



Attendance Policy

Tyndall College, Kilkenny Road, Carlow.

Scope

This policy applies to the pupils attending Tyndall College, Carlow. It is prepared with http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/NEWB_Guidelines_Eng.pdf NEWB attendance guidelines in mind and we recommend that this document is read in conjunction with this policy.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to monitoring, encouraging and promoting regular school attendance. Educational studies consistently show a link between regular student attendance and the successful achievement of learning outcomes.

Relationship of this Policy to the Mission and Aims of the School

In line with our mission statement. The school aims to maximise the potential of all students. Reaching one's full potential is facilitated through active engagement in the curriculum which is facilitated by regular school attendance. Regular attendance and engagement assists the school in fulfilling its aim of giving pupils a wide range of learning opportunities designed to promote their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development at school and within society. It also assists pupils in preparing for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences presented in adult life.

In cases where attendance is unsatisfactory the school will seek to identify the causes of the poor attendance and to provide whatever support and encouragement it can to overcome the problem. The school also recognises that some absence is unavoidable and will endeavour to be understanding in such cases. Where regular unauthorised absences occur, and where adequate warnings have been given and disregarded, the school reserves the right to refer the student to the board of management and the board may request, that the student repeat a year.

Students must be aware that certain courses in the school require a minimum attendance for certification purposes. In all cases, it is the responsibility of students to make up for work missed during absences. Students should also be aware that in certain circumstances, work missed due to absence may be such, that the criteria for certification for the course cannot be met. Attendance records will be made available to individual students, the Department of Education and Skills, Kilkenny & Carlow Education and Training Board and other statutory authorities with the right to access to such information. Attendance may also be referred to in written references provided by the school.

Goals/Objective

To assist the School in complying with the Education Welfare Act 2000.

To outline the system in place for monitoring of school attendance.

To outline how the School promotes and encourages high levels of attendance.

To ensure a coordinated school response to absenteeism.

To form habits of regular and punctual attendance in students.

Tyndall College strongly recognises the importance of regular, consistent attendance.

Children must attend school regularly because:

- a good education gives a child the best possible start in life.
- If a child goes to school regularly he or she will be better able to keep up with schoolwork and may grow to enjoy school.
- Employers want people who are reliable. Children who think it is ok to miss out on school, may also think it is ok to stay off work.
- Missing out on school friendships can affect a child's ability to make and keep friendships throughout life.
- Children who attend school regularly are less likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour and/or become involved in crime.

Children should only be absent from school when it is absolutely necessary e.g. due to illness, family bereavement or other exceptional family circumstances.

Class Tutors and Year Heads will remind students regularly of the importance of good attendance.

The following structures are in place to monitor and encourage this attendance

1. Daily register is taken using vsware during registration each morning
2. A roll call is taken using vsware (where possible) in every class
3. Students who are late to school in the morning must report to the office to sign the late book and to ensure they are marked present. Interventions apply for persistent lateness. These include verbal warnings, communication with home and detention.
4. Parents should ring and inform the school on the first day of an absence.
5. All verbal contact re absenteeism is recorded in a record book in the main office. On return having been absent a parent must provide a written signed explanation for the absenteeism which pupils give to their Year Head. This must be filled in the appropriate section of the school diary and it is imperative that the counterfoil is also filled in.
6. Students who have to leave school during the school day, must present a note to their Year Head and then present this to the office on the day by 8.50am. The student should be collected in person by parent/guardian and signed out of the school.

7. If a student returns to school following a partial absence, they must report to the main office before attending classes.
8. When students leave school without permission this is considered a serious breach of the disciplinary system.
9. Where a student is absent, and the school is not informed contact may be made with the home
10. A daily list of absent students is available to teachers on the VShare system.
11. Students who miss 5/6 days are spoken to by their Year Head and a letter will be sent to parents requesting a response or meeting to discuss absence.
12. The School Principal, HSCL coordinator, School Completion Programme Co-ordinator and the school Care Team monitor school attendance.
13. Parents of students who are showing signs of absenteeism issues are contacted by the HSCL coordinator.
14. Arrangements may be made to meet parents in the school or the HSCL coordinator may visit the home to offer advice and support.
15. Where appropriate in school, measures may be put in place for individual students to encourage better attendance. The advice of the Education Welfare Office may also be sought in some cases.
16. After 10 days of absence, the student will receive written notice that they have been absent for 10 days (or more), and will be asked to meet with a member (or members) of the Care team in the school with a view to seeking ways to address the issue.
17. Parents are requested to attend a meeting with the School Attendance officer, School Completion and the HSCL to discuss and agree strategies for improvement if a student has missed 15 or more days.
18. Attendance reports are sent to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) at the assigned times during the school year. Normally AFTER 20 days, a second letter is sent and at this point the NEWB are informed and have access to our attendance records. A visit from the NEWB attendance officer may follow.
19. A rewards and incentives scheme is used to promote good attendance. There is a monthly individual rewards scheme where the names of students with full attendance are put in to a draw on a class by class basis with the person's whose name comes out receiving a prize. At the end of the year all students with full attendance are entered into a draw for an iPhone (Sponsored locally). There is also a class reward initiative where the class with the fewest days missed will be brought on a trip. This initiative encourages positive peer pressure to encourage good school attendance in every class. These initiatives are supported by the School Completion Programme in conjunction with our school sponsors. A reward system is also in place for the most improved attenders thus encouraging students who have a poor record of attendance to improve.
20. It is strongly emphasised at the First Year Parent Induction and at subsequent meetings such as parent teacher meetings that full attendance is promoted and encouraged.
21. Attendance awards are given at the annual School Awards Ceremony in late May each year.

Authorised and unauthorised absences

It is recognised that some absences are unavoidable. Authorised absences include:

- Certified sick leave
- Absence on compassionate grounds, e.g., death or illness of a family member.

In all cases of absences, the school should be notified as soon as possible. In cases of certified sick leave, a doctor's certificate should be provided to the school. Otherwise, the absence will be deemed unauthorised. Leave on compassionate grounds must be negotiated and agreed with the school.

Explanation for Absence: Students must produce a note in their school journal from their parents explaining the absence on the day they return to school. Students who are over eighteen may write their own notes. The note must give the reason for absence. This is a requirement from the Education Welfare Board. Reasons for absence will be recorded for the Education Welfare Board under the following Headings

- A. Illness
- B. Urgent Family Reasons
- C. Expelled
- D. Suspended
- E. Other
- F. Unexplained
- G. Transferred to another School.

Note: If for some reason a parent or child does not wish to put the reason for absence in the school journal they should give a general explanation in the school journal with a separate note for the Year Head in an envelope.

If your child has to attend the doctor a Doctor's note should be given to the relevant Year Head at morning assembly.

Cases of regular absences

Where a student has missed a significant amount of time, authorised and unauthorised combined, which will result in him/her being unable to participate effectively on the course, s/he will be advised that s/he cannot resume his/her place on the course in the current year. (In this regard, 20 -30 days absent would be regarded as significant.) If s/he wishes to appeal this decision, they may apply in writing, within 14 days, to the Board of Management of the school.

Support for Parents: If parents have difficulty in getting their child to attend school they should make contact with the relevant Year Head for their child. Parents and children will be supported through the school Pastoral Care System. This may take the form of a meeting or meetings with

one or more of the following – Career Guidance Counsellor, Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal.

Monitoring Attendance/Punctuality by Parent/Guardian:

Parents/Guardian should monitor their son's/daughter's school journal on a weekly basis to keep up to date on attendance and punctuality.

Holidays during Term Time:

Parents should not take their child out of school for holidays. This has the potential to damage their education. It is very difficult for any child to catch up with what has been missed when out of school for an extended holiday.

There are, of course, exceptional circumstances where parents may have to take their son/daughter out of school during term time. However, you should always be aware of the potential risk to their education, and therefore these situations should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Classwork missed due to absence

It is the policy of the school that work missed by a student during absence will not be covered again when the student returns, as this is detrimental to the progress of students who were in attendance. Consequently, it is the student's responsibility to identify work and class notes missed during absence, and to catch up on the work outside of class time. In cases of authorized absences such as sporting events, it is the responsibility of the student to catch up on notes and homework. Teachers will facilitate this.

In cases where attendance constitutes a criterion for certification, any absences above the permitted level will result in the student failing to achieve certification.

Work experience

In cases of absence while on work experience, both the school and the workplace should be notified early in the morning of the first day's absence. Students should be aware that there may not be an opportunity to compensate at a later stage for absences while on work experience.

Assignments/project deadlines missed due to absence

In cases of unauthorised absences, no extension of deadlines for projects or assignments will be granted. In cases of authorised absences, the school may exercise its discretion to agree to an extension of project/assignment deadlines should this be possible within the rules for the certification being sought.

Continuous Assessment or portfolio elements missed due to absence

In cases of unauthorised absences, extensions of deadlines for continuous assessment or portfolio elements will not be granted.

School examinations missed due to absence

School examinations missed due to absences will not, except in exceptional circumstances, be made available again. (Please see Tyndall College Assessment Policy)

Disclosure

Attendance records will be made available

- to individual students,
- to statutory authorities with the right to access to such information on receipt of a valid request for such information.
- to others in appropriate cases and with the written request of the student/former student concerned (unless he/she is a minor where, his/her parents/guardians consent is required)

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- Attend school each day as agreed on enrolment in Tyndall College, Carlow.

Parent/Guardian

- Encourage their children to attend and engage in school and to support the School in this regard
- Have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school
- In the event of absence on any given day, parents should communicate verbally to the school on the day of the absence and in writing on the return of the student both the fact of that absence and the reasons for the absence
- In the event of the student being withdrawn from school for part of a day, to communicate to the school both the fact of that partial absence and the reasons for that absence in writing.

Teachers

- To monitor attendance in their classes
- To highlight students who may be a cause of concern
- To discuss attendance of students with parents at parent teacher meetings

Office Staff

- Input the data from the temporary roll sheets into the computer system (see below).

DEIS Attendance/School Completion Team

- To review and implement the various strategies/measures outlined in the annual DEIS plan and Attendance Strategy

Home School Community Liaison Coordinator

- To promote high standards of attendance of pupils at school.
- To monitor the overall attendance of students and follow up as necessary with Class Tutors/Deputy Principal/Principal
- To contact and support parents of students who are developing an attendance

Problem

- To meet with students and parents in cases of high levels of absences.

Year Head & Class Tutor

- Check absence note signed by parent/guardian

Deputy Principal/Principal

- Responsible for the overall implementation of the policy.

Monitoring Procedures

The Attendance Officer and HSCL Coordinator in conjunction with the Principal and Deputy Principal will monitor the overall effectiveness of the policy.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1

The following information is taken from page 3 GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING STUDENT ABSENCES & EXPULSIONS PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS. The full text can be found at http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/NEWB_Guidelines_Eng.pdf

REPORTING OF STUDENT ABSENCES

Under the Act, a school is obliged to report to the NEWB every time:

- ✓ a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- ✓ a Principal is concerned about a student's attendance
- ✓ the Board of Management decides to expel a student
- ✓ a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- ✓ a student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason

All schools are asked to submit information about individual student absences four times a year on designated dates, and only if they have students in the categories stated above. Reporting dates are circulated at the beginning of each school year.

APPENDIX 2.

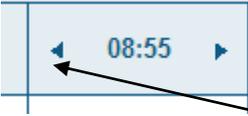
- Roll Call takes place each morning commencing at 8.50am Assembly
- Further roll call takes place in every class period.
- During roll call
 - All students **must** sit down
 - Journals should be placed on the students desk
 - Roll will be called by the teacher in charge
 - Students who are present between 8.50am and 9.00am are recorded as present
 - Students who arrive after 9am are marked as late
 - A check is carried out by the class tutor/year head to see if students have a journal
 - The class tutor keeps a record of students who have not got a journal
 - It is a minor offence if a student has no journal persistently
 - The minor offence should be recorded in the behaviour book in the staff room.
 - A check is carried out by the year head to see if students have the correct uniform
 - Class Tutors to record if students do not have full uniform
 - Year Head to be informed if incorrect uniform consistently
- Students who arrive after 8.50am should report to the secretary's office to sign in.

VSWare

Attendance is taken online using VSWare. Should the system be down the following applies:

- If Wifi is down a note will be put on staffroom door to inform staff
- Temporary roll sheets will be placed in the roll book area
- Teachers will return the roll book to this area
- The school secretary/deputy principal will update the computerised system when the opportunity arises

The following is a breakdown of codes and how they are used

<p>Abs(I): Abs d2 Illness</p>	<p>This code is for when you have a note to say that the student was absent. To register this you will be going back using the</p>  <p>back arrow and marking in the Abs(I) for those dates that you have a note.</p>
<p>Abs(UFR): Abs d2 Ugt fami...</p>	<p>This code is for an urgent family reason such as a death in the family. To register this you will be going back using the</p>  <p>back arrow and marking in the Abs(UFR) for those dates that you have a note.</p>
<p>SA: School Activity</p>	<p>This code is for when students are out but on school business such as on a field trip, at a match etc. For NEWB purposes students are technically present when this option is chosen.</p>
<p>susp: Suspended</p>	<p>This code is for when students are suspended.</p>
<p>Late1: Late Morning</p>	<p>If a student arrives after roll call and are late you use this. The late book is checked after break each day and students who were marked absent but are in the late book are recorded. If a student protests that they were late, not absent, the previous day please send them to the office as we need to check if they are not signing in late.</p>
<p>exp: Expelled</p>	<p>This is the code for when a student has been expelled.</p>
<p>Abs(Uexp): Abs Unexplained</p>	<p>This code is for Unexplained absence and is the one that will be used in most cases. This will then be overwritten in subsequent days when notes explaining an absence are presented.</p>

