



Cork Educate Together Secondary School

School Attendance Policy

CETSS offers parents the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and justice and equality for all. In our school, every child will learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each child to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.

Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement

Introduction

This policy is informed by the vision for Cork Educate Together Secondary School coupled with the school's ethos which aims to enable students to reach their full potential both academically and socially. The policy will reflect the pastoral nature of our school.

Rationale

The rationale underpinning the formulation of this policy is as follows:

- To comply with the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- To form habits of regular and punctual attendance by our students.
- To discourage absenteeism, lateness and unwarranted withdrawal of students during the school day or term.
- To develop a sense of personal responsibility in our students.
- To make all school partners aware of the links between school attendance and academic achievement.
- To enable us to identify students who may be at risk and put supports in place to assist them.

Vision

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing the potential of every child in a caring environment and will utilise existing pastoral strategies in our school and will encourage the involvement of all school partners.

Aims

The aims of this school policy are to:

- Encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- Detect and correct patterns of poor attendance as early as possible.
- Accurately record students' attendance.
- Raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
- Promote a positive learning environment.

- Fulfil the legislative requirements of the Education Act 2000.
- Adhere to the guidelines as set out by The Child & Family Agency Tusla.

Content

- Attendance records for all students will be maintained by the School as set out in this Policy.
- Every member of staff will encourage regular attendance by students.
- General School communications, meetings with parents and other occasions will be used to communicate to parents the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of unwarranted absences.
- Teachers will discuss attendance records of students with parents/guardians during the course of Parent/Teacher meetings.
- Where unauthorised absences are suspected parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
- The Attendance Officer in consultation with the SEN teachers and Guidance and Counselling Service will encourage and facilitate regular attendance by children from families with special difficulties or needs.

Related Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Admissions Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- To liaise with Attendance Officer to monitor attendance records regularly.
- To make reports to Tusla as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences and/or withdrawal of students from the School.
- To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.
- To encourage regular attendance by students.
- To receive reports from Attendance Officer relating to attendance.
- To monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the School or from classes.
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences are suspected.

Attendance Officer

- To liaise with Class Teachers on Tusla returns – complete Tusla returns and cross check a percentage of rolls for quality control purposes.
- To liaise with Class Teachers in identifying at-risk students.
- To liaise with SEN teachers and Guidance and Counselling Service in implementing strategies for supporting at risk students.
- To recommend students to the Guidance and Counselling Service who are displaying at risk behaviours with regard to attendance.
- To work with students notified to Officer via teacher/Class Teacher (persistent unexplained absences, those reaching 15 days).
- To develop positive strategies for encouraging full attendance e.g. first contact home, improvement awards.

- To contact parents when students reach 15 days absent.
- To collect data on attendance in order to assess success of strategies termly.

Class Teacher

- To conduct a daily roll call and enter into the school database.
- To record notations by parents/guardians and assign reason for absence.
- To fill in documentation regarding student absences for use by the School Office and Attendance Officer in Tusla returns.
- Create a welcoming atmosphere for returning student, particularly after a prolonged absence.
- Praise students within the group on full attendance and set targets for class groups to reach.
- To check student journals for 'Absence slips' signed by parents/guardians from students who have been absent and to sign that these have been seen.
- To write a note to parents regarding non-production of absence slip.
- To keep a record of matters relating to attendance/absences of students.
- To note trends in absence records of individual students.

Class Teachers

- Take a roll call in every class and enter on school database.
- Teachers to notify any discrepancies in class registration to Class Teacher via email for amendment.
- Create a warm welcoming atmosphere in class for returning students.
- Discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Meetings.
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and ensure understanding of the links between academic achievement and regular attendance.
- Make comments on report forms regarding positive and negative attendance.

Parents

- To ensure regular attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences.
- To keep all holidays outside of the school term.
- To notify the School 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 on return via the School Journal.
- To provide the School with reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the School 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 School during the school day.
- To acknowledge and where necessary reply to communications from the School in relation to attendance issues.

School Office

- To amend the school database to reflect latecomers to school.
- To prepare student lists for notification to Tusla, Class Teacher, Attendance Officer and Principal.
- To maintain a record of students withdrawn during the school day and their return to school.
- To ensure that when a student is withdrawn from the school, a parent/guardian personally accompanies the student who is leaving the school and signs the appropriate record before the student is withdrawn.

Attendance Records

- Attendance will be recorded during all classes by all subject teachers. The Class Teacher will maintain a record of student absences and record the number of absences on students' end of-term Report Forms to parents.
- Letters from parents/guardians regarding student absences will be given by students to the Class Teacher. These letters will be initialled as seen by the Class Teacher.
- Parents/Guardians are required to give advance notice in writing of all foreseen absences giving a reason for the absence.
- Where an absence is unforeseen, the parent/guardian is required to notify the School by telephone on the morning of the absence. This notification must be confirmed by a written letter stating a reason for and duration of the absence.
- Where a student is to be withdrawn from the School during the school day, the student must present a written request from the parent/guardian to the Class Teacher. This notice will be presented to the office when the student leaves the school.
- Parents/Guardians or a person nominated by the parents/guardians on the student's Registration Form, must present themselves at the School and sign the office 'Sign-Out Register' when a student is withdrawn from the School during the school day.
- Failure to comply with any of the above procedures for leaving the School during school hours is a serious breach of the School's Code of Conduct.

School Strategies to Promote attendance

Environment

- CETSS provides a safe welcoming positive learning environment for our students.
- CETSS positively rewards students with full attendance and improved attendance in school terminal awards ceremony.
- CETSS focuses monthly on student attendance rewarding those with monthly full attendance with verbal praise.
- Encouragement of full attendance by students particularly on days prior to school breaks.

Communication:

- An effective mode of communication, via email/Virtual Learning Environment exists between teachers and parents. Regular contact on issues regarding homework, curriculum areas etc. Ensure these issues do not contribute to the non-attendance of pupils
- Early intervention: New parents to the school are made aware of attendance requirements and the importance of attendance in CETSS.

Information:

- Parents are discouraged from taking holidays during school time.
- Parents will be informed of their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the School with regard to the Education Act.
- Class Teachers are asked to send names of students they identify with poor attendance- after utilising the structures in place to the Attendance Officer to ensure every effort is made to help children at risk as soon as possible.

Reports:

-Every parent is provided with details of their child's total attendance for the term in the student's school report. Attendance patterns are also discussed at parent-teacher meetings.

Success Criteria

- Clear outline of responsibilities of all school partners.
- An effective record of attendance and trends will be kept and monitored.
- Clear lines of communication developed between parents and school on the issue of attendance.

Monitoring Procedures

-The policy will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Attendance Officer in consultation with Senior Management.

Review Procedures

-This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis