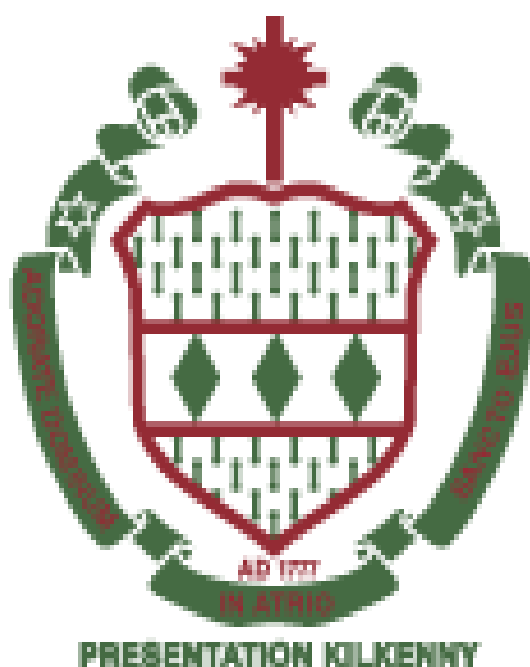


Policy to Encourage Attendance at School.

Presentation Secondary School, Kilkenny



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Date of Adoption by BOM:

Date for Next Review:

PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL, LOUGHBOY, KILKENNY

POLICY TO ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

This policy is a school based policy for implementation by all staff, students, parents and the Board of Management.

This policy strives to set out the basic principles upon which the school attendance strategy will be implemented, sustained and evaluated in our school.

RATIONALE

In this school we are educators first. Education is the foundation stone upon which a child's development for later life is built. Parents are the primary educators and as such, are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children receive the education which they have a right to and deserve. The school is here to provide, support and enhance this education. Attendance at school and full participation in school life is therefore extremely important. Research has shown that poor attendance and poor participation are directly linked to low educational achievement and early school leaving.

POLICY BACKGROUND

The Education Act (1996) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to ensure the child is:

- (a) To be enrolled at and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
- (b) To be registered for home schooling with the Board of Studies and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.

The Act requires Principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister. Attendance registers must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board inspector or by any authorised person.

POLICY AIMS

Presentation Secondary School, Kilkenny wants to work in partnership with parents to ensure that an environment is created where students look forward to coming to school and participating in school life. The school wants to create conditions where students see that it is in their own interest to come to school regularly.

The school and parents have certain obligations under the Education Welfare Act 2000 regarding attendance and participation which are outlined in that Act.

The aims of our school attendance policy are, as far as permitted by limited resources, to:

- Assist towards developing a school environment where all students feel welcome in the school, and where their educational and personal needs are met within the resources provided to the school
- Ensure the monitoring and recording aspects of the School's Attendance Policy are achieved
- Highlight the importance of regular attendance
- Encourage regular attendance and participation in school life
- Encourage good communication between parents and the school
- Establish procedures for the monitoring of attendance and non-attendance
- Establish procedures for the attendance record-keeping for the school, students, parents and TUSLA.
- Develop working partnerships between the school and other relevant agencies and services, such as the TUSLA
- Support students and parents, where there are attendance problems, through intervention, Pastoral Care, the TUSLA, and the provision of school counselling.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS

The school expects all students registered in the school to attend all timetabled classes every day.

If a student is late for school, they must sign in at the school office and may receive a penalty such as same-day, after school detention.

If a student is under 16 years of age, it is the parents'/guardians **legal** responsibility to ensure that their child attends school every day.

A written and dated explanation for all absences is required on a students' return. The school is legally entitled to a full explanation for all absences.

If a student needs to leave school, she must be signed out at the school office by a parent/guardian.

REFERRAL TO TUSLA

If a student is absent for a total of 20 days or more during the school year, the school is legally obliged to report this to the TUSLA. This report must be made irrespective of the reasons why the student is absent. If the school is very concerned about the pattern of a student's absence, then the school may wish to inform the TUSLA.

SCHOOL CALANDER AND TIMETABLE

The school calendar contains details of the opening and closing times of the school and the school holidays. There is also information about parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings. As the year progresses, it may occasionally be necessary to make changes to the calendar in order to accommodate unscheduled school meetings. Parents/Guardians and students are expected to be familiar with the students class timetable.

HOLIDAYS

It is recommended that students are not taken out of school for holidays during term time.

ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

As noted above, parents and guardians must submit a note of explanation following all absences.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

In the event of long term absence, parents /guardians are asked to maintain contact with school authorities.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS ETC

If a student needs to leave school for a medical / dental appointment, a dated and signed note must be provided by parents/guardian. An appointment card may be asked for.

RECORDING OF ABSENCES

Roll call is held at 8.50 a.m. and at 1.55 p.m. by each class teacher and this record is collected by a member of Senior Management.

SCHOOL REPORTS

End of term reports will contain the number of days that a student has missed to date.

COMMUNICATION

At the core of all relationships in the school is mutual respect and understanding, supported by good communication. Our School Attendance Policy will only work if there is good communication between home and school. Parents and guardians are asked to contact the school if there are any matters of concern. All matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be implemented by School Management in collaboration with the Board of Management, teaching staff, students and parents in a spirit of partnership through consultation with the school partners, within the available resources of the school. Specific school based strategies which have been developed to maximise school attendance include:

- Guidelines are given to first year parents on the importance of full attendance
- There is regular highlighting to parents/guardians on the significance and importance of maximum school attendance through correspondence and at school events by Year Heads, Deputy Principals and Principal. Year Heads carry out weekly analyses of their students' attendance and contact parents/guardians by phone where necessary. Letters are also sent to parents/ guardians of students with very high levels of absenteeism.
- School management also regularly remind parents of their legal obligations to ensure that their daughter attends school.
- The significance and importance of maximum school attendance is also regularly highlighted to the student body formally at assemblies, over the intercom and informally and regularly by class teachers. Year Heads and Senior Management also hold interviews with students who have high levels of absenteeism to encourage and support improvement. This may necessitate parents/guardians being invited into school for a meeting if a pattern of absenteeism escalates.
- Twice daily visits to each classroom by senior management, to collect rolls and sign absentee notes, further highlight to students how seriously school attendance is regarded in the school.
- Assessments of attendance record are taken into account when students are considered for certain school programs such as T.Y.
- Students with full/ good attendance are recognised at annual awards day and receive special awards/prizes. Certificates are given for full attendance and a voucher per year group is raffled for those students who missed no more than 1

day. An overall prize is also raffled.

- We are currently in the process of updating our computer package for monitoring attendance and it is expected that a text will automatically be sent to parents/ guardians on a daily basis for verification.

Review and Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by School Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to CEIST and the DES.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____