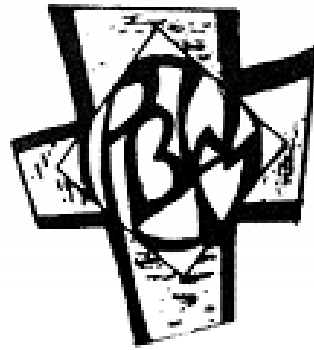


PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL

TRALEE



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Revised May 2013

INTRODUCTION

As a school community, the staff at Presentation Secondary School, Tralee, believe

- that there is a direct relationship between a student's success in school and regular attendance
- that students who have good attendance records enjoy their school experience more than students who do not attend regularly.

THE POLICY IN CONTEXT

The school Attendance Policy is directed by

1. The School Mission Statement
2. The Pastoral Care Policy
3. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000

AIM OF THE POLICY

It is hoped that by constantly monitoring and tracking students' attendance records, absenteeism will improve and students will have a positive school experience.

To reflect our obligations relating to school attendance as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

INTRODUCTION:

The Education Welfare Act 2000 provides a comprehensive new framework for promoting regular school attendance and attending to problems of absenteeism. It was signed into law on July 5th 2000. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was set up under this Act to support regular attendance and the education of children and young people. The Board has appointed Educational Welfare Officers (E.W.O.) to provide advice and support to parents and schools and to follow up absences from school. Under the Act parents must notify the school when a child is absent and it is recommended that the explanation be in writing. It is incumbent on schools to notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a child has missed a total of twenty days in the school year.

The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) for Presentation Secondary School Tralee is Ann Fogarty.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 safeguards every child's entitlement to an appropriate minimum education by:

- Developing a national framework to promote regular attendance at school,

- Promoting a positive appreciation among students of the benefits to be derived from education and attendance at school
- Identifying the causes of absenteeism and early school leaving and developing measures for its prevention,
- Providing support to children at risk and those who experience difficulties in school in order to resolve any difficulties or impediments to their regular attendance at school.

THE EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD

The National Educational Welfare Board is given the lead role in implementing the provisions of the Act:

- The principal function of the Board is to ensure that every child in the State attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education.
- The Board also has an advisory and research role in the formulation of Government policy on school attendance and education provision.
- The Board will deploy educational welfare officers at local level throughout the country. These officers will work in close co-operation with parents, teachers, school managers, community bodies and other relevant agencies to promote regular school attendance and prevent absenteeism and early school leaving.

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OFFICER

The Educational Welfare Officers appointed by the Board will focus in particular on children at risk and those who are experiencing difficulties in school in order to resolve any impediments to their regular attendance at school. Alternative schooling will be sought for students who have been expelled, suspended or refused admittance to a school.

SCHOOL DAY

- All students must attend at the scheduled times every day:

Mon. Tues.	8.55 - 1.15	1.55 - 4.00
Wed. Thurs. Fri	8.55 - 1.15	2.10 - 3.35
- Students are expected to be present each day.
- Students are expected to maintain high standards of punctuality throughout the day.

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

- Subject teachers take registration using Facility E-portal at the start of each lesson. Period 1 and Period 7 each day are designated roll call classes and attendance or absence at these classes is recorded in the students' official records.

- On a pilot basis for the 13/14 school year, a text message alerting parents to a student's absence will be sent once the fact has been verified in the second period.
- The Year Head of each year group tracks the attendance records of the students on a weekly basis.
- This helps to identify, at an early stage, students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- The Year Head meets with the students who may be at risk to encourage them to attend. The Year Head may, at this early stage, invite the parents/guardians to the school, to discuss and attempt to resolve any difficulties or impediments to their regular attendance at school.
- After 10 days absence, a letter is sent to the parents/guardians by the Year Head (see Appendix I and Appendix II) inviting them to the school to discuss the situation.
- The Year Head communicates the names of students of concern to the Pastoral Care Team at their weekly meeting. The Pastoral Care Team may make recommendations to support the student e.g. referral to the Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support team or outside agency as appropriate.
- After 20 days absence, a letter is sent by the Year Head to the parents/guardians of students under 16 to inform them of the school's obligation to inform the EWB and inviting them to the school to discuss the situation if they wish (Appendix III)

PROCEDURE FOR RECORDING EXPLANATIONS FOR ABSENCES

- Explanations for Absence notes (red colour) are provided to students in the back of their contact journal (Appendix IV).
- If a student is absent, an absent note (red colour) must be completed and handed into the office before 9.00 a.m. on the day of return.
- The counterfoil of the absent note is stamped with the school stamp and must be shown to each subject teacher.
- The reason for the student's absence is entered by the administration staff on the student's database on Facility Admin.
- The Year Head of each year group tracks the attendance records of the students on a weekly basis and if he/she notices that a student has a number of unexplained absences, a letter (Appendix V) is sent to parents informing them of the unexplained absences and requesting further information re: same.

SCHOOL ACTIVITY/WORK EXPERIENCE

- Absences from class due to participation in a school activity or work experience are recorded as school activity (SA) or work experience (WE).
- Teachers organising the school activity provide the administration staff with the list of students involved the day prior to the event. The administration staff pre-enter the students' absence under the category school activity (SA) or work experience (WE).
- The staff member accompanying or organising the event phones the school on the morning of the activity to confirm the presence/absence of the students.

LATE POLICY

- Students are requested to get into the routine of being at school on time.
- Students who arrive late disrupt the class and miss important instruction time.
- When a student is late, the reason for her lateness must be clearly stated on one of the Note to/from Parent/Guardian (Blue colour) (Appendix VI) provided at the back of the student contact journal and presented to the office on entry to the school.
- The counterfoil of the late note is stamped with the school stamp and must be shown to the subject teacher.
- The subject teacher will enter the code *Late Valid* on the E-portal system.
- When a student does not present a signed Note to/from Parent/Guardian (Blue colour) to the office the subject teacher will enter the code *Late* on the E-portal system.
- If a student arrives to school after 9.40 a.m. she must sign the *Late Book* in the office.
- Students who sign the late book are entered by the administration staff on the student's database on Facility Admin as Late if no note is provided or Late Valid if a note is provided to explain their absence.

TRUANCY

- Truancy is considered an extreme violation of the School Code of Positive Behaviour and incurs immediate suspension.
- In school Truancy (where a student remains in the school building but does not attend a timetabled class) incurs lunchtime detention.

MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

- Parents/guardians and students are requested not to make medical or dental appointments during school hours.
- Where this is not possible, permission to leave the school note (Blue colour) must be completed and handed into the office before 9.00a.m on the day in question.
- The administration staff will record the student's name on the *Signing Out Book*.
- When a parent/guardian arrives to collect his/her daughter he/she must sign the Signing Out book and indicate whether or not the student is expected to return.
- The administration staff will record the student's departure from the school on Facility Admin.
- In the event of a parent/guardian collecting his/her daughter during lunchtime the member of staff on duty at the door will oversee the correct use of the *Signing Out Book*.
- The student is required to sign in on her return.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- On a pilot basis for the 13/14 school year, a text message alerting parents to a student's absence will be sent once the fact has been verified in the second period.
- Parents are routinely informed of their daughter's attendance and punctuality record through the termly and mock examination reports.
- A letter and a copy of the attendance record are sent to parents/guardians once a student has been absent in excess of 10 days (Appendix II and III) and again when a student is absent in excess of 20 days (Appendix IV).
- Individual subject teachers can track a student's attendance for their given subject using Facility E-portal and are encouraged to contact a parent/guardian if concern arises about absenteeism for a particular subject.
- When a Year Head has a specific concern about an individual student he/she may arrange a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and parents/guardians to discuss strategies re same.
- When a Year Head notes that a student has not presented signed notes explaining her absences to the office, the Year Head will write to the parents/guardians bringing their attention to the matter and requesting that explanations be presented (Appendix 5)

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

- Teachers have access to the attendance records of all students through the use of Facility E-portal.
- Teachers can access the specific attendance record for each of their teaching groups using Facility E-portal.
- If information is received from parents in relation to a student's absence, teachers are notified of this through the noticeboard in the staff room.
- In the case of a prolonged absence and if requested by parents, teachers are encouraged to place classwork and notes into an envelope in the staffroom for forwarding to the absent student.

REWARDING STUDENTS FOR ATTENDANCE

- Students who have full attendance in any given year are presented with a Certificate of Attendance at the end of the year.