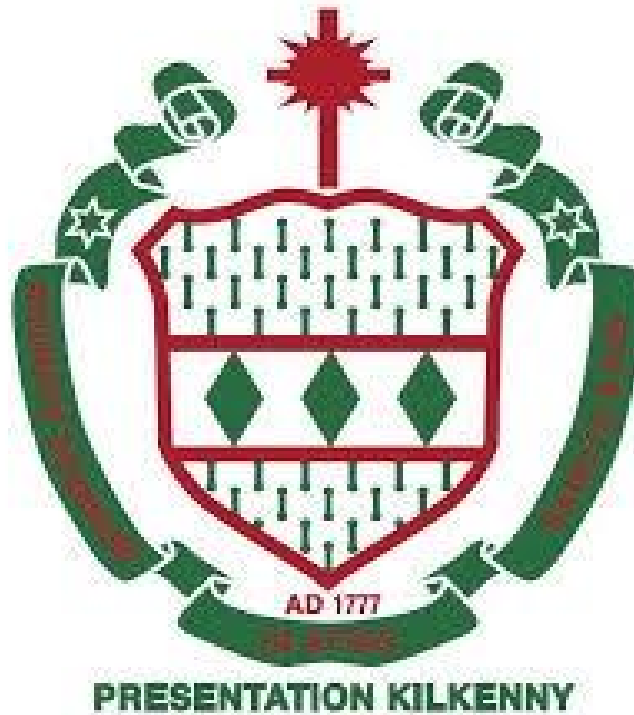


Policy to Encourage Attendance at School.

Presentation Secondary School, Kilkenny



Date of Adoption by BOM: *Monday 24th April 2023*

Date for Next Review: *April 2025*

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 TUSLA
- Support students and parents, where there are attendance problems, through intervention, Pastoral Care, 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. Their journal is stamped and the lateness is recorded on VSware. If the student is repeatedly late for school, then they 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 by students. A note should be entered on VSware prior to the students absence or on the first day of the students absence. 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. A note should be entered on VSware also for the duration of the absence to explain the reason for such absence.

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 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 or if the student's absenteeism is severe, the school will make an individual referral for that student to TUSLA. This will be then passed on to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in the region who will be in contact with the students' parents/guardians to investigate why the student has missed so much school.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND TIMETABLE

The school calendar contains details of the opening and closing times of the school and all school holidays. It also details parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings and highlights so far as possible in advance any closures of the school academic year. This academic calendar is shared with parents in June of each year and is readily available on the school website each year. 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 will be notified of such changes well in advance. With the student timetable available on the VSware App., parents and students are expected to be familiar with their weekly class timetables. In addition, each year group has an assembly one morning of the week where they are expected to be in attendance. This takes place ten minutes before class begins on that particular morning.

HOLIDAYS

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

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

One of the posts of responsibility within our school leadership team is the post of Attendance Officer. All notes and absences are dealt with by the Attendance Officer in collaboration with Year Heads. A weekly

report on attendance will be forwarded to Year Head. The Attendance Officer will highlight students of concern to year heads and will provide a final year report on overall attendance in the school to the Board of Management each year. The Attendance Officer also notifies parents when their daughter has missed twenty days or more and informs them that their details have been forwarded to TUSLA.

ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

As noted above, parents and guardians must submit a note of explanation following all absences. This note should be entered on VS WARE

EXTENDED ABSENCES

In the event of long term absence, parents /guardians are asked to inform school authorities in advance where possible. if parents/guardians allow, we will inform all of the student's teachers. Parents/guardians are also expected to explain this absence on VS Ware.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS ETC

The school encourages parents/guardians and students to schedule appointments outside of school time if at all possible. However, if a student needs to leave school for a medical/dental appointment, they must sign out at the main office, ensure a reason is entered on VSware and be collected by their parent/guardian or close adult relation. An appointment card may be asked for.

RECORDING OF ABSENCES

Roll call is held at 8.50 a.m. and at 1.50 p.m. by each class teacher via VS Ware . A text will be sent to Parents/Guardians who are marked absent at 8.50am to inform them of this absence.

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, administration 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 that are given to first year parents on the importance of full school attendance
- 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. The Attendance Officer carries out weekly analyses of students' attendance and forwards this report to Year Heads. Contact will be made with parents/guardians by phone where

necessary. Letters are also sent to parents/guardians of students with very high levels of absenteeism.

- School management 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.
- Year Heads, together with the Deputy Principal for each year group will use 'check and connect' attendance report cards with certain students in an effort to motivate students to come to school each day. This card is signed by the teacher in each of their classes to record that they were present. Setting the students more short term goals for attendance has proven to be effective.
- Assessments of attendance records are taken into account when students are considered for certain school programs such as T.Y. and L.C.A.
- 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.

TUSLA TEMPLATE for the STATEMENT of STRATEGY for SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The following template has been adopted and once ratified by the school Board of Management, it will be uploaded to the TUSLA portal.



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Template for the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Presentation Secondary School
Address	Loughboy, Kilkenny
Roll Number	61590S
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>(a) To be enrolled at and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.</p> <p>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.</p>
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>The school expects all students registered in the school to attend all timetabled classes every day.</p> <p>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.</p>

	<p>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.</p> <p>A written and dated explanation for all absences is required by students. A note should be entered on VS Ware prior to the students absence or on the first day of the students absence. The school is legally entitled to a full explanation for all absences.</p> <p>If a student needs to leave school, she must be signed out at the school office by a parent/guardian. A note should be entered on VS Ware also to explain the reason for absence.</p>
<p>How attendance will be monitored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roll call is held at 8.50 a.m. and at 1.55 p.m. by each class teacher via VS Ware . A text will be sent to Parents/Guardians who are marked absent at 8.50am to inform them of this absence. ● It is recommended that students are not taken out of school for holidays during term time. ● All notes and absences are dealt with by the Attendance Officer in collaboration with Year Heads. A weekly report on attendance will be forwarded to Year Head. ● As noted above, parents and guardians must submit a note of explanation following all absences. This note should be entered on VS WARE ● In the event of long term absence, parents /guardians are asked to maintain contact with school authorities. The reason must also be entered on VS Ware ● If a student needs to leave school for a medical / dental appointment, and a note should be entered on VS Ware. The Student should also sign out at the office. An appointment card may be asked for. ● End of term reports will contain the number of days that a student has missed to date.
<p>Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target setting and targets ● The whole-school approach ● Promoting good attendance ● Responding to poor attendance 	<p>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.</p> <p>The school and parents have certain obligations under the</p>

	<p>Education Welfare Act 2000 regarding attendance and participation which are outlined in that Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. The Attendance Officer carries out weekly analyses of students' attendance and forwards this report to Year Heads. Contact may be made to 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. ● 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.
School roles in relation to attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	All policies are reviewed by Senior Management Team and School Attendance Officer
Review process and date for review	
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	

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: _____