



# Attendance Policy

September 2022



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## **1.0 College Mission Statement**

High quality education changes the world, one child at a time.

We prepare our students for life in a diverse world by intentionally integrating students of all abilities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, from all faiths and none.

We provide a caring and inclusive environment to help our students achieve excellence within a culture of acceptance and understanding.



## 2.0 Rationale

A school year is very short and time in school is so precious. Absence from school and coming late to school has a negative effect on a pupil's educational progress, achievement and employment prospects. Therefore, daily attendance and excellent punctuality is our goal for all students. We will strive to promote a positive and proactive ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality.

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. We aim to improve the overall attendance of the pupils by:

Proactively encouraging and rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Exploring and identifying the reasons for absence and lateness.

Implementing strategies to improve the attendance and punctuality of students who have fallen below the required threshold.



### **3.0 Aims**

- To strive to achieve the Northern Ireland average for attendance for non-selective Post Primary Schools, as set out by the Department of Education.
- To improve attendance by actively involving parents, carers, pupils and outside agencies through advice, support and guidance.
- To improve attendance to promote positive pupil achievement.
- To improve attendance and punctuality in order to enhance the pupils sense of belonging within the school community.
- To develop a framework that clearly defines roles and responsibilities of personnel in school in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure compliance with all statutory requirements as laid down by the Department of Education.
- To promote good relations with the Educational Welfare Service
- To instil good habits and values for adult and working life.
- To raise pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality.
- To develop an attendance reward schemes which recognises pupils' attendance achievements.
- To celebrate successes in attendance through an annual attendance awards event.



## 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

### Role of the School

Mrs Clarke, Deputy Headteacher has overall responsibility for school attendance and will work closely with the school's Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher bringing any concerns regarding school attendance to their attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2020/08, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202008-attendanceguidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools>



## **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will:

- Set attendance targets in accordance with the School Development Plan.
- Monitor the progress of attendance.
- Liaise with the Board of Governors in relation to attendance.
- Ensure that strategies to promote and implement the policy in school are in place.
- Determine whether to authorise any requests by parents to take their child out of school for an extended period of time.
- Approve decisions on alternative school provision for pupils to alternative school provision (EOTAS).

## **Deputy Headteacher**

Mrs Clarke, has responsibility for managing school attendance and punctuality. This will involve responsibility of the following:

- Develop and implement strategies to promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure all staff promote and implement agreed attendance management strategies.
- Ensure regular communication of attendance data is shared with Head's of Year including monthly whole school attendance figures, year group attendance figures and Education Welfare Service updates
- Actively promote attendance and punctuality targets at a whole school level.



## Senior Leadership Team (SLT) continued

- Work alongside the pastoral team to provide additional support for students who we are concerned about.
- Provide attendance and punctuality rewards for students who meet / exceed targets.
- Monitor attendance data and advise staff on appropriate actions following the school's attendance strategies and interventions.
- Work closely with and support the Head's of Year in relation to their work on the attendance and punctuality in school.
- Regularly review the pupils who are being supported by the Education Welfare Service.
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to update and monitor pupil attendance below 85% and those pupils' where attendance has dropped significantly due to medical, social, emotional or other issues.
- Work alongside the pastoral team and SENCO to discuss alternative school provision for pupils (EOTAS).
- Liaise with external agencies and feedback to the pastoral team and other relevant staff.
- Feedback information to the Senior Leadership Team and the School Principal in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Make use of attendance data to monitor the progress, identify trends and set targets for improvement.
- Adhere to any guidance provided in the Department of Education Circulars in relation to attendance.
- Review and update the school attendance policy annually.





## **Senior Link Teacher**

- Each Senior Link teacher will support the Head of Year in leading and monitoring attendance within their year group.
- During each SLT link meeting, attendance will be a standing agenda item and will be records in minutes.

## **Heads of Year responsibilities:**

- Distribute attendance/punctuality data to Form Tutors on a regular basis.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality at individual form class and year group level on a weekly basis
- Support Form Tutors to implement a levelled approach regarding attendance, where there are concerns over attendance.
- Have overall responsibility for overseeing Level 0 to Level 3 of the Traffic Light Attendance levels
- Lead the team of Form Tutors in monitoring and recording action taken to promote attendance, using the whole school attendance google drive.
- Coordinate a weekly lateness rota to manage and promote good punctuality to school each morning.
- Coordinate the creation and distribution of attendance incentives and rewards for the year group.
- Promote and celebrate successes in attendance and punctuality on social media and on the school website.
- Sample student planners to ensure pupils are completing their monthly traffic light and are checked/signed by Form Tutors.
- Liaise with parents on attendance issues via phone calls, letters and face to face meetings



## **Heads of Year responsibilities continued:**

- Organise support for priority pupils i.e. those whose attendance is falling rapidly.
- Request support from SLT when face to face meetings with parents/guardians has not had an impact on a student's attendance, or if there is a significant issue which will cause a rapid decline in attendance.
- Support Form Tutors to ensure that all absences are fully explained and appropriately coded.
- Request support from the Education Welfare Service in liaison with Mrs Clarke, if a student's attendance has / is likely to fall below 85% (Years 8-12).
- Complete Education Welfare Service Referrals for any student whose attendance is <85% where all other strategies have been exhausted and there are genuine concerns over attendance.
- Provide pupils' attendance and punctuality records to employers and other agencies upon request.
- Respond to concerns from form tutors promptly.
- Meet with Mrs Clarke on a fortnightly basis to discuss year group attendance data, progress and concerns.
- Ensure attendance and punctuality are standing agenda items during Form Tutor meetings. Each Head of Year will forward minutes of meetings to Mrs Clarke.
- Lead the team of form tutors to devise form class attendance targets.



## **Form Tutor Responsibilities**

- Regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is accurately recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- Emphasise the importance of good attendance/ punctuality in form classes on a regular basis.
- Develop positive relationships with pupils and parents/guardians to support improved attendance, including developing a full understanding of reasons for absence.
- Speak to pupils to praise on their attendance achievements and be an advocate to encourage improved attendance to bring about improved achievement outcomes
- Monitor progress against targets for attendance/punctuality. Set individual targets where required to help motivate students to improve. Ensure targets are recorded in student planner.
- Set aspirational attendance targets for their form class.
- Use the attendance register to read patterns of attendance and respond, making communication with parents / guardians quickly where a student's attendance is erratic or no reason is being provided for an absence.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality and take appropriate action according to the attendance traffic light levels and in response to reasons provided by parents/guardians.



## **Form Tutor Responsibilities continued**

- Identify priority pupils in terms of attendance and punctuality. Communicate this with the Head of Year and update the monitoring attendance spreadsheet, to keep track of strategies used.
- Communicate with parents regularly via phone, letter and in face to face meetings making them aware of the importance of maintaining strong attendance.
- Record any action taken to promote attendance, using the whole school attendance google drive
- Place any paper based notes, letters or records of communication from parents into the pupil file via the school office.
- Pass concerns on student's attendance promptly to Head of Year and inform them of strategies already employed and their outcome.
- Support students who are being reintegrated after long term absences.
- Follow up with parents/guardians on any unexplained absences.
- Assist the Head of Year with the completion of Education Welfare Service referral forms, where appropriate.
- Monitor punctuality of pupils, inform pupils of lateness detentions or appropriate sanctions in line with lateness policy.



### **Classroom Teachers will:**

- Register pupils using SIMS lesson monitor for each class.
- Inform the Head of Year or the Senior Link teacher if concerned regarding the absence of a pupil.

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### **Attendance Liaison Link will:**

- Complete the monthly attendance returns to the Education Authority.
- Liaise with the Pastoral Team on issues relating to attendance records e.g. non-marking of register, unexplained absences.
- Carryout daily checks to ensure AM and PM registers are marked.
- Produce the monthly attendance tracker for Heads of Year and Form Teachers
- To send letters following a Form Tutor, Head of Year or Senior Teacher request
- To change attendance codes and add comments following direct parent/ guardian contact
- To liaise with Heads of Year regarding any pastoral concerns/issues.
- To work with and meet with pupils to support with attendance improvement.
- To maintain positive links with parents/guardians including communicating with the Pastoral team regarding any attendance concerns.
- To run attendance reports to obtain attendance information
- Meet with Mrs Clarke on a fortnightly basis.



## **Pupils' Responsibilities**

Pupils are asked to:

- Value school and education.
- Aim to meet or exceed the whole school attendance target.
- Be in school every day and on time.
- Sign in using the ipad at the School Reception if arriving late to school.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Keep a record of their monthly attendance % in their Planner.
- Ensure that a reason for any absence has been provided by parent/guardian through the automated system or using a written note on their return to school. (Pupils should pass on absence notes from parents to their Form Tutor).
- Record their monthly attendance traffic light and ensure their attendance pages in the planner signed by a parent/guardian
- Catch up on any work missed during their absence.
- Be respectful to anyone who has reason to discuss attendance or punctuality with them.
- Take responsibility for their punctuality, where there are no genuine reasons and complete appropriate sanctions



## Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. [1]

If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

Parents are asked to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Notify the School if their child cannot attend for any reason (this is for the child's security as well as administrative reasons).
- Work with the School and Pastoral team (Form Tutor, Head of Year, Senior Teacher) to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems.
- Attend meetings as required in relation of their child's attendance.
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance and / or respond to our automated call system/phone calls.
- Discuss planned absences with the school and apply for permission well in advance,
- e.g. a wedding or other special occasions.
- Discuss issues with the school which could have an impact on their child's attendance

[1] *Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986*



## 5.0 Punctuality and Lateness

At Integrated College Glengormley we actively promote the importance of developing good time keeping amongst pupils, by monitoring pupil punctuality to school. The school monitors and acts upon persistent lateness of pupils.

For pupils the school day begins promptly with Registration at 8.45am and registers must be completed electronically by Form Tutors at the start of Registration on the SIMs Attendance Register. Pupil's arriving to registration after 8.56am are marked as 'late', unless due to extenuating circumstances, which will be communicated to Form Tutors or discussed with Head's of Year.

Any pupil arriving late (after 8.56am until 9.05am) reports to their Form Tutor and the Form Tutor records minutes late and reasons on the SIMs Attendance Register.

Any pupil arriving late after 9.05am should attend their period 1 class as normal and their Teacher will give a L mark. If a pupil arrives late after 9:55 they should report to the office and sign in using the app, to ensure they receive their present mark.

If a pupil has a note for their lateness from a Parent/Guardian, they should present this at the school office.

All above information is recorded on the SIMs Attendance Register.

It is the responsibility of Form Tutors in collaboration with the Head of Year to monitor lateness and act swiftly to reduce persistent lateness by employing strategies from the school Lateness Policy.





### **Late Passes:**

Where there are genuine issues regarding punctuality, pupils can be considered for a late pass. Form Tutors should raise concerns to the Head of Year. Late passes will be issued by each Head of Year and will be awarded on a case-by-case basis. Any pupil with a late pass will not receive a late mark or be expected to complete sanctions due to their lateness.

### **Lateness Sanctions:**

Form Tutors will closely monitor punctuality to AM registration on a daily basis and apply appropriate sanctions, where there is no valid reason for arriving late.

If a pupil arrives late to school, without a genuine reason for their absence. The following sanctions will be actioned.

- Each week - if 2 or more lates occur in a week a break-time detention will be issued the following week
- If there are continued late marks, a punctuality letter will be requested to be sent
- If no improvement, the Form Tutor will contact the parent and discuss the use of a punctuality card
- If no improvement, the Head of Year will invite the parent/guardian to a meeting in School to discuss further to bring about improvement.