



# **Presentation Community College, Terenure.**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **College Vision:**

To strive for excellence in all our endeavours

### **Mission Statement:**

To provide high quality education within a caring and creative community, where relationships matter, where high self-esteem, tolerance and participation are promoted and where the emphasis is on the development of the individual.

Presentation Community College is committed to success, raising expectations, providing opportunities and striving to meet the needs of all its students.

### **Rationale:**

- To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process
- To ensure that students benefit fully from the opportunities that the college offers them
- To ensure that all parents/guardians, students and staff members are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance
- To maintain accurate records of college attendance
- To form habits of regular and punctual attendance
- To discourage absenteeism, lateness and unwarranted withdrawal of students during the college day or term
- To develop a sense of personal responsibility in students
- To ensure students are aware that a good college attendance record enhances employment opportunities
- To comply with the Education Welfare Act 2000

The aims of the attendance policy of Presentation Community College are to:

- Encourage students to attend college regularly and punctually.
- Share the promotion of college attendance amongst all in the college community.
- Inform the college community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Identify students who may be at risk of developing college attendance problems.
- Ensure that the college has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- Develop links between the college, and the families of students who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.

The college will endeavour to ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted and rewarded throughout the college.
- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily and during each class period.
- Parents or guardians are contacted, by telephone call or text message, when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- College attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
  - The Education Welfare Board.
  - The Education Welfare Officer
  - The Board of Management

## **The National Educational Welfare Board**

The National Educational Welfare Board is the national agency established to ensure that every child attends college regularly, or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education. It also advises the Government on college attendance and education provision. The Board's emphasis is on helping colleges, families and children, rather than imposing penalties for non-attendance at college. It employs educational welfare officers at local level throughout the country to provide support and advice to parents and colleges and to follow up on absences from college. They also help to co-ordinate all policies concerning attendance and educational welfare.

The Board also:

- Monitors college attendance, and takes a range of measures where children do not attend college
- Maintains a register of children who are not attending a recognised college
- Maintains a register of young persons of 16 and 17 years of age who leave college early to take up employment and makes arrangements for their continuing education and training in consultation with providers and employers
- Collects data on college attendance and non-attendance, suspensions and expulsions
- Intervenes in relation to proposed college expulsions
- Promotes and fosters in society, and in particular in families, an appreciation of the benefits to be derived from education
- Promotes and fosters an environment that encourages children to attend college and to participate fully in the life of the college
- assists children and parents of children who are not attending college on a regular basis,
- assists colleges in drawing up strategies and programmes aimed at preventing non-attendance in colleges.

The Board of Management of a college is obliged to have an attendance policy, which promotes attendance awareness and good practice and provides for monitoring and reporting of same.

Appropriate agencies such as the Inspectorate of The Department of Education and Science and officers of The Education Welfare Board have a right to inspect college attendance figures of individual pupils.

### **Categories of absence as reported to the NEWB:**

- Illness
- Urgent family Reason e.g. Bereavement
- Expelled
- Suspended
- Other – all reasons e.g. Holidays, religious observance etc
- Unexplained – college has not received written notice from parent/guardian
- Transfer to another college – college has received written notice from another college that the student has transferred to that other college

### **Strategies:**

Presentation Community College aims to promote good attendance and punctuality:

- by rewarding good attendance, it is hoped to encourage all students to attend college regularly. The college acknowledges good attendance at assemblies, class/year group outings and prize giving ceremonies throughout the college year.
- by emphasising to students and parents/guardians the importance of education in a child's life, it is hoped to encourage regular attendance.
- by emphasising to students and parents/guardians the link between poor attendance and early college leaving/poor academic performance, it is hoped to encourage regular attendance. This may be achieved through Year Group assemblies, newsletters, individual and general meetings.
- through monitoring and effective recording of non-attendance, to identify at an early stage students who are likely to have college attendance problems and to offer support to both parents and students through teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance and Care teams, NEWB.

- as part of our commitment to being an inclusive college, to not only respect difference but also to provide the support services necessary for students with special educational needs. It is hoped that such provision will enable all students to feel part of the college community, thus encouraging them to attend regularly.
- by provision of an extensive extra- curricular and co-curricular programme, to encourage students to participate and, thus, attend college regularly.
- to use all the support agencies of the college where appropriate, including guidance, Care Team, CDETB psychological services etc to help resolve problems of non-attendance.
- to reflect the caring ethos of the college by dealing with all cases of regular non-attendance in a fair and sensitive manner.

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive college atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good college attendance. Through the promotion and nurturing of a friendly, caring environment and by encouraging all students to realise their potential, it is hoped that students will attend regularly. In this regard:

The college promotes development of good self-concept and self-worth in the students.

Supports for students, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.

Internal communication procedures are in place to inform all staff of the special needs of students.

The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised where appropriate.

The attendance of students is monitored by the Class Tutor in the first instance, and the class tutor will notify the Year Head of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.

Students with a poor attendance record are supported in an effort to improve their attendance by all the support services within the college.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Students

- Students have the clear responsibility to attend college regularly and punctually.
- Students should inform the Year Head if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Students are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their Year Head and informing the main office upon their return from absence.
- Students are responsible for passing college correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.
- The college Journal should be with students during all classes, and presented to any member of staff upon request.

### Parents/Guardians

- Making sure their child (ren) understand that parents support college attendance.
- To ensure regular attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences.
- To notify the College in writing of the reason for all student absences: such notice should be provided prior to the absence if possible or otherwise immediately afterwards. Telephone or oral messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible.
- Contacting the college immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related college matters.
- To provide to the College reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the College may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary.
- To adhere to the procedures set out in this Policy for the withdrawal of students from College during the college day.
- To acknowledge and, where necessary reply to communications from the College in relation to attendance issues.
- Ensuring regular and punctual college attendance.
- Working with the College and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems.

- Discussing planned absences with the college.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during college time.
- Showing an interest in their child (ren)'s college day and homework.
- Encouraging their child (ren) to participate in college activities.
- Praising and encouraging their child (ren)'s achievements.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that student's appointments (with doctors, dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of college hours.

### Teachers

- To take a roll call in every class.
- To notify the Administration Office of absences from class of students who are marked present on the class roll and not in attendance.
- To discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Meetings.
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and ensure they understand their responsibility to 'catch up' on work missed during any absences.

### Year Heads

- To monitor student attendance regularly
- To seek and file written explanations for student absences from parents/guardians
- To note trends in absence records of individual students e.g. Monday or Friday absences and to bring this to the attention of the parents/guardians of the students concerned
- To send standard Absence Letters to parents/guardians where frequent absences occur.
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and to notify the Deputy Principal of same.

### Deputy Principal

- To encourage regular attendance by students.
- To receive reports from Year Heads on issues relating to attendance.
- To monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the College or from classes.
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences are suspected.

### Principal

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- To monitor attendance records regularly.
- To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences withdrawal of students from the College.

- To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.
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### **Implementation Procedure**

The class teacher calls the roll during the first period at 8.45am

Each subject teacher calls a roll and records attendance for each class period.

The year head of each year group will pursue unexplained absences.

Students arriving after 8.45am must sign in at the main office, and should present a note from a parent/guardian explaining the reason for lateness. Students will receive a stamp in their journal, which will grant access to class.

If a student arrives late to class, without an appropriate explanation (usually in the form of a note from another member of staff) the subject teacher will write a note in student's journal stating that the student was late to class and the time of arrival will be noted.

On receipt of a combination of three late stamps and/or notes from teachers stating that a student has arrived late to class, the student may have a sanction applied.

Prolonged or unexplained absence (two days or more without communication from a parent/guardian) will result in the college making contact by phone or letter.

In the unlikely event of a student approaching 20 days absent, a letter will be sent home by the year head informing parents/guardians of the fact. Letters will be sent to inform parents/guardians of student absences after 5, 10 and 15 days of cumulative absences. After 20 days the Education Welfare Officer will be notified of the student's non-attendance by the college authorities, and parents/guardians informed of this notification in writing.

### **Definitions:**

Absence – where a student does not arrive at college

Lateness – when a student arrives after the college days has commenced i.e. 8.45am