

CEIST

Catholic Education  
An Irish Schools Trust



## Attendance Policy of PSS, Wexford

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## **1.0: Link to Mission Statement**

Presentation, Wexford, is a Catholic Secondary School for girls only, guided by the ideals of Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Congregation.

The school is committed to the pursuit of excellence in a caring environment.

“Inspired by the vision of Nano Nagle, our school is committed to the pursuit of excellence in a caring, respectful and inclusive community.”

We are an inclusive school both in our intake and in the curriculum which we provide. We aim to provide the highest standard of education for all our students.

We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with parents/guardians, staff, students, patron and the local community.

## **2.0: Introduction by the Board of Management**

This policy was devised in consultation with all the teaching staff in our school. It was submitted to the Board of Management, and Parents Association and the student's council.

In devising this policy, we have considered the democratic and student centred principles of this school. The establishment of a sound learning environment at school and classroom level is critical to effective learning and teaching.

## **3.0: Scope**

This policy applies to all students, parents, teaching staff and the Board of Management of PSS, Wexford.

## **4.0: Rationale**

- To work to protect, in conjunction with all other aspects of school life, the care and welfare of the students.
- To facilitate continuity and progression in the learning process.
- To ensure that students benefit fully from opportunities that this school offers them.
- To ensure all parents/guardians, students and teachers are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance.

- To ensure the school fulfils its legal obligations in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant acts. Under the Act, Education Welfare Boards have been established to oversee school attendance nationwide and each school has been assigned an Education Welfare Officer whose duty it is to liaise with the school in relation to any attendance problems which may emerge. The principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:
  - A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days.
  - the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is not less than twenty.
  - A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the principal.
  - A student is, in the opinion of the principal of the school in which they are registered, not attending school regularly.

## **5.0: Objectives**

Through implementation of this policy, our school expects to:

- Encourage full attendance at school.
- Highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents.
- Positively enforce punctual attendance morning and afternoon and at each class period throughout the school day.
- Maintain an effective attendance record-keeping system through our school administration system.
- Encourage students to form a habit of good attendance.
- Encourage parents to send children to school in all but exceptional circumstances.
- Develop suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.

## **6.0: School Attendance Strategy**

A Positive Approach:

- Effective attendance is promoted in the school through a culture of high expectation which encourages each student to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Across the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the long-term implications for them of irregular attendance.
- Reports to parents/guardians provide a record of attendance and punctuality.

### **6.1: Principal**

- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students.
- To monitor attendance records regularly.
- To sign and authorise reports drafted by the Year Heads for submission to the Education Welfare Officer as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- To ensure parents/guardians and students are informed of procedures for the notification of absences and 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.
- Facilitate mixed ability classes in so far as possible throughout the curriculum.

### **6.2: Deputy Principals**

- To work in cooperation with the Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Class Tutors, Administration Staff and to implement the school policy.
- To liaise with the Year Head and Pastoral Care Team to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- To meet, along with the Year Head, the students who had unauthorised absence from class.
- To inform and remind teachers of their obligations regarding recording attendance.

### 6.3: Attendance Officers/Year Heads

- To regularly monitor the attendance records on the VSware system for the given year.
- To liaise with the Tutors and SST to address the difficulties surrounding a particular student's attendance.
- Prepare [EWS Referral Form](#) for students under their care.
- To meet, along with the Deputy Principal, those students for whom attendance or punctuality is a problem to discuss the issue.
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and/or when patterns of absences are developing and to notify the Deputy Principal of same.
- To remind the students during the assemblies of the Year Group of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Use the positive behaviour strategies and other rewards to promote attendance in the year group.
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their own learning by giving students the Return to School Learning plans.
- To conduct an attendance and punctuality audit at the end of each term. Contact home to acknowledge excellent attendance and punctuality and to raise concerns about patterns of poor attendance and punctuality. These audits will include the following actions:
  - Contact parents/guardians of ten-day unexplained absences advising that fifteen-day unexplained absences will result in an attendance clinic with Deputy Principal.

### 6.4: Class Teacher

- To record the attendance of every class every day. When substituting under the S&S scheme or when providing cover for personal leave, the teacher will complete registration for that class using the VSware system (essential information in the event of an evacuation of the school).
- If there is a technical difficulty the class teacher will record the attendance manually on paper and submit to reception. If the class teacher is substituting during these periods

the attendance should be recorded either electronically on VShare or on the class list available for that time and then submitted to reception.

- To impress on students the importance of regular attendance and insist on punctuality.
- To be a role model for punctuality.
- Acknowledge students, welcome them back and support them upon their return to school.
- Support student on return to school by providing the Return to School Learning Plan
- Teachers need to be made fully aware of their responsibilities regarding the recording of attendance and follow up of any concerns regarding attendance. They need to carry out an initial investigation and inform the Year Head if the student does not have a satisfactory explanation for absence from your class.
- Where a reason for absence is recorded for AM roll call teachers need to submit the same code for PM roll call.

### 6.5: Role of Parents/ Guardians

- Parents/Guardians have a primary responsibility to ensure that children of school-going age attend school.
- Parents/Guardians need to be mindful of the educational importance of full attendance when scheduling appointments or family events which may necessitate the withdrawal of a student from school.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing an explanation for all absences on VShare.
- Parents/Guardians must provide written notes VShare explaining reasons for lateness.
- Students will not be allowed leave the school for appointments without prior written parental notification on VShare.
- To make appointments, where possible, outside of school hours.
- If Parents/Guardians are aware in advance that a student will be absent for any part of the school day, they should notify the school through VShare.

## 6.6: Students

Students must adhere to the following:

- To be in attendance and ready for class at 8.50 am.
- To be in attendance for afternoon class.
- To always report to the office or attendance officer if you are late. This will be recorded, and sanctions may be imposed for regular late attendance particularly where the late is not explained by parents on VShare. Late stamp will be given in journal.
- To sign out at the office having presented a note VShare for the attention of the Year Head outlining permission to leave and the reason why you are leaving school during the day.

### **Under 18**

- ✓ All students MUST – have a note – parent/guardian must ring office – all under 18s must be collected from school – if these procedures are not followed – student will NOT be allowed to leave the school
- ✓ Student must sign out

### **Over 18**

- ✓ All students MUST – have a note – parent/guardian must ring office to confirm
- ✓ Student must sign out

- To sign if you are returning to school during the school day.
- If a student has no permission to leave submitted on VShare, they may not leave the school without first obtaining permission from the Principal or Deputy Principal. The school will also contact Parents/Guardians by phone.
- Students who become ill during the day should inform their Year Head or Tutor. Parents/Guardians will be contacted by the school. In this case, the student will only be allowed leave the school when collected by a Parent/Guardian from the school office.

## 6.7: Attendance Officer

1. Advise teachers on the school's attendance policy.
2. Consult with Principal/Deputy Principal.
3. Participate in professional development opportunities related to the role.
4. Contact parents via VShare regarding 5 days unexplained absences.
5. Monitor school attendance records and the data inputting of teachers and advise teachers of inputting errors.
6. Address attendance enquires by parents regarding attendance records on VShare.



7. Improve attendance communication with parents and pupils, parental involvement and student support services.
8. Issue electronic formats of appendices 1 & 2 to students via VSware.
9. Implement School Attendance Policy.
10. Update staff regarding attendance issues.
11. Advise Junior Year Heads when their assigned students reach ten days unexplained absences.
12. Advise the Deputy Principals when their assigned students reach 15 unexplained absences.
13. Liaise with the EWO to arrange school attendance clinics once students reach 15 unexplained absences.
14. Refer students experiencing difficulties to the Student Support Team

### **6.8: Extracurricular Staff Member**

1. Extracurricular Teacher will request permission to participate from Deputy Principal responsible for S&S.
2. Extracurricular Teacher will create a group for their activity on VSware.
3. Deputy Principal (S&S) will update the roll using VSware Groups.
4. Class teachers do not interfere with school activity established by the Deputy Principal.
5. Extracurricular teacher advises the Deputy Principal (S&S) of any changes to attendance.
6. Deputy Principal (S&S) will update the roll according to the information received from the Extracurricular Teacher.

### **6.9: Administrative Staff**

- To input attendance data from Class Teachers when and if required.
- To work in conjunction with the Year Heads/Attendance Officer/Principal to submit the annual reports to the NEWB.
- To administer the signing in and out of students.
- Other duties associated to support the effective management of attendance.

### **6.9: If a student is suspended**

On rare occasions a student may be absent from school due to suspension for breach of discipline. In such instances parents will be consulted in advance and students are expected to use their time productively by applying themselves to their studies. In such instances, where a student is suspended, they should not be on the school premises or engaged in any school activity as there may be insurance implications.

### **6.10: Partnership arrangements**

The school will liaise with relevant bodies and engage with services where there is a concern regarding attendance.

### **7.0: Sanctions**

Disciplinary actions consistent with the school's Code of Behaviour will be imposed by the Principal, Deputy Principals and Year Heads for absences from school without permission.

The relevant Deputy Principal will impose sanctions for late attendance consistent with the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **8.0: Tusla – Child & Family Agency**

Under legislation, every child must attend school regularly up to 16 years of age or complete at least 3 years education in a post-primary school; whichever comes later. The Child & Family Agency was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

As a parent, you must notify the school if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that explanations must be given in writing on Vsware. The school will notify Tusla if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise for concern. This is outlined below:

## **8.1: The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 18**

Where a child is absent from the school at which they are registered during part of the school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such student shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the Code of Behaviour, prepared by the school under section 23, notify the Principal of the school of the reasons for the students absence.

## **8.2: The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21 (4)**

The principal of the school concerned shall inform, by notice of writing to the Educational Welfare Officer where:

- 1) A student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.
- 2) The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during a school year is not less than 20 days.

## **9.0: Implementation & Review:**

### **9.1: Implementation**

This policy will be implemented by the Board of Management in a spirit of partnership through consultation with the school partners, within the available resources of the school. The use of school resources is always subject to the permission of the Board of Management.

### **9.2: Success Criteria**

Success criteria will include:

- Improved attendance rates.
- Improved explanations for absences.
- Improved timekeeping.
- Improved communication with parents.

### **9.3: Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The Board of Management will carry out monitoring of the policy. Teaching Staff, Parents Association and the Student Council will be central to this monitoring and any evaluation.

## 9.4: Review Procedures

The Board of Management, in consultation with the school partners will review this policy every two years. It will be the responsibility of the Principal to bring the policy before the Board for review at the appropriate time.

## 13.0: Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 following consultation with all stakeholders.

Chairperson: Mary Culleton

Date 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Principal: Billy Ryan

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## 11.0: Appendix 1: Return to School Learning Plan

<b>Student Name:</b>	<b>Year:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Reason for Absence:</b>			
<b>Reason for Absence Documented Yes No</b>			
<b>Date of last day of School:</b>		<b>Date of Return to School:</b>	
<b>The work that I missed and need to complete:</b>			

<b>Subject:</b>		<b>Work to complete:</b>	

**People I will go to when I need help:**

**I have checked that my child has completed any work they have missed due to absence:**

<b>Parent Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Year Head Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Student Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<hr/>	<hr/>



People I will go to when I need help:

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Agreed role of parents / guardians in supporting the Student Absence Learning Plan for this subject. To be filled in by parent / guardian:

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I have checked that my child has completed any work they have missed in their subject due to absence:

Parent / Guardian Signature:

Date:

I confirm that this student has caught up in any work missed in this subject due to absence

Subject Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Head Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_