

Attendance Policy

Rice College Attendance Policy

Foreword

According to **NCCA Guidelines on Wellbeing** “schools have a central role to play in supporting and promoting students’ learning about wellbeing and for wellbeing”...”Student wellbeing is present when students...have a sense of purpose and belonging to the wider school community.”

Therefore, attendance at school is a vital element in the development of the student.

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 states that “...a recognised school shall cause to be maintained in respect of each school year a record of attendance or non-attendance on each school day of each student registered at that school.”

The full and proper operation of the attendance system by all staff members is essential to ensure that the school complies with all **Child Protection** legislation.

All of the above has informed the following Attendance Policy.

Attendance

Students should strive for maximum attendance because:

- Having a good education will help to give the best possible start in life.
- Students will not be able to keep up with schoolwork if frequently absent, which may increase stress and anxiety, and decrease wellbeing.
- The Education Welfare Act requires it.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians can assist the school by:

- Ensuring maximum attendance and punctuality.
- Arranging dental/medical appointments etc outside normal school hours, where possible
- Arranging family holidays during school holidays
- Informing the school of the reasons for the student’s absence.
 - Contacting the school on suspicion of truancy.

Valid Reasons for Absence

- (a) Illness.
- (b) Serious illness or death in the family.
- (c) Medical or dental appointment.
- (d) Extenuating circumstances, where the Principal or Deputy Principal grants permission.

Recording Attendance

- (a) Class teachers are responsible for logging all student attendances and absences for each class, on a daily basis, on VSWare. Should VSWare not be accessible, a paper record of absences must be sent to the office of the Deputy Principal.
- (b) Students must attend all their timetabled classes and may not absent themselves from class without permission.
- (c) Students who arrive late at school must obtain a *Late Slip* from the Deputy Principal and furnish it to their Class Teacher.

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- (d) All information with regard to student attendance will be stored in compliance with **GDPR** legislation, and may form part of a reporting procedure to Tusla. **Verifying Absence**
- (a) In all cases of absence from school, students are required to furnish a note to the Deputy Principal explaining same. This 'Absence Note' must be submitted immediately on returning to school and must specify:
- The dates of absence
 - Reason for absence
 - Parents/Guardian's signature.
- (b) The school has a legal obligation to inform Tusla when a student has reached 20 days absence within one academic year, which have not been accounted for.
- (c) Students transferring into our school must have their attendance records from their previous school.

Disseminating Attendance Information

- (a) Year Heads have access to absentee lists from their year group via VSWare, subject to **Data Protection** legislation, and will monitor same.
- (b) The Deputy Principal will oversee the operation of the operation of the attendance system.
- (c) School Reports will contain attendance statistics for the information of parents/guardians.
- (d) Parents/Guardians can request the latest attendance statistics at the scheduled parent-teacher meeting or by contacting the Deputy Principal.
- (e) Parents/Guardians may be contacted by the school where student attendance/punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Permission to Leave School

Students requesting permission to leave school to attend a dental or medical appointment or for some other valid purpose must seek permission from the Principal or Deputy Principal. Students must furnish a note from their parents/guardians in this event.

Punctuality

School begins at 9.00am. All pupils are expected to be on time. There is an electronic bell to signal the beginning and end of each class. Classes are of 40 minutes duration and 80 mins for a double. There is a break from 11.00am to 11.10am, and lunch is from 1.10pm to 2.00pm, daily. Classes finish at 4.00pm on Mondays and Tuesdays, and at 3.20pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

- Lateness to class is recorded on VSWare. A student is considered late for class if they arrive 5 minutes after the bell, thus allowing students to move from one class to another.
- Students who remain in a class to speak with the teacher need a note from that teacher explaining their lateness for the next class, ensuring the proper duty of care to the student. Detaining students after a class should be kept to a minimum.
- Where teachers see a pattern of poor punctuality emerging, they should bring this to the attention of the Year Head. The Year Head may decide to refer the

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matter to the Deputy Principal, and sanctions may be imposed, such as a telephone call home, or detention.

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may be taken where:

- Truancy has been proven
- A student is habitually late
- A student fails to attend his/her timetabled classes

Permission to leave school

Students requesting permission to leave school to attend a medical appointment or for another valid reason must seek the permission of the Deputy Principal. Students must furnish a note from a parent/guardian in this event. Alternatively, a telephone call from a parent/guardian, prior to the event, will suffice.

Students must sign out at the office of the Deputy Principal before leaving the building.

Statement of Strategy

In keeping with the requirements of **The Education (Welfare) Act 2000** a **Statement of Strategy for School Attendance** was submitted to, and ratified by, the Rice College Board of Management on December 21st 2017.

The Statement of Strategy was submitted to Tusla on December 22nd 2017.

Data Protection

All records, correspondence etc, pertaining to attendance will be dealt with and stored in the strictest of confidence, in compliance with Data Protection legislation.

Reviewed by Sub-Committee: 9/1/19

Reviewed by Staff: 24/1/19

Reviewed by Parents Association: 27/2/19.

Reviewed by Student Council: 26/2/19

Ratified by BOM: 8/4/19