all timetabled classes and exams including PE unless a medical certificate to the contrary is supplied.
- In keeping with the Ethos of the school all students must attend all school award and prize giving ceremonies. Failure to do so may lead to sanctions and withdrawal of privileges including attendance at Graduation Ceremonies and end of year activities

### **The Role of the Moltóir/Caomhnóir /Attendance Officer**

- The Moltóir/Attendance Officer and her/his team promote good attendance and punctuality by:
- Ensuring that the attendance system is operating effectively and efficiently.
- Liaising with Principal, Deputy Principals and the Pastoral Care Team Caomhnoirí will contact Parents/Guardians on the third day of absence if no contact has been made with the College.
- Moltóir will contact Parents/Guardians when their child has reached ten days of cumulative absences reminding them of the twenty-day rule.
- Notifying the Principal or Deputy Principals to contact the Education Welfare Officer:
- Once a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively.
- When a student has been suspended for 5 days cumulatively.
- Liaising with the Principal/Deputy Principals in preparing the annual report for TUSLA and ensuring that student absence reports are submitted 5 times a year on designated dates
- Rewarding good attendance through certification at the end of year Awards' Ceremony.
- Caomhnóirí and teachers have a duty of care in the completion of attendance sheets. The system that is followed:
- Caomhnóir to take and update attendance roll each morning at assembly
- Each teacher will register the class attendance within the first ten minutes of class.
- Staff will be emailed a lists of students who will be absent on any activities. These activities may include: practical exams, work experience, Extra-curricular activities etc.
- Accurate roll attendance sheets are kept by Caomhnóirí and subject teachers
- Teachers keep individual rolls in their teachers' roll book for all classes.
- Absences are followed up and notes are checked in the next class.

### **Attendance & Parental Responsibility**

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

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- When a student is absent from school for any reason, Parents/Guardians must notify the school by telephone or email on or before the third day of absence. If no communication is forthcoming then the College will endeavour to make contact with the Parents/Guardians/of the absent student.
- Parents/Guardians are required to provide a note of explanation for any absence in their son's/daughter's Dialann. These notes are inspected on the child's return to school by the Caomhnóir.
- The Department of Education recommends that Parents/Guardians must try to ensure that family holidays are scheduled during holiday times.
- Parents/Guardians are requested to arrange appointments for students outside of school hours.

### **School Attendance Strategies**

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

- Building a warm, caring, respectful and compassionate atmosphere in which every person feels accepted and valued.
- The provision of an excellent extra-curricular activity package which encourages the participation of all students
- A modern meaningful curriculum, which is inclusive of all students.
- Well-structured pastoral care system based on the ethos of Mol an Óige
- Transition Year Programme.
- Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.
- Rewarding and certification of good attendance
- A comprehensive roll attendance system.
- Homework Club and supervised evening study for exam classes

### **Information for Parents/Guardians**

#### **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.

#### **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/Guardians 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.

## **TUSLA**

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

## **What TUSLA expects from the school**

- Under the Education Welfare Act, a school is obligated to report to TUSLA every time:
- It decides to exclude a student
- 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 school's Attendance Officer/ Moltóir/ Caomhnóir or a member of The Pastoral Care Team
- Visited by an Education Welfare Officer

## **Parents/Guardians Role in Punctuality & Attendance**

- 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 dialann on returning to school signed by a parent/guardian.
- Highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Attend annual parent /teacher /students meetings to find out how your child is progressing.
- Organise family holidays outside school term.
  
- 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.

**Ratified by the Board of Management April 2016**