Attendance & Participation Strategy

Coláiste Iósaef

Scope:

Board of Management, Teaching Staff, Administration Staff, Parents Association, Student Council

Relationship to School's Mission Statement:

Good attendance is promoted in Coláiste Iósaef by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class.

We are committed to encouraging students to develop a pattern of regular and punctual attendance to benefit from the education provided. Without such a pattern of regular attendance, it is not possible to *"foster the development of the whole person through the provisions of a broad education tailored to individual needs within a Christian Community."*

Rationale:

- To work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and welfare of the students.
- To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process.
- To ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them.
- To ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance.
- To ensure the school fulfils its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant acts. Under the Act, Education Welfare Boards have been established to oversee school attendance nationwide and each school has been assigned an Education Welfare Officer whose duty it is to liaise with the school in relation to any attendance problems which may emerge.

The Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:

- A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days
- The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than twenty
- A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the Principal
- A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school in which he/she is registered, not attending school regularly

Goals:

- To develop a positive approach to attendance and punctuality.
- Keep accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours.
- Students learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance.
- Parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance.
- Reduce the rate of absenteeism and encourage full attendance where possible.
- The early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to all students of Coláiste Iósaef, regardless of their age.

Whole School Approach

Coláiste Iósaef promotes and encourages full attendance by all our students. This ethos is communicated to all members of our school community and promoted through:

- Parent/Teacher Meetings
- Staff Meetings
- School correspondence
- School media (website, school app)
- School VSware software and access for parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Role of the HSCL, SCP and appropriate school management personnel
- The daily recording of attendance/non-attendance by school staff

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:

The Principal has overall responsibility for students including their attendance.

- 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 school.
- To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.
- Facilitate mixed ability classes in so far as possible throughout the curriculum.

Deputy Principal:

- The Deputy Principal will liaise with Principal on all issues regarding students; this also includes the monitoring of student attendance.
- To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Class Tutors , Administration Staff and to implement the School Policy.
- To liaise with the Year Head and Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.
- To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance.

Year Head:

The Year Head is responsible for the following:

- Monitoring attendance in Year Group and making their students aware of the importance of regular attendance in school.
- Making contact with parents/guardians in an effort to improve attendance and ascertain reasons for non-attendance at school.
- When necessary make referrals to the Student Support Team and brings concerns to the HSCL/SCP/Deputy Principal/Principal
- Inform Parents/Guardians of students with 10-15 days absence from school.

Promotion of Positive Attendance & Punctuality for 2024-2025				
Lates	**Three reported lates (morning, class) in a week is a student behaviour review session (SBRS).** **Follow Code of Behaviour.**	**Persistent lateness – YH contacts parents by phone.** **Improvement plan put in place.**	**Follow up phone call and DP involvement if required.** **Meeting with Parents/Guardians**	**Referred to Principal for further action.**
Absence **(without explanation)**	**10+ Days** YH makes a phone call to parent/guardian to advise of same HSCL/SCP notified if student is on their list	**15+ Days** YH issues a letter to parent/guardian with details as outlined on the standard template YH needs to notify HSCL and/or SCP if necessary	**20+ Days** EWO referral if necessary, discussion with SCP, HSCL and Senior Management	**30+ Days** Meeting with Parents/Guardians and other relevant school personnel
Rewards	Full Attendance Term – Certificate. Full Attendance Half Year – Christmas Reward. Full Attendance Year – Awards Night.	Consistent & Regular Attendance – YH gives certificate.	Improvement Award for students who have improved. School Trip/Award	

Class Teacher:

- It is the responsibility of the class teacher to take an accurate roll in all classes. Any errors should be amended by the class teacher immediately. The appropriate record should be indicated on the roll – ABS,ABN, WD, etc.

- The accurate recording of attendance on VSware provides the school with the necessary data to:

  i) inform parents/guardians of the attendance of our students

  ii) allow Year Heads to identify when a student has had an extended absence from school.

  iii) ensure that class tutors have accurate lists of students within their tutor group that need to present an absent note.

Home School Community Liaison:

The HSCL will:

- Provide a link with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school with respect to attendance.
- Organise a home visit when a student(s) has an unexplained extended absence.
- Promote a positive culture of regular attendance through parent/guardian networking

School Completion Programme Coordinator

The School Completion Coordinator will:

- Speak to SCP target students regarding attendance and the importance of punctuality. The SCP Coordinator will discuss any concerns that may be impacting attendance for target students and try to resolve with the student.
- Make contact with parent of SCP target student when absence reaches 15 days.
- Make contact with parent of SCP target student when absence reaches 20 days to inform them about the reporting procedures to NEWB.
- Complete Tusla NEWB return for all students in the school who are absent 20 days or more.
- The SCP Coordinator will liaise with Year Heads and School Management regarding attendance issues for SCP target students.

Student Support Team:

The Student Support Team will:

- Discuss concerns regarding students with poor attendance and recommend appropriate support measures to encourage improved attendance. They will be cognisant of details such as bereavement, physical and mental health concerns and other issues that may impact attendance.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

As the primary educators parent(s)/guardian(s) have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence.

Responsible for writing a note to inform of reason/s for absence. A section is provided in the student journal for this and can also be completed on the school app.

They can monitor attendance by signing into VSware.

Student:

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

Day to Day Implementation of this Policy:

Every student is expected to be in attendance as follows

- 8.45 a.m. until 3.50 p.m. on Monday
- 8.45 a.m. until 3.40 p.m. on Tuesday - Thursday
- 8.45 a.m. until 1.10 p.m. on a Friday

Teachers are required to record on VSware all students in attendance and absent for each class period on a daily basis.

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.

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 should be furnished to the Year head in writing or through the app.

Parents/Guardians may also use the school app to provide a note of explanation.

School management communicate regularly with parents outlining their concerns regarding holidays; medical and 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 first class should be marked as **LATE** on VSware and should have the time of their arrival noted on VSware. Such students are expected to produce a note from their parent/guardian explaining the reason they were late.

Late arrival to school on a repeated basis may be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions may 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 Year Head to obtain permission to ring home from the school office. If the Year Head is unavailable, they should be sent to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

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 appropriate Year Head. The unauthorised absence of a student from any class during the school day will be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions may apply.

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.

There is an appropriate mechanism on the school VSware platform to record such absence from class.

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 and a copy given to the school office.

It can also be posted on the school VSware.

Any 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 Year Head and if they are not available either the Deputy Principal or Principal 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 may be applied.

Any student over the age of 18 years may leave the school without written consent from a parent/guardian. In this instance, the school will contact home as a matter of courtesy to inform them that their child has left the school.

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.

This will be recorded on the school VSware system by the Principal.

Promoting Good Attendance:

Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve full potential through regular presence in class.

Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance.

The Year Head and/or member(s) of the Student Support Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue.

Reports to Parent(s)/Guardian(s) include a detailed breakdown of attendance for the period in question.

Records of attendance and punctuality are available to parents to view on VSware by logging in using the unique password for that student.

The school's reward system acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality.

A sense of belonging and connectedness in school is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities.

Responding to Poor Attendance:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be notified via phone call or text messaging if the school has a concern about a particular absence any time on any given date.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) also have access to their own VSware account where they can monitor their child's attendance on a class by class basis each day.

The appropriate Year Head 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.

The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be requested to make an appointment to discuss the matter with appropriate school representatives.

Discussing school attendance with the student (where appropriate), with a view to finding an explanation for the absence and thereby a solution.

Using the support of the school HSCL and SCP personnel for home visits and appropriate interventions.

Supporting students through the School Support Team (SST).

Implementation:

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.

Review Process:

The policy will be reviewed in line with the school procedures regarding policy reviews and updates.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____