

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of our school policy on attendance and punctuality is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in the education system. Moreover it endeavours to promote self-discipline, commitment and responsibility.

The Education Welfare Act 2000

The main provisions of the Education Welfare Act are as follows:

- Schools are required to establish and maintain a school register, showing attendance or non-attendance for each student.
- Every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years of education in post primary, whichever comes later
- The act established a National Educational Welfare Board. The NEWB (now TUSLA) has appointed Education Welfare Officers to work with schools to encourage school attendance.
- The act stipulates that the school is obliged to report to TUSLA every time:
 - ✓ It decides to expel a student
 - ✓ A student has been absent for 20 days or more cumulatively
 - ✓ A student's attendance causes concern for the school
 - ✓ A student's name is removed from the school register
 - ✓ A student has been suspended for six days consecutively
- Schools must prepare a student absence report. This information must be submitted two times a year in summary format for all students.
- Absences must be categorised under six headings:
 - ✓ Illness
 - ✓ Family Business
 - ✓ Appointment
 - ✓ Holiday
 - ✓ Absence Unexplained
 - ✓ Suspended

School Policy on Attendance and Punctuality

- Students are required to be in school by 08.45.
- Students must attend weekly Assembly.
- Persistently poor punctuality may result in meetings with Parents/Guardians.
- Students who arrive late to class during the day will be dealt with by the subject teacher using the following steps:

- Documented in vs ware and accessible to parents for review and appropriate sanction applied.
- Re-occurrence to be escalated to management where appropriate.
- Students speaking with a member of staff must have a signed note of explanation or a note communicated on vs ware or via email from that member of staff excusing their absence/delay from class.
- Parental/guardian's responsibility to check vs ware regularly.
- Principal/Deputy Principal will be notified by the Attendance Officer of persistent offenders. Sanctions to deal with such students may include work given, detention or suspension.
- Students who wish to leave the school early for an appointment (e.g. Doctor, Dentist etc.) must present an early excuse note in advance of their absence on vs ware. This note must be approved by the tutor prior to leaving the school. In the event of being unable to find their tutor the note must be signed by the Deputy Principal
- In the event of an absence the student must present a note of explanation on their return:
 - On vs ware, which is available to tutor, subject teacher and year head.
- In the event of a student becoming ill while at school, Students must inform the Year head or the Deputy Principal who will contact the parent/guardian before a student signs out. All Junior students must be collected from the school by a parent/guardian. All students, junior and senior, must remain at reception until contact is made with the student's Parents/ guardians.
- Full attendance and participation in all timetabled classes and exams is required. Students who are unable to participate in PE classes due to medical circumstances will be asked to furnish their PE teacher with a medical note.

To facilitate the above students must have their journal with them at all times.

Attendance & Student Responsibility

- Students are expected to always have their journal in their possession.
- Students are requested to be in the school building by 08.40 each morning.
- Classes begins at 08.45 all students must attend.
- School finishes at 15.34 Monday to Thursday, and 13.04 on Friday.
- Students who arrive late for school will be marked as late on VSware.
- In the event of an absence the student must present written note of explanation in his journal to his tutor or submitted on VSware.
- Students who wish to leave school early for an appointment (e.g Doctor, Dentist etc.) or otherwise, the student must present written note of explanation in his journal to his tutor or submitted on VSware.

- In the event of a student becoming ill the student must inform a Deputy Principal who will make contact with their parent/guardian. Parental/guardian permission must be received before students sign out through office. Junior students must remain at reception until collected.
- Students are expected to have full attendance, attend all timetabled classes, exams and whole school events.
- In keeping with the Ethos of the school all students must attend all school award and prize giving ceremonies.

Attendance & Parental Responsibility

- The primary responsibility for a student's attendance in school lies with the Parents/Guardians (The Education Welfare Act 2000).
- When a student is absent from school for any reason, Parents/Guardians must notify the school by VSware, telephone or email.
- Parents/Guardians are required to provide a note of explanation for any absence on their son's VSware or in their journal. These notes are inspected on the child's return to school by the Tutor/Yearhead
- The Department of Education recommends that Parents/Guardians must try to ensure that family holidays are scheduled during holiday times.
- Parents/Guardians are requested to arrange appointments for students outside of school hours.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for monitoring VSware on a regular basic.

School Attendance Strategies

The following is a list of strategies that we have put in place in St Mary's Diocesan in order to encourage good attendance:

- Building a warm, caring, respectful and compassionate atmosphere in which every person feels accepted and valued.
- The provision of an excellent extra-curricular activity package which encourages the participation of all students.
- A modern meaningful curriculum, which is inclusive of all students.
- Well-structured pastoral care system based on the ethos of the school.
- Transition Year Programme.
- Rewarding and certification of good attendance.
- A comprehensive roll attendance system.
- Supervised evening study for all classes.

Information for Parents/Guardians

The importance of good attendance

- It enables you child to keep up with schoolwork and makes school a more positive learning experience.
- It teaches them good habits for the future.

The Education Welfare Act (2000)

- The purpose of the act is to encourage regular attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible, preferably until he completes his education.
- Every child must attend school regularly until the age of sixteen or complete at least three years post primary education, whichever comes later.
- It is the central responsibility of Parents/Guardians to ensure that they comply with the regulations stated in the Education Welfare Act 2000, with regard to the attendance and participation of their child in the school to which they have been enrolled.

TUSLA

- TUSLA (previously known as The National Education Welfare Board) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.
- TUSLA has appointed Education Welfare Officers to work with schools to encourage school attendance.

What TUSLA expects from the school

- Under the Education Welfare Act, a school is obligated to report to TUSLA every time:
 - It decides to exclude a student
 - A student's name is removed from the school register
 - A student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
 - A student has been suspended for six days
 - A Principal is concerned about a student's attendance
- Schools are asked to submit information about individual student absences five times a year.
- Where there is concern about your child's attendance or about reasons given you may be contacted by the school's Attendance Officer/ Tutor/ Year head or a member of The Pastoral Care Team
- Visited by an Education Welfare Officer

Parents/Guardians Role in Punctuality & Attendance

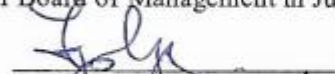
- Promote regular attendance
- Ensure that your child is in school on time
- Make contact with the school by second day of absence.
- Ensure that a note of explanation from parent/guardian is written in their journal or submitted to VSware on returning to school.
- Highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Attend annual parent /teacher meetings to find out how your child is progressing.
- Organise family holidays outside school term.

- Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who leave school to work must register with the **National Education Welfare Board**, so as to ensure that they can be helped with further education and training.

Ratification & Communication

Ratified by our Board of Management in June 2024 and implemented on 22nd August 2024.

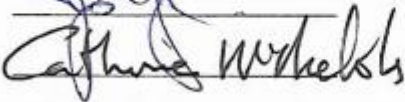
Chairperson:



Date:

18/06/24

Principal:



Date:

18/06/24

This policy will be displayed on our website www.stmarysds.ie