



## **Enniscorthy Vocational College Attendance Policy**

### **Ratified by Board of Management on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012**

#### **Introduction**

Regular attendance at school is essential for all students so that they may reach their potential. Parents/Guardians in the first instance have the primary responsibility in this area. Our school aims to foster a culture of regular attendance at school for all pupils. In addition we seek to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing problems with attendance at school. The provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2000 inform and support this policy.

#### **Rationale**

The policy is considered necessary because:

1. There are a number of legislative requirements arising from the Education Welfare Act 2000.
2. The changing fabric of our society.
3. The role of the National Education Welfare Board.
4. The requirements of the Department of Education and Skills.
5. The educational interests of the students.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This school policy sets out to:

1. Encourage full attendance.
2. Identify pupils who may be at risk.
3. Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
4. Foster an appreciation of learning.
5. Clearly communicate the need for full attendance with Parents/Guardians.

## **Application of Policy**

This policy applies to all second level students at Enniscorthy Vocational College regardless of age.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Principal**

- Overall responsibility for students including attendance.
- Maintenance of a register of all students who have been admitted to the school.
- Enniscorthy Vocational College affirms that a student, who has not reached the age of sixteen years or who has not completed three years of post-primary education, cannot be removed from the register, except;
  - For inter-school transfer and then only after all details regarding attendance and educational progress have been issued to the new school.
  - Where for whatever reason a student is removed from the school under the Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 20 (4).
- The Principal must maintain a record of attendance and non-attendance on each school day or part thereof of each student registered at the school.
- The Principal may at his / her discretion, delegate duties regarding school attendance to other professionals working in the school.

## **Deputy Principal**

- Liaise with Principal on all issues regarding student attendance.
- Monitor levels of absenteeism amongst student population.
- Liaise with relevant staff regarding student attendance issues.
- The Deputy Principal assumes the role of the Principal in the absence of the Principal.

## **Year Head**

- Monitor attendance in Year Group and make students aware of importance of regular attendance.
- Make contact with Parents/Guardians in an effort to improve attendance and ascertain reasons for non-attendance.
- When necessary make referrals to Pastoral Care Team

## **Class Tutor**

- Ensure that students are aware of the importance of good attendance and the procedures involved in recording partial and full day absences.
- Check notes from home regarding non-attendance, inform Year Head if no note is forthcoming.

## **Class/Subject Teacher**

- Responsible for student registration for every class throughout the day using the e-portal system.
- Bring any concerns regarding student attendance to the appropriate Class Tutor/ Year Head.

## **Pastoral Care Team**

- Take referrals from Year Heads and advise Principal on further courses of action which may be taken. These include interventions by the Pastoral Care team, School Completion or referral to outside agencies.

- Monitor students referred on an on-going basis.

### **Home School Liaison Officer**

- Take referrals from Principal.
- Establish contact with Parents/Guardians.
- Try to establish reasons for student absences.
- Nurture confidence and trust in Parents/Guardians.
- Encourage Parents/Guardians to adopt a positive attitude to school attendance.
- Establish contact and trust with students.
- Work with students to counteract any 'gaps' in education which may lead to further absences.
- Work with Pastoral Care Team and School Completion Programme to set in place appropriate supports to keep students at school.
- Maintain contact with Parents/Guardians.
- Monitor progress of certain students and keep Principal informed.
- Liaise with Year Heads on attendance issues.

### **School Attendance Officer (School Completion Programme)**

- To obtain and check absences on a daily basis.
- Monitor half day absences.
- Meet with HSCL/SCP Co-ordinator weekly to discuss attendance issues.
- Notify home when 10 and 15 absences have been reached.
- Notify E.W.O. when 20 absences or 6 days (cumulative) suspension have been reached.
- Inform Principal; Deputy Principal or Year Head of serious late coming.

## **Parents/Guardians**

- As the primary educators parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence.
- Parents/Guardians have the responsibility to contact school of absence either by phone call or note in journal.

## **Students**

- Each student has a personal responsibility to attend school each day.

## **Procedures**

- Every student is expected to be in attendance from 9.00 a.m. until 3.55 p.m. every Monday and Tuesday and until 3.15pm for the remainder of the week.
- Students may not be absent from school except when the absence is unavoidable due to illness, urgent family reason or other legitimate and unavoidable reason.
- If parents/guardians wish to communicate with son/daughter during class time, contact must be made with school through the office. Under no circumstances should direct contact be made with the student through their personal mobile phone.
- It is the responsibility of the Parent(s) / Guardian(s) to furnish the school with a signed and dated note outlining the date and reason for every recorded absence. Such notes will be collected and filed and used in returns to the E.W.B. as outlined in the Educational Welfare Act(2000).School management communicate regularly with parents outlining their concerns re. holidays; medical& dental appointments etc being scheduled during term time.

Parents are requested to ensure all discretionary absences occur outside term time. School management furnish them with a calendar of the school year to assist them in this regard.

- Students arriving late for class at 9.00 a.m. and /or 1.55 p.m. must sign the Late Book in the office before proceeding to class. Late arrival to school on a repeated basis will be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions will apply.
- In the event of a student becoming ill or getting injured during the day they should inform their class teacher who may send them to their Class Tutor/Year Head to obtain permission to go home. If such permission is granted contact with their parents/guardians should be through the school office. Students should not contact home via a mobile phone or prior to getting permission to leave the school premises. Parents/Guardians are expected to make arrangements for the collection of their son/daughter at the school office in the event of a student being ill or injured. When a student returns to school after such an absence a note of explanation should be presented.
- During the school day every student must attend every class according to their Timetable unless prior permission has been received from the Principal or Deputy Principal or Year Head or Class Tutor. The unauthorised absence of a student from any class during the school day will be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions will apply.
- Any unauthorised absence after a student being present in school at an earlier time should be immediately reported to Year Head / Deputy Principal or office.

- On occasion students may be absent from class due to school related activities such as sport and drama. Such absences are sanctioned on the understanding that students ensure all homework is sourced and carried out to a satisfactory standard. Students may be removed from such activities if they are having an adverse effect on their academic progress. Where a teacher is organising an approved activity which necessitates the absence of students from class a list of such students is posted in the staffroom.
  
- A student wishing to leave the school premises for a legitimate reason during the school day must have a signed note from their parent/guardian. This note should include the reason for the absence, the time the student is leaving and a contact number for verification. The student must get this note signed by their Class Tutor or Year Head and then sign out at the school office. No student will be permitted to sign out without producing a signed note. Any student who leaves the school premises without such authorisation will be deemed to have breached the school code of discipline and appropriate sanctions will be applied.
  
- On rare occasions a student may be absent from school due to suspension for breach of discipline. In such instances Parents will be consulted in advance and students are expected to use their time productively by applying themselves to their studies. In such instances, where a student is suspended, they should not be on the school premises or engaged in any school activity as there may be insurance implications.

### **Communication**

- In the event of a student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises the school must be notified immediately by Parent / Guardian.

- Teachers are requested to record on e-portal all students in attendance and absent for each class period on a daily basis.
- The school's Attendance Officer will write to the Parent(s) / Guardian(s) if there is a concern about a particular absence or absences as they come to our attention.
- Parent(s) / Guardian(s) will be requested to attend, at a convenient time an appointment to discuss the matter with Year Head or Deputy Principal or Principal.
- The School's Attendance Officer will inform Parent(s) / Guardian(s) by letter when a student exceeds 10 absences or more. This letter will outline the school's responsibility under the Education Welfare Act 2000. A copy of all recorded absences will also be enclosed .The Parent(s) / Guardian(s) will be invited to contact the school to discuss the matter if they may wish to do so.

**Sanctions for Breaches of School Attendance Policy:**

- The student may be placed on Lunchtime Detention.
- Persistent late-comers may be placed on Evening Detention.
- Un-authorized absence during the school day may result in Evening Detention or Suspension or the student may be required to attend school on certain date(s) when the other student cohort are not required to be in attendance.
- Absences will be notified to the E.W.B.as per the Education Welfare Act 2000.

## **Rewards**

- Certificates will be awarded to students with full attendance for the academic year.

**Policy Review** - This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.