



# Ballymakenny College

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

Ballymakenny College is a school in which students are happy and secure in a learning atmosphere that is characterised by positivity and belonging. We focus on all aspects of the young person and aspire to develop them as intellectual, emotional and reflective individuals. We encourage the highest standards in our students, ensuring that they reach their full potential through strong relationships and positive reinforcement. An understanding that this ideal can only be reached when students are present on an ongoing basis is the basis for this policy.

This policy will reflect the pastoral nature of our school and will be underpinned by the cornerstones of our philosophy which are;

- to instil a sense of individual growth and accomplishment in each student;
- recognise and strive to reach their potential;
- nurture social responsibility; and
- prepare our students for their next step in an encouraging and supportive environment.

Our School day

DAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
START TIME	8:30am	8:30am	8:30am	8:30am	8:30am
END TIME	3:30pm	3:30pm	2:30pm	2:30pm	2:30pm

## **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; and
- to enable us to identify at-risk students 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 encourage the involvement of all school partners.

## **Aims**

The aims of this school policy are to:

- encourage full attendance;
- detect and correct patterns of poor attendance as early as possible;
- record students' attendance accurately;
- raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance;
- identify pupils at risk;
- promote a positive learning environment;
- fulfil the legislative requirements of the Education Act 2000; and
- adhere to the guidelines of the The Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency.

## **Content**

- Attendance records for all students will be maintained by the school as set out in this Policy.
- Tutors, teachers, year heads and management will encourage full attendance.
- The importance of regular attendance and the negative impacts of unwarranted absences will be communicated through school communications (newsletters, induction days, etc.), parent meetings and other occasions.
- 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.

- As punctuality is important, parents will be notified if students are late for school on a regular basis.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Ballymakenny College has a 100% attendance policy. Taking circumstances into consideration, a decision regarding when attendance becomes an issue rests with the students tutor in consultation with the student's year head. Each role holder in the school has a responsibility to adhere regarding the Attendance Policy. The primary responsibility for ensuring attendance lies with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student.

#### Parents

- Ensure regular attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences.
- Notify the school principal or his/her nominee, in the form of a written explanation or a doctor's cert, explaining the reason for each absence.
- 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 and issued to the class tutor on return).
- Provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the school may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary.
- Adhere to the procedures set out in this policy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
- Acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the School in relation to attendance issues.

#### Students

- To attend school punctually on each school day and to bring in a note to explain all absences.
- To present at the school office when late.

#### Principal

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- 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 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.

#### Deputy Principal

- To encourage regular attendance by students.
- To receive reports 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.

#### Year Head

- To contact and/or meet parents when in consultation with tutors when attendance has been identified as issue.
- To send standard absence letters to parents/guardians where frequent absences occur.
- To send out a standard letter to parents regarding notification to NEWB and to notify attendance officer of same (20 days letter with/without concern).
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected. In instances of this the Deputy Principal must be notified.

#### Class Tutor

- Create a welcoming atmosphere for students under their care.
- Praise students in their group with full attendance and set targets for groups to reach.
- Conduct a daily roll call at 8.33 each morning and enter it onto VSware. Students who are not present at this time are recorded as being absent.
- Record student absences on VSware.
- Check notes presented by students to explain absences upon their return to school and input these explanations on VSware. If no explanation is given, VSware will 'flag' this as an unexplained absence.
- Write a note to parents if absences are unexplained.
- Send letters or call when there is no contact from home regarding absences (3days).
- Liaise with year heads on matters relating to attendance records of students.
- Make comments on reports regarding both positive and negative attendance records.
- Update VSware with 'Positive Behaviour Points' to all students with full attendance at the end of each week. Exceptions are made for students with an Explained Medical Appointment or absence due to a School Activity.

#### Class Teacher

- Take a roll call in every class and enter results on VSware.
- Create a warm welcoming atmosphere in class for returning students. □ Discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Meetings.
- Outline the importance of regular attendance and ensure that there is an understanding of the links between academic achievement and regular attendance.
- Make comments on report forms regarding positive and negative attendance.

#### The Office

- Amend VSware to reflect changes to daily attendance due to latecomers, who, if they arrive at school after 8.30am, must report to the office before going to class.
- Maintain a record of students withdrawn during the school day and, where applicable, 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

- An official roll call will be conducted during Treoir each day. The Class Tutor will keep a record of student absences on VShare and record the number of absences on students' end-of-term Report Forms to parents.
- Teachers will conduct a roll call in each class to be recorded on VShare.
- Notes from parents/guardians regarding student absences will be given by students to the class tutor. These notes will be issued prior to a period of absence if possible or immediately on return if the absence is unforeseen. Explanations for these absences will be updated on VShare. If absences are unexplained the student's attendance will be 'flagged' on VShare until a note of explanation is received by the class tutor.
- 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 note or doctors cert 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 tutor in Treoir. 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 Behaviour.

## Strategies to Promote Attendance

### Environment

- Ballymakenny College provides a safe, welcoming, positive learning environment for our students.
- Ballymakenny College positively rewards students with full attendance and improved attendance at the End of Year Awards. Any student with full attendance will be rewarded with a gold medal and their success recognised by the entire school.
- Ballymakenny College focuses on student attendance, on weekly and monthly bases. Students are awarded positive points on VShare for having full attendance each week. These points have a positive affect towards the possibility of winning 'Rang na Míosa' and/or 'Dalta na Míosa', both of which result in prizes/rewards.
- Encouragement of full attendance by students particularly on days prior to school breaks.
- At end of year Awards Ceremonies. 100% = Gold Medal, < 3 Days = Silver Medal, >5 Days = Bronze Medal. This can be reviewed on an annual basis.

### Communication

- Students' attendance and behaviour is effectively communicated using VShare. Parents/guardians can view their child's records.

- The school journal is seen as the most important form of communication between school and home. In the event of a period of absence being unexplained the class tutor will write home requesting an explanation for this absence.
- All notes in the journal, whether they be positive or negative must be signed by a parent or guardian.
- The school journal must be signed by a parent or guardian at least once a week (Friday), with the option to sign daily. This is to ensure that the lines of communication between parents and teachers are regular and always open.
- It is the role of the class tutor to check students' journals on a morning-by-morning basis ensuring that notes are signed by parents/guardians and absences are explained.

#### Information

- Parents will be reminded of the importance of regular punctual attendance in a letter at the beginning of each school year.
- Parents should not remove students from school for holidays during the school term. In the event of a student being removed for a period of time (eg. For holidays) the onus will be on the parent/guardian and child to catch up on any school work missed.
- No accommodation to facilitate exams can be made.
- Parents will be informed of their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the school with regard to the Education Act.
- Class tutors will send the names of students with poor attendance or punctuality to the year head. This is to ensure that every effort is made to help children at risk as soon as possible.
- Students and parents should familiarise themselves with the exam calendar.

#### Procedures

##### ***If a student is late:***

- on 5 occasions the class tutor may contact a parent/guardian.
- on 10 occasions the Year Head may contact a parent/guardian via a phone call;
- on 15 occasions the principal may send a letter home explaining the importance of punctuality and good attendance.; On 20 occasions a meeting will be set up between the principal and parents/guardians.

##### ***If a student is absent with little or no explanation:***

- after 10 occasions the year head will contact a parent/guardian via a phone call;
- after 15 occasions the Principal will send a letter home explaining the importance of punctuality and good attendance;
- after 20 occasions Ballymakenny College has great cause for concern over a student's attendance. In this event a formal written and signed referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

## Reports

- Every parent/guardian 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

In order for this school attendance policy to be successful it is vital the school:

- Have a clear outline of responsibilities of all school partners;
- Keep an effective record of attendance and trends to be kept on VSware. Patterns of attendance can be viewed by teachers, tutors, year heads and parents/guardians alike; and
- Develop clear lines of communication between parents and school on the issue of attendance.
- Make use of the school journal to communicate with parents.

## Monitoring

The Attendance Policy was devised in consultation with the students, parents, staff, management and Board of Management of Ballymakenny College.

This policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the normal Whole School Development Planning review cycle. If necessary, it may be reviewed at any time considering changing circumstances and/or changing legislation. Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of the school. Any suggested amendments/improvements will be communicated to the Principal or Deputy Principals who will consult with all partners.

Approved by the BOM of Ballymakenny College on May 2015

Signed by Chairperson:

*Maire Ní Bhroíthe*



# Attendance

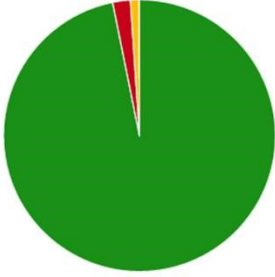
Actions ▾

Academic Years

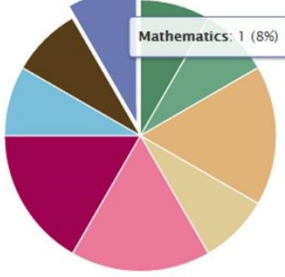
2014/2015



Absent Days



Lessons missed



NEWB Return

0 Lates this year

Absent

Partial Absence

Present

Unexplained Absence