



# Coláiste Éamann Rís Attendance Policy

## INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE:

In accordance with The Education Welfare Act 2000, this policy has as its purpose the promotion of maximum attendance by each pupil. It is a whole school policy in that it applies to students, parents/guardians and school staff.

The importance of regular attendance cannot be overemphasised as poor attendance affects all aspects of school life. We aim to be pastoral in approach as evidenced in our pastoral policies, structures, procedures and practices. This pastoral approach is infused by the guiding ethos of the school as expressed in our Mission Statement. Through the collaboration of subject teachers, tutors, year heads, and the pastoral team we strive to maximize attendance among all pupils, paying particular attention to those at risk. The parents of students with poor attendance and those at risk of early school leaving are targeted in a very specific way through HSCL intervention.

Coláiste Éamann Rís recognises the importance of having an attendance policy to encourage:

- all students within our catchment area to attend school in order that they can achieve high educational outcomes and pursue an educational programme, which is broad, balanced and challenging in preparation for their adult lives.
- students come to school to gain friendships, learn communication and other social skills while engaging in a range of educational and social programmes.
- students to experience the opportunities to participate in a variety of school activities giving them a broadly based educational experience.
- regular and full attendance by each student so they can maximise the benefits listed above.

## GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- to ensure we maintain high levels of achievement by each student.

- to encourage positive participation in school life.
- to encourage students to form and maintain good habits around attendance.
- to encourage parents to send children to school in all but exceptional circumstances.
- to be proactive in encouraging attendance and focus on preventative strategies.
- to maintain and keep a register of student attendance
- to record all absences and reasons for absence.
- to comply with regulations set down in the Educational Welfare Act 2000 regarding notifying Educational Welfare Officer re student absences and making returns to EWS.

#### POSITIVE MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE:

- Year heads contact parents after a student is absent for 3 days.
- Parents are encouraged to take an interest in students' attendance. Parents/guardians have access to the Unique Schools CER App and the VSWare student attendance tab.
- Certificates of full/excellent attendance are awarded at the end of each term.
- Prizes at Easter and Christmas for perfect attendance
- Positive points awarded by tutor on VSWare for full week attendance
- Inclusion in group outings as a motivator for attendance e.g. class outings, and other JCSP initiatives for junior school.
- Inclusion in group out-of-school activities in LCA and credit award.
- Provision of school supports e.g. HSCL, SCP, SEN, Guidance Counsellor, BFL as needed to support students needs in school
- Home visits and parent meetings to communicate with home and agree attendance targets with parents and students
- Targeted students are involved in SCP activities
- Recording attendance interventions (phone call, meeting, visit, targets) on student's VSWare file
- Cross curricular planning/collaboration to reduce the loss of tuition time through trips and activities etc.
- The use of google calendar to improve cross curricular planning/collaboration

- The school's DEIS plan details SMART targets on attendance and outlines further activities/strategies to improve attendance

#### ROLE OF THE STUDENT:

- To come to school every day unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To be on time and ready for school at 8.40 a.m.
- To complete each school day.
- To ensure that they are marked present on the official roll especially if they are late reporting to school.
- To sign out with the Deputy Principal, a reason must be input by the parent/guardian using the Unique Schools CER App.
- Agrees not to leave the school unless accompanied by an appropriate adult
- To provide absence notes for day(s) missed and a medical certificate where applicable using the Unique Schools CER App.

#### ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN:

- To collect students from the school office and input reason for leaving on Unique Schools CER App e.g. GP appointment.
- To ensure that days are not missed unnecessarily.
- To make appointments, where possible, outside of school hours.
- To plan holidays, trips away during the designated school holidays
- To use the Unique Schools CER App to input reasons for absence e.g. ill.
- When possible to notify the Year Head in advance of an expected absence.
- To attend parent/teacher/student meetings with their child

#### ROLE OF THE SUBJECT TEACHER:

- To take attendance at the beginning of every lesson
- To notify the office if attendance cannot be taken
- To email the Attendance Officer if attendance cannot be taken

- To notify the Attendance Officer if a student was marked present for the class previous, but is now Absent
- To deduct marks on VSware for students who are late and to use the appropriate attendance codes

#### ROLE OF THE TUTOR:

- To take attendance during each Tutor period
- To notify the Attendance Officer if a student was marked present for the class previous, but is now Absent
- To encourage and promote good attendance among all students.
- To identify three students in their tutor group who they feel need extra monitoring/support. These students can be identified using VSware (that is of course except first year students who we do not have information on yet).
- To liaise with the Year Head on attendance concerns
- To add points to VSware for good attendance

#### ROLE OF THE YEAR HEAD:

- To monitor attendance
- To phone home students who have been absent without reason for more than three days
- To work closely with class tutors
- To liaise with all school personnel on attendance concerns
- To arrange meetings with parents/guardians
- To contact any parent/guardian who did not attend the parent/teacher/student meetings
- To issue sanctions to students who absent themselves from school without permission

#### ROLE OF THE HSCL COORDINATOR:

- To identify students with poor attendance and those at risk of early school

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- To target the parents of these students and support them to send their child to school
- To identify with the family the obstacles to school attendance for the child
- To address these obstacles through the provision of practical support - for example, the sourcing of books, uniforms, locker keys, communication with teachers about the issues affecting the child's attendance
- To agree strategies with the parent that can be used to motivate their child to come to school
- To set short and long term targets for the child's attendance through liaising with his parents
- To consistently promote and encourage good attendance in interactions with both the students and their parents
- To affirm parental effort when the child's attendance improves
- To regularly liaise with parents through home visits and school meetings
- To regularly check the attendance of targeted students and "check in" with them

#### ROLE OF THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER:

- To monitor VSWare daily and follow up overdue rolls, students absent without leave and attendance errors.
- To input details of students attending outings, matches etc.
- To do whole school attendance for all in-house exams.
- To run daily and weekly VSWare reports to track and correct errors on the roll.
- To provide monthly and termly VSWare reports to Year Heads and DPs re attendance patterns in their year groups.
- To do Tusla returns on behalf of the school.
- To liaise with Year Heads, HSCL and SCP regarding attendance concerns.

- To send letters home to parents/guardians regarding attendance patterns of concern.
- To arrange Attendance Clinics for the EWO to meet with parents/guardians and students of concern and ensure EWO recommendations are met in school.

#### SCHOOL PROCEDURES (DAILY BASIS):

- Subject teacher to take roll and record on school VSware for every lesson
- SMS sent to all absent students in AM and PM by Unique Schools CER App.
- Attendance Officer, Year Heads & DPs to monitor attendance across the day

#### SCHOOL PROCEDURES (ONGOING):

- Informal monitoring on an ongoing basis by all staff.
  - Year Heads, DPs, principal, Attendance Officer, HSCL contacts and liaises with parents/guardians and the EWO where there are concerns.
  - To meet with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) when she/he is available to call to the school and discuss current situation.

#### SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS UNDER “EDUCATIONAL WELFARE ACT 2000”:

In order to comply with legislation and in accordance with EWS guidelines any pupil under 16 who has not completed three years in post primary and has accumulated 20 or more days absence from school, regardless of circumstances, must be reported to the EWS. We are aware schools are obliged by law to report on school attendance since the inception of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and accept that this obligation exists to protect children’s educational welfare.

Under the Act, a school is obliged to report to the EWS every time: – a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively – a Principal is concerned about a student’s attendance – the Board of Management decides to expel a student – a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively – a student’s name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason.

We are aware that it is not necessary to report students who:

– are following Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) or Adult Education Programmes. – have reached the age of 16 years and completed 3 years post primary education, unless the student has been suspended for 6 days or more.

There are two student absence reports:

Period One: from school reopening until December 31st to be submitted by March 31st.

Period Two: from January 1st to the end of the school year to be submitted by October 31st

And one annual attendance report to be submitted before October 31st

These reports are submitted online.

### Punctuality

School starts at 8.40am. Students have a five minute grace period to organise books etc. for classes which start at 8.45am. Students arriving after 8.45am are marked late.

It is the responsibility of all students and their families to ensure the student arrives to school on time every day. Students arriving late should have a reason input on the Unique Schools CER App explaining the reason for their punctuality. Continuous lates, even with reasons, will be addressed in the same way as students arriving late without a written excuse.

Students arriving late will be dealt with through the school disciplinary procedures which include but are not limited to:

- Reduction of points on VSWare
- Parent/guardian contact
- Detention for one hour after school
- Internal suspension
- Suspension

### COMMUNICATION:

All school policies are available to parents.

Our attendance policy has been designed in consultation with the teaching staff, School Completion Programme, the HSCL Coordinator, the Attendance Officer, the student council, the parents association and the Board of Management.

Students are informed of their obligations in the student journal and at assemblies during the year.

At meetings during the year, the importance of school attendance is regularly discussed with parents.

HSCL visits and parent meetings throughout the school year to promote school engagement for target students.

HSCL visits the homes of every first year student starting at Coláiste Éamann Rís as well as the homes of all new students who transfer to the school.

SMS are sent home daily regarding attendance, reminder and update SMS are also sent using Unique Schools CER App.

Parents/guardians are reminded that they have access to the attendance tab on VSware throughout the year.

#### EVALUATION:

- Termly data to Year Heads & DPs provided by Attendance Officer by year group.
  - Discussion and review of attendance strategies by school principal, deputy principal, HSCL, SCP, year heads, attendance officer, staff and EWO when available.
- This policy is open to review and evaluation on an annual basis.