



# Dunshaughlin Community College

## Attendance Strategy

**Scope:**

Board of Management, Teaching Staff, Administration Staff, Parents Council, Student Council

**Relationship to School's Mission Statement:**

Good attendance is promoted in Dunshaughlin Community College 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.

Without such a pattern of regular attendance, it is not possible to provide "a complete education maximising student potential to the highest possible standards" (Ref: School Mission Statement)

**Rationale:**

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

**Goals:**

- To develop a positive approach to attendance and punctuality.
- Keep accurate records of students' whereabouts at all times during school hours.
- Students learn to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance.

- Parents appreciate the vital role they play in their child's school attendance.
- Reduce the rate of absenteeism and encourage full attendance where possible.
- The early detection and correction of patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.

**A positive approach to attendance and punctuality:**

- 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 ePortal 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 school is developed through participation in school life and/or extra-curricular activities.

**How attendance will be monitored:**

- All student use their swipe card to register attendance in the morning and again at lunchtime in advance of class resuming at 2.05pm. Those student who swipe in after 8.44am will be recorded as late. Those arriving after the start of class tutorial are recorded as late.
- All students attend Class Tutor Roll Call at 8.44am in the Class Tutor Room. The roll is verified electronically on ePortal. Absence notes are submitted to the Class Tutor. He/she will subsequently amend the unexplained absence to absence explained on ePortal.
- Students who arrive at school after 8.44 am are required to sign in at the Deputy Principal's Office opposite the Student Support Services Office (SSO). The record will be amended from

unexplained to late or late excused. The student will be given a late stamp from the Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal on duty.

- 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. The signing out is inputted to ePortal by the Admin Staff.
- When that student returns to school they must sign back in at the school reception and the register will be amended by the school administrator.
- Students must also swipe in after lunch between 1.30pm and 2.00pm to register their afternoon attendance.
- The afternoon attendance is entered into ePortal at 2.05pm by the relevant Class Teacher.
- Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by administrative staff as school activity. The teacher who oversees the activity prepares a list of the names and, prior to departure, emails a list of student 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 Admin Staff of same.

### **Strategy Content :**

#### **Roles and responsibility:**

##### **Principal:**

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- To monitor attendance records regularly.
- To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- To inform parents/guardians and students of procedures for the notification of absences 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.
- Facilitate mixed ability classes in so far as possible throughout the curriculum.

**Deputy Principals:**

- To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Class Tutors , Administration Staff and to implement the School Policy.
- To liaise with the Year Head and Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.
- To inform new teachers of their obligations with regard to recording attendance.

**Year Head:**

- To monitor regularly the attendance records on the ePortal system for the given year.
- 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.
- Use the merit card system and other rewards to promote attendance in the year group.
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their own learning by giving students the Return to School Learning plans.
- To conduct an attendance and punctuality audit at the end of each term. Contact home to acknowledge excellent attendance and punctuality and to raise concerns about patterns of poor attendance and punctuality.

**Class Tutor:**

- To record the attendance of the tutor class at 8.44 am each morning. Ensure all student have swiped in to record absences and punctuality.
- 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 ePortal 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.

**Class 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 the ePortal system (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school).
- To input the attendance for the first and seventh periods into the ePortal system at 8.44am and 2.05pm. If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually on paper and submit to the Student Services Office. If the class teacher is substituting during these periods the attendance should be recorded either electronically on ePortal or on the class list available for that time and then submitted to the Student Services Office.
- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.
- Set example by their own punctuality.
- Acknowledge students, welcome them back and support them upon their return to school.
- Support student on return to school by providing the Return to School Learning Plan
- Teachers need to be made fully aware of their responsibilities regarding the recording of attendance and follow up of any concerns regarding attendance. They need to carry out an initial investigation and refer to Tutor / Year Head if the student does not have a satisfactory explanation for absence from your class.
- Where a reason for absence is recorded for AM roll call teachers need to submit the same code for PM roll call.

**Parent/Guardian:**

- To support the school's Attendance Strategy in compliance with their legal responsibilities. (Education Welfare Act 2000)

- To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unnecessary absences. Where possible, to arrange appointments outside of school time e.g. Wednesday afternoons.
- To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school.
- To inform the school in advance of any planned absences from school.
- To provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers.
- To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
- To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.
- To arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays.
- Signing in and out of school: Any student who needs to leave school early must be collected by a parent / guardian. A parent or guardian must accompany the student to reception if that student is returning to school following an appointment.
- **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.

**Student:**

- To be in class on time
- Take responsibility for recording their own attendance using the swipe card system in the morning and after lunch.
- 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.
- To complete the Return to School Learning Plan (Appendix 1) on returning to school after an absence.
- To complete the Student Absence Learning Plan (Appendix 2) in advance of a planned absence from school.

**Administrative Staff:**

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

**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.

**Partnership arrangements:**

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



## Appendix 2: Student Absence Learning Plan

### You must complete one plane per subject

Students who know in advance that they will be absent from school must develop a Student Absence Learning Plan to support his / her education during this period. Please ensure that you include revision for your exams in your plan.

Student Name:		Year:		Date:	
Subject:					
Reason for Absence:					
Reason for Absence Slip Completed:		Yes		No	
Date of last Day of School:			Date of return to School:		
The work that I missed and need to complete:					
Topic(s) that I missed					
Exercises to complete					

Resources that will help me:	
Exam Revision (where applicable)	
People I will go to when I need help:	
Agreed role of parents / guardians in supporting the Student Absence Learning Plan for this subject. To be filled in by parent / guardian. <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
I have checked that my son / daughter has completed any work they have missed in this subject due to absence: Parent / Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____	
I confirm that this student has caught up in any work missed in this subject due to absence Subject Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Year Head Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Student Signature: _____ Date: _____	