

Attendance Policy

Our school Mission Statement

St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.



Our school

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a voluntary secondary school for boys. We are located in north Dublin and we currently have an enrolment of over 700 students. Our school is a Catholic school operating under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (E.R.S.T.). The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter as outlined above in our mission statement. This is reflected in the operations of our school and in our school policies.

Rationale

- 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.
 - To enable us to identify students who may be at risk and put supports in place to assist them.

Aims and Objectives

This school policy sets out to:

- To foster discipline and the commitment of the student in the areas of time-keeping and attendance.
- To provide a framework that records positive school attendance and time-keeping.
- Encourage full attendance where possible.
- Identify pupils at risk of early school leaving or non-engagement with school.
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance within our student population.
- Foster an appreciation of learning.
- Improve communication with parents.

Related Policies

- Code of behaviour.
- Admissions Policy.
- Parental Involvement Policy.

Attendance & Punctuality: A positive approach

- 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.
- 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 Pastoral Care programme.
- The Year Head and/or member(s) of the Student Support Team meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue.
- Reports to Parents/Guardians include a detailed breakdown of attendance for the period in question.
 - Records of attendance and punctuality are available to parents to view on VSWare by logging in using the unique password for that student.
 - The school's reward system acknowledges excellent attendance and punctuality and recognises students who show significant improvements in attendance and punctuality.
 - A sense of belonging and connectedness in St. Aidan's CBS is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Principal:

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- To liaise with Attendance Officer to monitor attendance records regularly.
- To make reports to Tusla as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences and/or withdrawal 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.
- To encourage regular attendance by students.
- To monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the School or from classes.
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences are suspected.

Deputy Principal:

- Liaise with Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Class Tutors, Administration Staff, and Care Team on all issues regarding students including attendance.
- To co-ordinate with the Principal and Educational Welfare Officer as necessary. Compile a Tusla report.
- Communicating with parents and guardians regarding absenteeism, in an effort to improve attendance and ascertain reasons for non-attendance.
- Communicating with Year Head.
- To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance.

Year Head:

- To monitor regularly the attendance records on VSWare.
- To liaise with the Tutors and Care teams to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- To meet, along with the Deputy Principal, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem in order to discuss the issue.
- 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.
- To remind the students during the assemblies of the Year Group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Contact home to discuss patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.

Tutor:

- To record the attendance of the tutor class at 8.42 am each morning.
- To check absence notes from parents/guardians and to store these safely for the duration of the year.
- To amend on a weekly basis, the records on VSWare from absence unexplained to absence explained where relevant. Students who fail to produce reason for absence notes should be reported to Year Head.
- Contact in the case of a student being absent for three consecutive days where the school has not already received notification of absence. If they do not get an answer, or have concerns they should then report to Year Head.
- 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 and punctuality.

Subject Teacher:

- To record the attendance of every class every day.
- When substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave, the teacher will complete registration for that class using VSWare.
- To explain to the students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.
- Create a warm welcoming atmosphere in class for returning students.

Guidance Counsellor:

- Take referrals from Principal and Deputy Principal on further courses of action which may be taken. These may include referral to N.E.W.B.
- Monitor students referred on an on-going basis.
- Work with students to counteract any 'gaps' in education which may lead to further absences.
- If no improvement suggest to Principal or Deputy Principal that student should be referred to the N.E.W.O.

Office Personnel:

- Sign in any students who arrive after the bell and update VSWare accordingly.
- Contact home and sign out any student who needs to leave school.

Students:

- Each student has a personal responsibility to attend school each day on time.
- Every student is expected to be in attendance from 8:42 a.m. until 3.50 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. School finishes at 1:10pm on Fridays (some exceptions exist for TY and LCA work experience).
- If one arrives late to school, the student is responsible for signing in correctly and presenting the tutor with a slip explaining this.
- Following an absence from school, to present a written explanation to their class tutor in the School Journal on the day of return to class.
- In the event of a student becoming ill or getting injured during the day they should inform their class teacher who may send them to the Year Head or Deputy Principal to obtain permission to go home. If such permission is granted contact with their parents/guardians will be made via the school office only.
- Students should not contact home via a mobile phone or prior to getting permission to leave the school.

Parents:

- As the primary educators, parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence.
- Parents should make contact with the school via a note in the journal to the tutor, if they are aware of an upcoming absence.
- To keep all holidays outside of the school term.
- To provide the School with reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the School may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary.
- To adhere to the procedures set out in this Policy.
- To acknowledge and where necessary reply to communications from the School in relation to attendance issues.
- Signing in and out of school: Any student who needs to leave school early must be collected by a parent / guardian.
- Student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises: In the event of a student taking ill during lunchtime while off the school premises the school must be notified immediately by Parent / Guardian.

Sanctions for Breaches of School Attendance Policy:

- The student may be placed on detention for three unexcused lates in the space of two weeks.
- If a student fails to bring in a note for an absence on the day they return, they will be asked to bring in a note the following school day. If the student fails to bring in the note again, the parent/guardian will be contacted.
- Absences will be notified to the N.E.W.B. as per the Education Welfare Act 2002.

Evaluation

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this programme. Specifically important to our attendance policy is:

- Pupil feedback.
- Staff feedback.
- Parental feedback.

Ratification

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 7/8/2020.

Review and Development

- We are also committed to the review and development of our school policies. As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and also to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.