

# St Vincent's Castleknock College

## *Attendance Policy*

### **1 Introductory Statement**

Under the Education Welfare Act (2000), school attendance is a legal obligation.

The National Education Welfare Board which was set up under the Act includes the following among its functions:

- 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 there from;
- to promote and foster, in recognised schools, an environment that encourages children to attend school and participate fully in the life of the school;
- to assist recognised schools in so far as is practicable to meet their obligations under this Act;
- to support, monitor, and assess the effectiveness of, strategies and programmes aimed at preventing non-attendance in recognised schools.

### **2 Rationale for this Policy**

The Board of Management of St Vincent's Castleknock College sets out this written policy in order

- to comply with the Education Welfare Act 2000;
- to maintain accurate records of school attendance by students;
- to form habits of regular and punctual attendance in students;
- to discourage absenteeism, lateness and unwarranted withdrawal of students during the school day or school term;
- to develop a sense of personal responsibility in students;
- to make students aware that a good school attendance record enhances their educational experience and builds a personal foundation for life after school.

### **3 Relationship of this Policy to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

The Mission Statement of St Vincent's Castleknock College is set out as follows:

**To have a College which is concerned with the development of the whole person in a Christian atmosphere which encourages involvement in a balance of religious, intellectual, cultural and sporting activities and which promotes the growth of self-worth and respect for others in the spirit of St Vincent de Paul.**

The philosophy of St. Vincent de Paul (1581 – 1660), the Patron Saint of Christian charity, continues to inform and inspire the students, faculty, staff and extended community of St. Vincent's Castleknock College. As a Vincentian college, it is committed to following Vincent de Paul's philosophy, which emphasises respect for the individual, service to the

needy, human solidarity and adherence to the belief that self giving helps make the world a better place.

Regular and punctual attendance is a prerequisite to the full achievement of the College Mission Statement.

## **4 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **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, for example if the student has an attendance problem or if the student is suspended for 3/6 or more days
- 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.

### **Deputy Principal**

- to encourage regular attendance by students
- to receive reports from Year Heads on issues relating to attendance
- to monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the school or from classes
- to contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences are suspected

### **Year Heads**

- to monitor student attendance regularly
- to seek and file written explanations for student absences from parents/guardians
- to note trends in absence records of individual students e.g. Monday or Friday absences and to bring this to the attention of the parents/guardians of the students concerned
- to send standard Absence Letters to parents/guardians where frequent absences occur
- to contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and to notify the Deputy Principal of same

### **Class Tutors**

- to conduct a daily roll call
- to receive 'Absence Letters' signed by parents/guardians from students who have been absent and to deposit these letters in the box provided for the purpose in the staff room after registration period each day. Absence Letters will then be filed by Year Heads.
- to liaise with Year Heads on matters relating to attendance records of students.

### **Teachers**

- to take a roll call in every class

- to discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Meetings
- to impress on students the importance of regular attendance and ensure they understand their responsibility to find to 'catch up' on work missed during their absence

#### **Administration Office**

- to maintain a record of students withdrawn from school during the school day and their return to the school
- to ensure that when a student is withdrawn from the school, a parent/guardian personally accompanies the student who is leaving the school and signs the appropriate record before the student is withdrawn.

#### **Parents/Guardians**

- to ensure regular attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences;
- to notify the school in writing of the reason for all student absences: such notice should be provided prior to the absence if possible or otherwise immediately afterwards. Telephone or oral messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible;
- to provide the school with reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the school may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary;
- to adhere to the procedures set out in this Policy 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.

#### **Students**

- to accept responsibility for their own registration each period and, in particular, during official daily registration;
- to comply with the procedures for reporting back after being absent from school;
- to comply with the procedures for recording withdrawal from school during the school day.

## **5 Strategies to Encourage School Attendance**

Good attendance is essential for promoting an efficient and effective school environment. Since there is a strong correlation between attendance records and personal outcomes, good attendance is also an important factor in ensuring that each student is working to his full potential. This attendance strategy will encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school.

- Teachers and management encourage regular attendance by students. Close contacts are established between school and home on this issue. The Headmaster's bulletins, meetings with parents and other occasions are used to build with parents a shared vision of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of unwarranted absences.
- Teachers discuss attendance records of students with parents/guardians during the course of Parent/Teacher meetings.
- Procedures put in place to record and monitor attendance are clearly stated and consistently implemented.

- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own attendance.
- There is early identification of poor attendance patterns and notification of same to parents. Students who are at risk of dropping out are identified at an early stage.
- Students who have good attendance records are recognised at school award ceremonies.
- Parents are encouraged to make appointments for outside school business (e.g. dentist, doctor) for after school hours, where possible.
- Absences due to family holidays are discouraged.
- Prior to his departure, parents must provide written notification to the school of any plans for a student to leave the country during the school term for any reason.
- Aspects of the operation and management of the school and of the curriculum that may contribute to truancy will be identified and changed in so far as they are not necessary for the proper running of the school.

## **6 Monitoring of this Attendance Policy**

The Principal will liaise with the Deputy Principal and Year Heads in monitoring the implementation of the policy.

## **7 Review and Evaluation**

The policy will be reviewed annually by the whole staff, in consultation with the parents and students and approved by the Board of Management.

## **8 Implementation Date**

This policy comes into effect from the date of ratification by the Board of Management on 17 January 2013.