



Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles



Attendance Policy

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Scope

This policy applies to the pupils attending Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed. 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. This policy is underpinned by our core values of Academic Excellence, Care and Community.

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

Our mission statement is: 'Coláiste Mhuire aspires to provide an inclusive education for all its students in a caring and supportive environment. 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 assist the school in fulfilling its aim of giving pupils a wide range of learning opportunities designed to promote their 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. It is the student's responsibility to make up for work missed during absences. CMCO staff will be cognisant of individual circumstances.

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, Tipperary Education and Training Board, TESS, EWO and other statutory authorities with the right to access 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 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.

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed 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, they will be better able to keep up with schoolwork and may grow to enjoy school.
- Employers want people who are reliable. Good school attendance encourages good practice for students' working life in the future.
- We encourage students to develop friendships and positive relationships during their time in school and we hope that good attendance helps students in this regard.

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 the School Information System during registration each morning.
2. A roll call is taken using the School Information System (where possible) in every class.

A rewards and incentives scheme is used to promote good attendance. This includes rewarding perfect and very good attendance in the school merit system. This is supplemented by various other schemes such as fun activities on high-risk days/poster campaigns etc. These initiatives are supported by the School Completion Programme.

1. Attendance reports are sent to TESS at the assigned times during the school year. Normally AFTER 20 days, a second letter is sent and at this point TUSLA are informed and have access to our attendance records. A visit from the NEWB attendance officer may follow.
2. Students who are late to school in the morning must report to the office to register their attendance and to ensure they are marked present. While every student is welcomed, supported and encouraged to come to school on time, interventions apply for persistent lateness. These may include finding out why students are late, stressing the importance of being on time, verbal warnings, phoning home or communication with home, and detention.
3. Parents should ring and inform the school on the first day of an absence or place note in the school information system.

4. On return to school, having been absent, a parent must use the school information system to explain the absence. If a parent is unable to use Compass, they may phone the office, and the office personnel will put it on Compass.
5. Students who must 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 9.00 a.m. The student should be collected in person by parent/ guardian and signed out of the school.
6. If a student returns to school following a partial absence, they must report to the main office before attending classes.
7. A student leaving school without permission is considered a serious breach of the disciplinary system.
8. Where a student is absent, and no explanation has been provided, the school may contact home to confirm the reason for the absence.
9. Class tutors are the first point of contact with the student and if students are beginning to miss time at school (more than 5 days), class tutors are asked to engage with the students concerned by way of support and discerning the cause of absenteeism.
10. Parents of students who are showing signs of absenteeism are contacted by the Attendance Coordinator or the HSCL coordinator where appropriate.
11. Arrangements may be made to meet parents in the school or the HSCL coordinator may visit the home to offer advice and support.
12. Where appropriate, 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.
13. Parents can monitor their students' attendance through the Compass app. The Compass app sends automatic updates to parents whose children have missed 10, 15 and 20 days.
14. Parents may be 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.
15. 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.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

It is recognised that some absences are unavoidable. Authorised absences include Certified Sick Leave or 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 agreed with the school.

Explanation for Absence: Parents must use the school information system to explain an absence prior to a student returning to school. Students who are over eighteen must bring a note to their year head. The note must give the reason for absence. This is a requirement from TUSLA. 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
- H. Family holiday

Note: If for some reason a parent or student does not wish to put the reason for absence on the school information system, they should contact their child's year-head.

If a student must attend the doctor during school time, a doctor's note should be given to the relevant class tutor.

Note: For Covid related absence the provisions of the Covid response plan apply while this is valid.

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 absence would be regarded as significant.) If it is within the parameters of CL/MO2/95 the student will be advised to repeat the year. 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 contact 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, SCP, BFL and HSCL.

Monitoring Attendance/Punctuality by Parent/Guardian:

Parents/Guardian should monitor their son's/daughter's attendance on the School Information System on a weekly basis to keep up to date on attendance and punctuality.

Holidays during Term Time:

The Child and Family Agency strongly advise against taking children out of school to go on holiday during school time. This has the potential to have a negative impact on 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.

Appointments and Driving Lessons:

Parents are asked not to schedule appointments (that they can control) or driving lessons during the school day.

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 where attendance constitutes a criterion for certification, any absence 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. See the assessment policy for more information on this.

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.

Attendance in TY

We understand and fully support students who wish to engage in extra Transition Year experiences outside of the core school program. These opportunities can be valuable for their personal and educational growth.

To ensure fairness to all students and to maintain the integrity of our planned school trips, we have a general attendance stipulation of 80% for participation in TY trips. This helps ensure students are actively engaged with the TY program as a whole.

We recognise that these additional experiences your son/daughter may undertake could impact their regular attendance. To help us support these enriching opportunities while also ensuring students don't miss out on school trips (which do not clash with these additional experiences) due to these commitments, we request parents complete a form to indicate that their child is participating in any significant extra TY experiences. This form allows us to have a clear understanding of their commitments and help us to support them in balancing these with their school attendance. It also helps us in planning and ensures that all students who meet the attendance criteria can fully participate in planned trips. If the experiences are for over 2 weeks/10 days we ask that parents arrange a meeting with the Programme Coordinator.

Disclosure

Attendance records will be made available:

- to individual students, and their parents/guardians
- to statutory authorities with the right to access 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 they are a-minor where, his/her parents/guardians' consent is required)

Roles and Responsibilities Students

- Students are expected to arrive on time for all school activities, including morning tuition, all classes and extra-curricular activities.

- If a student arrives after the official start time, they must sign in at the office and they will be marked as late on our school information system. Persistent lateness will be addressed by the school.

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 inform the school as outlined previously in this policy
- 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 late students and the temporary roll sheets (when applicable) into the school information system.

DEIS Attendance/School Completion Team

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

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.

Deputy Principals/Principal

- Responsible for the overall implementation of the policy.

Monitoring Procedures

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