



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

1. SCOPE

This strategy applies to the students, staff and parents of CBS Thurles and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL'S MISSION, VISION AND AIMS

CBS Thurles is a boy's secondary school, which is based on the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice dedicated to an all-round Christian education based on Gospel values.

To further these aims we envisage the development of a community wherein –

- Student and Staff members are valued, and their talents and abilities recognised and developed to prepare for changes in society.
- Each person recognises his/her own responsibility in implementing agreed standards of conduct.
- Good communication is maintained between all members and where liaison with parents and local community involvement is encouraged.
- This policy involves helping each student develop to his full potential, both socially and educationally

3. RATIONALE

In CBS Thurles we have identified attendance and punctuality as an area of focus. This strategy is intended to foster a good mature attitude towards attendance and punctuality.

4. OBJECTIVES

Through implementation of this strategy CBS Thurles expects to:

- To encourage full attendance at school.
- To highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents.
- To positively enforce punctual attendance morning and evening and at each class throughout the day .
- To maintain an effective attendance record-keeping system through our VSware system
- To develop suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.

5. POLICY CONTENT

5.1 National Educational Welfare Board

Under legislation every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school; whichever comes later. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

Parents / Guardians must notify the school if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that explanations must be given in writing. The school will notify the Educational Welfare Board if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise for concern. This is outlined below:

5.2 The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 18

Where a child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of the school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such child 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 child's absence.

5.3 The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21 (4)

The Principal 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 school during a school year is not less than 20 days.

CBS Thurles recognises the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Regular or prolonged absences will have a negative impact on a student's learning and development and therefore should be avoided whenever possible. The school has an Attendance Strategy in place, the aim of which is to promote good attendance in the school. Poor punctuality has a similarly negative impact on the learning of the student, and has the further effect of disrupting the class into which the student is arriving late. The guidelines below should be adhered to by all students.

- The school day begins at 9.00a.m. Students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8.55 a.m.
- Lunch is from 12.45 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. and students are expected to be in their classrooms by 1.25 p.m. Time in between lessons should only be used to prepare for the next lesson.
- Students who arrive late to school in the morning (after 9.00a.m.) and the afternoon (after 1.20 p.m.) must report to the office and sign in.

- When a student is absent, the student must present an absence note to their class teachers on the day they return to school.
- Teachers must put the absence note into the respective year file in the staff room at 3.36 pm on the day of the student's return to school.
- A student may not leave school during the school day without permission;
 - If a student needs to attend an appointment, he must present an appointment slip or note at the office and sign out.
 - On return the same day, the student must sign back in at the office.
 - If a student leaves school and does not return on the same day, an absence note is required on return to school.
 - If a student has no note she may not leave school without the permission of the Principal or Deputy Principal.
 - Any contact with parents/guardians in relation to leaving school must be made through the office.

Students will receive sanctions for unexcused absences and lateness in accordance with the Presentation Secondary School Code of Behaviour.

6. ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

CBS Thurles will recognise students' who achieve full attendance in the school year by presenting the students with a certificate of full attendance.

7. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

7.1 Disciplinary actions consistent with the Code of Behaviour will be imposed by the Principal, Deputy and Year Heads for unexcused absences. Individual class teachers will impose sanctions for lateness consistent with the Code of Behaviour.

The remaining content of this policy outlines in detail the whole school approach to the following attendance and punctuality procedures:

- Daily monitoring of attendance at 9.00am and 1.30pm.
- Daily monitoring of punctuality at 9.00am and 1.30pm.
- Recording of daily attendance.
- Recording lateness.
- Recording notes and communications.
- Recording early departures and Presentation Secondary School attendance.
- Sanctions for lateness.
- Sanctions for unexcused absences.
- Informing parents when concerns arise.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CBS Thurles acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community in the implementation of this Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

8.1 PRINCIPAL AND DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

1. The Principal and Deputy Principal to carry out spot checks on absences.
2. The Principal will inform parents in a letter, both in May and September, that family holidays during school term are ill-advised and inhibit educational progress.
3. Apply disciplinary procedures to students for unexcused absences and lateness, consistent with CBS Thurles School Code of Behaviour and the National Education Welfare Board legislation on attendance.
4. If a student has no note he may not leave school without the permission of the Principal or Deputy Principal

8.2 YEAR HEAD

1. Record student absences and file all absence notes in individual student files.
2. Record all verbal and written communication from parents/guardians.
3. Record and attend to student absences.
4. Apply Behaviour Management procedures (in consultation with Management) to students for unexcused absences consistent with Code of Behaviour and the National Education Welfare Board legislation on attendance.
5. Contact parents' where appropriate, re student's number of absences on reaching fifteen days during an academic year.
6. Good attendance and punctuality will be acknowledged in the reports issued to students and parents/guardians at the end of the first term and at the end of the academic year.

8.3 CLASS TEACHER

1. All teachers will keep individual class attendance records for every class taught on VSware.
2. Class teachers will follow up on student absences and report to the Year Head if necessary.
3. Students away for school activities must not be marked absent.
4. Promote and encourage good attendance in class.
5. Teachers may communicate with parents/guardians at parent teacher meetings on the importance and value of good attendance.

8.4 STUDENT

1. Students must present absence notes to class teachers on the day they return to school.
2. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation (e.g. appointment slips, notes etc.) and present them to the office for all appointments that will prevent her from attending a class. Such documentation should be presented prior to her release from school.
3. Students must report to the office if late arriving to school in the morning and the afternoon.
4. If a student has no note he may not leave school without permission from the Principal or Deputy Principal and SIGN the leaving school register in the office.
5. If a student returns to school during class time she must SIGN back in at the office.
6. Students will receive sanctions for unexcused absences and lateness in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

8.5 PARENTS / GUARDIANS

1. To support the school's Attendance & Punctuality Policy in compliance with their legal responsibilities.(Education Welfare Act 2000)
2. To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences.
3. To provide a written excuse for the student's absence on the first day of return to school.
4. All messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible for the attention of the Class Tutor.
5. To provide to the school reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the school may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary.
6. To adhere to the procedures set out in this Strategy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
7. To acknowledge and, where necessary, reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.
8. To arrange, where possible, all elective appointments for after school or during school holidays.
9. Any student who arrives late for school must be either accompanied by a parent /guardian or provided with an explanatory note.