



Attendance Strategy

1. Scope

The policy applies to all students of Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin, their parents/guardians and the school's staff.

2. Relationship to the schools characteristic spirit:

Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin is a multi-denominational all-Irish speaking school under the patronage of Cork Education and Training Board. We aim to provide a secure, welcoming and active learning environment in which each individual is encouraged and challenged to develop his/her full potential academically, socially, personally and morally, with student wellbeing at its core. In order to achieve these goals, it is expected that all students registered at the school attend all classes and events organised for them, both in and out of school.

Education plays a vital part in ensuring that children grow to independence and derive maximum benefits from life's opportunities. In Ireland, education is a right that is prescribed and protected in Article 42 of Bunreacht na hÉireann. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out a number of statements including a state's role to 'take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools'. This Attendance Strategy seeks to assist parents in achieving the best outcomes for their children. It has been drawn up by the Board of Management in consultation with all the school partners, and in keeping with the requirements of Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, with a view to fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin, and in so doing, encourage excellent attendance on the part of each student.

3. Context:

This policy has been devised in consultation with all members of the school community and in keeping with the school's characteristic spirit. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Health and Safety Policy, Code of Behaviour, School Tour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Wellbeing Policy, SEN Policy and Child Protection Policy. Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin encourages the pursuit of excellence and strives to create an environment conducive to the highest standards of achievement with the well-being of every student at its core.

4. Rationale:

This policy was devised to

- a) Work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and well-being of the students;
- b) Facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process;
- c) Ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them;
- d) Ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance;
- e) 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:
 - i. A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days;
 - ii. The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than twenty;
 - iii. A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the Principal;
 - iv. A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school in which he/she is registered, not attending school regularly.

5. Objectives

The Objectives of this Statement are:

- a) To maintain accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours;
- b) To encourage students to learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance;
- c) To encourage parents to appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance;
- d) To ensure minimum rates of absenteeism;
- e) To detect and correct the patterns of poor attendance;
- f) To support the development of a school environment where student well-being is core;
- g) To highlight and encourage regular attendance;
- h) To encourage good communication between parents/guardians and school;
- i) To establish and successfully implement procedures for monitoring attendance and good record keeping;
- j) To develop working relationships with relevant agencies such as the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB);
- k) To support students and parents where attendance issues arise.

6. Strategies to encourage good attendance

- a) 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.
- b) Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance. This is also promoted through the Well-being programme.
- c) The Year Head and/or member(s) of the Pastoral Care Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue.
- d) Reports to Parents/Guardians include a detailed breakdown of attendance for the period in question.
- e) The School has assigned a staff member to support the implementation of the Attendance Strategy.
- f) Through the promotion and nurturing of a friendly, caring environment in which human flourishing is prioritized and by encouraging all students to realise their potential, it is hoped that students will attend regularly.
- g) By rewarding good attendance, it is hoped to encourage all students to attend school regularly.
- h) Through monitoring and effective recording of non-attendance students with attendance issues are to be identified support is offered to both parents/guardians and students through teachers, Tutors, Year Heads and/or NEWB.
- i) Through the provision of a wide range of subjects, the school aims to cater for the diverse needs of all its students.
- j) As part of our commitment to being an inclusive school, to not only respect difference but to provide the support services necessary for students with additional educational needs. It is hoped that such provision will enable all students to feel part of the school community, thus encouraging them to attend regularly.
- k) By provision of an extensive co-curricular and extra-curricular programme, students are strongly encouraged to participate and thus, attend school regularly.
- l) To liaise with local and feeder primary schools to identify potential attendance problems and to receive information and advice which might help to develop strategies to improve attendance.
- m) To reflect the school's characteristic spirit by dealing with all cases of regular non-attendance in a fair and sensitive manner.

7. Roles and responsibilities:

Student:

- a) To punctually attend all scheduled classes every day unless there is a valid reason for not doing so;
- b) Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation in the designated section of the School Journal on the day of return to class. Alternatively an email may be sent to the office explaining the child's absence;

- c) If arriving late for school, to have a note from their parent/guardian or to present a written explanation for same. An after-school reflection period will be given to those who arrive without a note of explanation.

Parent/Guardian:

- a) To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities (Education Welfare Act 2000);
- b) To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences;
- c) To provide a written reason for the student's absence;
- d) All messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible on return, for the attention of the class teacher;
- e) To 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;
- f) To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day;
- g) To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues;
- h) To arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays;
- i) To ensure that if/when his/her child arrives late for school, that they are accompanied by a parent /guardian and/or provided with an explanatory note.
- j) The school must be notified by phone or email if a child is absent from school for any reason.

Principal:

- a) To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students;
- b) To monitor attendance records regularly;
- c) To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000;
- d) To remind students and parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress.

Deputy Principal:

- a) To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, and administration staff and Attendance Officer to implement this School Policy;
- b) To liaise with the Year Head and Pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.

Class teacher:

- a) To record the attendance of every class every day on VS Ware. When teaching or substituting, the teacher will input the roll call on VS Ware;
- b) To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.

Year Head:

- a) To monitor regularly the attendance records on Vs Ware for the given year;
- b) To liaise with the Pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular pupil's attendance;
- c) To meet, along with the Deputy Principal, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue;
- d) To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/ or when patterns of absences are developing and to notify the Deputy Principal of same;
- e) To remind the pupils during the assemblies of the year group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

Class Tutor:

- a) To check and sign absence notes from parents/guardians;
- b) To amend immediately upon receipt of explanation, the details of the absence;
- c) To liaise with the Year Head in the event of absences not being explained or where any other problems may arise in relation to attendance.

Attendance Officer:

- a) To liaise with and assist class teachers in matters relating to the recording and inputting of the attendance onto VShare;
- b) To work in conjunction with the Administrator in the School Office in submitting reports to the NEWB;
- c) To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance;
- d) To attend meetings with the Principal and Year Heads, to discuss matters relating to attendance.

Administrative Staff:

- a) To input attendance data from Class Teachers when required;
- b) To work in conjunction with the Attendance Officer to submit reports to the NEWB;
- c) To administer the signing in and out of students.

8.Procedures

- a) The roll is recorded at the start of each class on VShare. Absence notes are submitted to the Class Teacher. He/she will subsequently amend the Vs Ware.
- b) Those arriving after the start of class are recorded as late.
- c) Students who arrive at school late are required to sign in at the School Reception. The Administrator on duty will amend to record from *absence unexplained* to *late explained/unexplained*.
- d) A hard copy of absences is recorded daily during Period 1 for Health and Safety reasons.
- e) Students who leave the school during the day due to illness or appointments must be collected by a parent/guardian at School Reception and must then sign out.

- f) Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by staff as *school business*. The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names and, prior to departure, posts this to staff and provides a copy of the list to Reception. If a student listed is absent from the trip, the teacher will notify the Staff of same.
- g) The school will provide a calendar for the opening and closing times of the school, the school holidays and information about parent teacher meetings and staff meetings.
- h) Parents should try to avoid taking their children on holiday during school term. A signed application should be made to the principal should such an absence be unavoidable.

9. Medical Appointments/Illness

If a student has permission to leave school early e.g. in advance for a medical appointment, parents/guardians ensure that the student has a signed note in their school journal. They should be signed out at the school office by their parent/guardian.

If a student becomes unwell at school they should report at the school office from where parents/guardians may be contacted. If they need to leave school as a consequence, they must be signed out at the school office by their parent/guardian.

10. Contacting the School in cases of absence

Parents/Guardians should contact the school as soon as possible to inform the school that your child is absent. This can be done by phone to the office at (021) 4372901 or by emailing eolascul@corketb.ie.

When a student returns to school, he/she should have a signed note in the School Journal with an explanation for the absence. This should be given to the Class Teacher.

For extended absences contact should be kept with the Class Teacher and if the extended absence is for medical reasons a doctor's note should be sent to the Class Teacher.

11. Recording of non-attendance

a) Recording of multiple absences:

When a child is absent for a prolonged period, parents/guardians will be contacted by the school. The primary concern of Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin is the welfare of the child and regular contact and communication is vital. End of term reports will also contain Attendance Records.

b) If a student is suspended:

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.

c) Partnership arrangements:

The school will liaise with relevant bodies and engage with services where there is a concern regarding attendance.

12. Success Criteria

Success criteria may include:

- a) Improved Attendance rates;
- b) Improved communication with parents/guardians and/or explanations for absences;
- c) Improved work input/homework;
- d) Reduced number of reports to National Educational Welfare Board.

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on October 17th, 2017.

It has been made available to all members of the school community.

It was reviewed on March 7th, 2023.

Signed by:

Chairperson of the Board: _____

School Principal: _____

Date: