



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction:

This policy is based upon the Strategy Statement on Attendance which was ratified by the BOM in June 2011.

The Policy:

- promotes attendance and participation by all students in the full life of the school.
- features the policies and practices of the school that promote an appreciation of learning and good attendance.

Rationale:

Legislative context:

Education Welfare Act 2000 s22(1)... that schools prepare and submit to the Board a statement of the strategies and measures it proposes to adopt for the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending that school and encouraging regular attendance at school on the part of such students....

'If students do not feel missed then there is a problem. They are tourists in the classroom not citizens of the classroom.' (Prof. Dolf Van Veen., in NEWB Conference 2008, School Attendance and Participation: What Works and Why? Report)

Education (Welfare) Act s10

(a) to promote and foster in society, and in particular in families, an appreciation of the benefits to be derived from education, in particular as respects the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural and moral development of children, and of the social and economic advantages that flow therefrom,

(b) to promote and foster, in recognised schools, an environment that encourages children to attend school and participate fully in the life of the school,

Aims:

- To communicate our high expectations for good attendance
- To outline our procedures and data collection regarding attendance which aim to identify quickly any students at risk.
- To comply with legislation

Link to mission statement:

1. "Our school is a place where we foster such values as respect, inclusion and care as evident in our school policy and practice."

Link to existing school policies:

The Attendance Policy is linked to the policies and procedures that promote an appreciation of learning and good attendance. It also incorporates the 4 action plans outlined in the Strategy Statement on Attendance.

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Homework
- Special Educational Needs
- Whole School Guidance
- Subject Plans

A whole school approach has been adopted in the development and communication of the Attendance Policy and as with all existing policies it is subject to change as the need arises.

Key personnel:

- Every Teacher & staff member: electronic registration and Teacher's Diary
- Class Tutor – dedicated time each day
- Year Head – year group monitoring and regular discussions with parents.
- Deputy Principals – Junior and Senior School
- Post Holder with responsibility for Punctuality
- Guidance Personnel
- SEN Department
- Care Team
- Administration Personnel – daily monitoring, furnishing of data to relevant personnel, NEWB periodic and end of year returns.
- Homework club/ Student mentoring

Benefits for Child

- The strength of the link between good attendance and the child's performance in examinations is confirmed in several research studies.
- School attendance contributes to personal and social development - school is where children make friends and develop social relations with other students and teachers. Good attendance maintains these relations and prevents friend and staff alienation from periods of absence.
- Self-esteem and confidence are developed as a result of regular attendance at school.
- Children who regularly attend school achieve the most from their school experience.
- Better relations with parents and siblings, easing parental stress and creating a good example for siblings.
- Good school attendance is a positive habit learned and this habit and dedication can be carried on to future studies.
- Better chances of long-term employment.
- A good record of performance is attractive to employers.
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Benefits for School

- Positive impact on school resources.
- Harmony within the class and between the students.
- Good teacher/student relations can lead to improved success.

Impact of Non-Attendance:

Impact on Child

- The strength of the link between missing school, underachievement and early school leaving is confirmed in several research studies.
- Children who miss school on a regular basis will have gaps in their learning which will impact on their ability to engage in future lessons.
- Children who miss large amounts of school time can experience social and emotional consequences through alienation from peers and staff.
- Children may be drawn into anti-social behaviour.
- Children who are away from school may also be at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse.
- Absenteeism is one of the strongest factors associated with early school leaving.
- Those who frequently miss school are less likely to progress to further study.
- Children who leave school early tend not to re-engage with education and therefore remain at a disadvantage throughout their lives.

Impact on School

- Benefits from teaching are not fully realised as teachers must re-visit topics for absentee students.
- School time lost in investigation of non-attendance. This is a drain on valuable resources within the education sector.
- Disharmony within the class.

What we do:

Attendance, Monitoring & Tracking

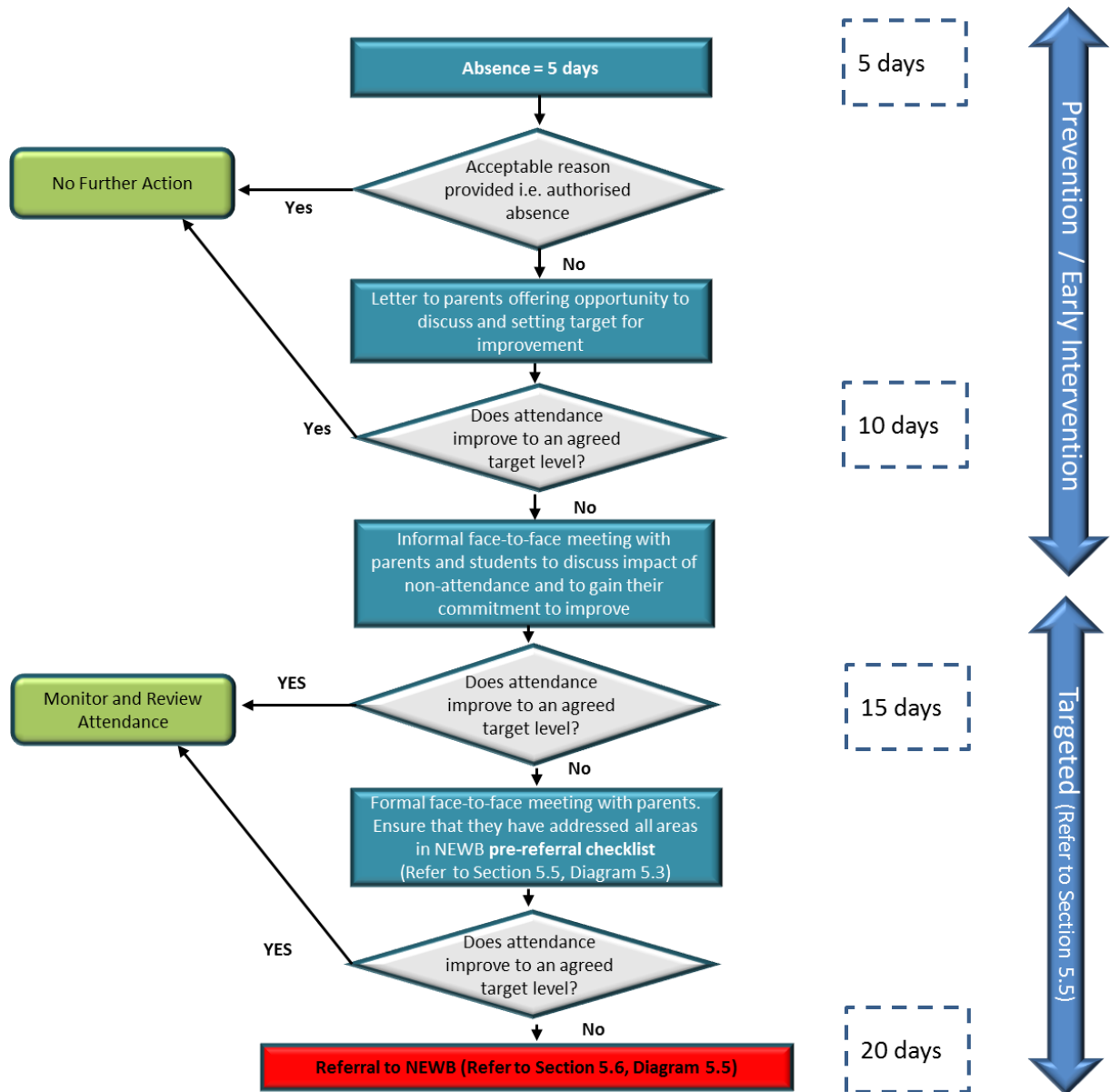
1. Attendance & punctuality are taken very seriously in Ashbourne CS
2. Where possible, P/DP meet & greet students as they arrive in school each morning & at lunchtime.
3. Student attendance is marked electronically at morning registration by the class tutor & at every class by the subject teacher throughout the school day.
4. Attendance information is available to Administration & other relevant personnel on the E' Portal system.
5. Following morning registration, a text is issued to all parents of non attenders.
6. Reminders to teachers to take a register are made over the intercom regularly by Principal/Deputies emphasising the importance of attendance.
7. Weekly discussions regarding attendance take place between Year Heads & relevant Deputy Principals.
8. Latecomers after registration must physically sign in late at the main office. – The Late Books are checked twice a day by Administration & E' Portal updated accordingly.
9. Class tutors check & collect notes daily at tutorial time.
10. Journals are stamped/signed by relevant personnel.
11. Students may only leave with written permission from home & sanction given by Deputy Principals or Principal. Students must sign out and information is provided relating to reason for leaving.
12. Students who are unwell must sign out and must be collected by parents/guardians.
13. Students cannot leave school during morning break. Senior students only may leave during lunch with permission from parents/guardians.
14. On a weekly basis, Class tutors or any staff member who has a concern regarding a student's attendance/patterns of non-attendance/lateness are urged to e-mail/contact the relevant Year Head who will investigate and determine response.
15. Attendance is regularly discussed at Weekly Care Team meetings. An attendance report form is available to track & monitor the attendance of 'at risk' students.
16. Where there are concerns regular phone calls are made to parents/guardians (Year Head, DP/P, POR, Class Tutor). This response is co-ordinated & recorded.
17. The Year Head may visit the home to discuss attendance, & agree a way forward.
18. When necessary the P /DP communicates with the Education Welfare Officer, Juvenile Liaison Officer, Social Workers, Youth Services, and others.
19. Attendance is discussed with parents/guardians at P/T Meetings.
20. Attendance at Study is monitored daily – each journal is stamped.
21. Attendance is commented upon in formal school reports.
22. Attendance is core to LCA & TY.
23. Incentives are provided to encourage full/improved Attendance including Attendance Certificates.
24. Letters are issued on a regular basis. Formal letters signed by the Year Heads/ Deputy/Principal regarding attendance issue at specific agreed number of days, e.g. 5, 10 etc... Although standard, these are individualised and include an invitation to come into school to discuss the situation.

*There is always a need to attempt to address the more intensive needs of chronic non-attenders. There are differing and sometimes highly complex factors underlying poor

attendance including issues around bullying, safety, identity and mental health; and the need to consider different interventions at this level. These issues emerge consistently at Care Team meetings.

There is also a range of issues which impact upon school attendance such as established norms around late bedtimes, missing school due to holidays, medical appointments or missing up to twenty days as an acceptable practice. These issues are addressed with parents/guardians.

ADDRESSING ABSENTEEISM IN ACS



This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting on Wednesday 13th November, 2013 (Ref. Meeting Nr. 191).

Date: _____

*Chairperson
Board of Management
Ashbourne Community School*