

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 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 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
- To make reports to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 of cumulative absences in excess of twenty days, and reasons thereof, during the course of the school year.

Deputy Principal

- To encourage regular attendance by students
- To receive and follow up on reports from Year Heads on issues relating to attendance
- To monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the school or from classes.

Year Heads

- To monitor student attendance regularly
- To seek and file written explanations/emails for student absences from parents/guardians
- To note trends in absence records of individual students, eg Monday or Friday absences and to bring this to the attention of the parents/guardians of the students concerned
- To monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the school or from classes
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and to notify the Deputy Principal of same.

Teachers

- To take a roll call in every class and to record on the College eportal system.

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.

** Students who have reached the age of 18 years may sign out provided they have permission from their Year Head.*

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
- 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 the importance of regular attendance
- To accept responsibility for their own registration each period
- To sign in at reception if arriving late
- 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.
- It is their responsibility to find out the work missed during their absence.

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.
- Procedures put in place to record and monitor attendance are clearly stated and consistently implemented.
- There is early identification of poor attendance patterns and notification of same to parents.
- Students who have good attendance records are recognised at school award ceremonies.
- Parents are encouraged to make appointments for outside school business (eg 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.

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 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 22 May 2019.