

Holy Faith Secondary School Clontarf



Attendance Policy and Strategy

Scope

This policy applies to the whole school community, for implementation by all staff, students, parents and Board of Management. This policy strives to set out the basic principles upon which the School Attendance Strategy will be implemented, sustained and evaluated in our school. This policy has been developed in consultation with the Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

Relationship to school mission statement

Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf aims to provide an excellent, all round education in a Christian environment. Through a learning community of faith and justice, based on respect, we seek to form integrated and self-reliant persons, who will be moved to work for a better world.

Our objectives are

- To pursue excellence in all areas of school life, academic, creative and practical.
- To nurture a friendly and caring environment which allows each student to develop her own natural talents and gifts.
- To recognise our responsibility towards the wider community and develop a spirit of service.
- To offer opportunities for the spiritual development of each member of the school community.

This policy seeks to foster an appreciation of learning among students and to encourage regular attendance on their part.

Related policies

This policy is linked with the school's Admissions Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour, Suspension and Expulsion policy and School Rules.

Rationale

In Holy Faith Clontarf, we are educators first as education is the foundation stone upon which a student's preparation for later life is built. Parents are the primary educators and as such are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children receive the education which they have a right to and deserve. The school is here to support and enhance this education. In Holy Faith, we work in partnership with parents to ensure that an environment is created where students look forward to coming to school.

Research has shown that poor attendance and poor participation are directly linked to low educational achievement and early school leaving. Every school is required by the Education Welfare Act (2000) to have an attendance policy. The act states that students should attend school every day. This policy is implemented so that we have a standardised response to non-attendance.

Goals/objectives

This policy aims to:

- Promote a spirit of partnership involving principal, deputy principal, year heads, parents, teachers, students and the community
- Assist towards developing a school environment where all students feel welcome in the school and where their educational and personal needs are met within the resources provided to the school.
- Promote good attendance and active participation in school. This develops a good work ethic and prepares students to be responsible employees/employers for the future.
- Establish procedures for the monitoring of attendance and non-attendance.
- Establish procedures for attendance record-keeping for the school, students, parents and TUSLA
- Support students and parents where there are attendance problems

Students attend school every day in order to achieve:

- better understanding of material being taught in class
- increased confidence and self-esteem
- improved examination performance
- better career opportunities

Policy content

A register of all students who have been admitted to the school will be maintained.

School attendance/absenteeism/lateness is monitored carefully as follows:

- The school day begins at 9.00am. Students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8.55am unless they are attending weekly assembly.
- A roll is taken at 9 am daily. This is recorded on computer by Deputy Principal and details posted on staff notice board before 11.00am
- Year Head also takes and records attendance daily and updates staff notice board with details of late arrivals and early passes given.
- Each teacher also takes his/her own roll at beginning of individual classes
- Year Head records absentee letters and contacts parents if pattern of absence is causing concern

Principal/Deputy Principal, Year Heads and teachers will listen carefully to parents' concerns regarding absences. Particular attention is given to children who are experiencing difficulties. Our school is particularly mindful of students with different needs and puts strategies in place to

meet these needs as they arise with ongoing communication (telephone calls/letter) between Year Head (and/or Principal/Deputy Principal) and parents. Year Head/Guidance Counsellor works with the student reasoning with her and giving advice on how to improve.

In order to encourage good attendance, every effort is made to make school a happy and welcoming place for students, teachers and parents. Students are rewarded with certificates for good attendance at assemblies and prizes for perfect attendance at annual prize-giving.

Sanctions include loss of privileges and detention for lateness.

Roles and responsibilities

Holy Faith Clontarf, recognises the contribution of all members of the school community in the implementation of its policy.

Principal:

The Principal of Holy Faith Clontarf will maintain a register of all students who have been admitted to the school.

Holy Faith Clontarf affirms that a student, who has not reached the age of 16 years or who has not completed three years of post primary education, cannot be removed from the register, except:

- For inter-school transfer and then only after all details regarding attendance and educational progress have been issued to the new school.
- Where for whatever reason a student is removed from the school under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 20 (4).

Holy Faith Clontarf affirms that the Principal shall, after admitting a student from another second level school, notify the Principal of said school that she/he has registered said student.

Holy Faith Clontarf affirms that the Principal must maintain a record of attendance and non-attendance on each school day or part thereof of each student registered at the school, which specifies the fact of attendance or failure to attend and the reason for such failure.

The Principal is obliged to inform in writing an Educational Welfare Officer where:

- The student is suspended from a recognised school for a period not less than six days
- The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during the school year is not less than twenty

The Principal will arrange for a copy of the school calendar to be sent to parents with reports in June each year and contains details of the opening and closing times of the school and the school holidays.

Deputy Principal:

- Arranges for the collection of attendance sheets on a daily basis
- Enters attendance on SIMS system
- Posts daily attendance on noticeboard in staffroom
- Liaises with Year Heads to ensure accuracy of attendance
- Monitors and analyses lateness and imposes sanctions where warranted
- May carry out “spot check” attendance and contact home as necessary
- Operates reward system for good attendance
- All records regarding attendance will be kept in the school for 7 years (legal record).

Year Head:

- Records students’ absences.
- Receives absence notes and files record of absence notes received.
- Contacts parents where appropriate to discuss absence.
- Signs permission slips for students to leave school early. Amends staff notice board with details of late arrivals and early passes given.
- Liaises with Deputy Principal to ensure accuracy of attendance record sent to parents with school report.

Teachers:

- Call the roll for each class and record absentees
- Log lateness
- Ensure the return of the attendance sheet by 9.15am to Deputy Principal’s office
- Monitor non-attendance during the day and alert the Year Head to any discrepancies
- Teachers involved in extra-curricular or co-curricular activities to put list of students attending matches, outings etc. on noticeboard in staff room
- Teachers may discuss with parents at parent/teacher meetings the importance of good attendance

Students:

It is the responsibility of each student to

- attend every day unless for a valid reason be punctual for all classes attend all classes as per timetable unless prior permission has been received from the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.
- sign the late book if arriving late and give note to Year Head
- get early pass notes signed by Year Head/Principal/Deputy Principal when leaving school early
- sign out if leaving during the day and again if returning later (after appointment/music exam etc)
- provide a note regarding absences (in journal or on paper) upon return to school. Students need to ensure the accuracy of notes – dates, reasons etc

- Students may be sanctioned for unexplained absences or lateness.

Should a student become ill during the school day, she should report to her class teacher who will refer her to the Year Head or main office when she will be directed to sick bay. A student may be unwell for a short period and then in a position to return to class. If a student is very unwell the office will contact their parent/guardian. Students should not contact home via a mobile phone.

Students involved in sports or extra-curricular activities:

It is the responsibility of students who are absent from class/school for any reason to find out details of work missed. This applies also to students who miss class due to sporting or other extra-curricular activities.

It is also the responsibility of students to notify the teacher beforehand that they will be absent from class due to sporting or other extra-curricular activities.

Parents:

Holy Faith Clontarf affirms that parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for ensuring that girls attend school regularly once they are enrolled at this school bearing in mind that they are legally obliged to complete three years of post primary education up to their sixteenth birthday. Should any parent need assistance in ensuring that their daughter attends school, please contact the school where support structures can be discussed in strict confidence.

Holy Faith Clontarf affirms that parents/guardians have a social responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly regardless of age or status and they should ensure that their children complete their education.

Holy Faith Clontarf affirms that parents/guardians have a statutory obligation to notify their daughter's Year Head in the form of a written explanation or a doctor's certificate, explaining the reason for each absence and date of absence. (Education Welfare Act 2000) In the event of long absence, parents/guardians are asked to maintain contact with school authorities.

The school requires that emergency contact numbers or means of contact are provided to the school before the start of the school year.

The school calendar is sent to parents with reports in June each year and contains details of the opening and closing times of the school and the school holidays. Parents need to be aware that removing their daughter from school for an extended holiday outside of these dates, has the potential to damage her education as it is difficult for any student to catch up with what has been missed.

Parents also need to be aware of the negative impact of work/part-time jobs on attendance and participation in school and involvement in extra curricular activities. Please note that a report will have to be made to TUSLA if the total absences over the year are in excess of 20 days OR if the school is concerned about the student's pattern of attendance. The

school (Year Head or Deputy Principal) contacts parents where attendance or lateness is a cause for concern. School reports sent twice a year will contain the number of days that the student has missed to date in the current year. If parents have any queries about this, they should contact the Deputy Principal or relevant Year Head.

Board of Management:

The Board of Management of Holy Faith shall ensure that the statutory obligations of the school with regard to school attendance and participation are adhered to.

The Board of Management of Holy Faith shall submit a report on attendance levels in the school to the Education Welfare Officer and to the Parents' Association.

The Board of Management of Holy Faith Clontarf shall ensure that an evaluation of the effectiveness of the process, strategy and policy regarding attendance is carried out regularly.

The Board of Management of Holy Faith Clontarf shall ensure that all information is collected and issued in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1988).

Success criteria

- Improved attendance over a sustained period.
- Reduced disruption to class
- Fewer numbers (especially at Senior Cycle) detained for lateness
- Deputy Principal to regularly provide statistics on lateness and absences

Monitoring procedures

Management (Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads and B.O.M) will monitor the implementation of this policy.

Review procedures

Principal, Deputy Principal (per term) in consultation with Year Heads, and staff

The Principal will report to the B.O.M. (per term) with regard to Attendance and Participation

The review of the policy should take cognisance of changing information, legislation, developments in school based programmes and feedback from parent/guardians, teachers and students.

Implementation and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12th May 2015.

A review of the policy will take place in January 2017
This policy may also be reviewed by Le Chéile

Signed: _____

Margaret Mullooly
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____

Deirdre Gogarty
Principal

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