



St. Dominic's Secondary School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

We are committed in partnership with parents, students, SCP and local agencies to promoting good attendance in our school, to enhance teaching and learning, always mindful of our ethos and Mission Statement.

We in St. Dominic's aim to provide a Christian education, inspired by the Dominican motto "Truth", which fosters the education of the whole person.

The aims of the attendance policy in St. Dominic's Secondary School are to :

- Encourage students to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Identify students who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- Develop links between the school, NEWB, SCP , HSCL and the families of students who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.

The school will endeavor to ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted and rewarded throughout the school.
- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily and during each class period.
- Parents or guardians are contacted, by telephone call or text message, when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - The Education Welfare Board.
 - The Education Welfare Officer
 - The Board of Management

Punctuality

School is open from 8.50 a.m. and students are required to be in their classrooms for registration. All students and teachers are expected to be on time. Students who arrive late must sign in, and consistent lateness will be considered a serious breach of school rules and sanctions may be imposed. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of students being consistently late. The School is obliged under The Act, to report students who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Failure to sign in may result in the school recording and reporting a student who has arrived late as absent.

Guidance for Parents

Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school Principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for students’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school. To facilitate this, all communications must be in the Homework Journal, and not on a separate page or sheet of paper. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school she should give details of her absence to her Year Head, written into the appropriate place in the Journal. This information will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child’s absence is not received by the school.

If for any reason a student has to leave school early, written permission from parent or guardian must be presented to her Year Head at registration, before leaving the school premises.

Students are expected to attend all classes during the school day. Punctuality for all classes is expected. Parents/Guadians will be informed of all school closures in writing by the school authorities.

Anyone feeling unwell should report to the office. A member of staff will telephone home, where appropriate, to arrange collection.

Attendance at all school activities, including those outside school premises is expected for those involved.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems
- Making sure their students understand that parents support school attendance
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their student’s school day and their student’s homework
- Encouraging them to participate in school activities
- Praising and encouraging their student’s achievements
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that student’s appointments (with doctors, dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters
- Providing up to date contact details, including phone numbers, change of address etc.

Students

Students have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

Students should inform the Year Head if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

Students are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their Year Head. Students are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day. The school Journal should be with students during all classes, and presented to any member of staff upon request.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school promotes development of good self-concept and self-worth in the students.
- Supports for students, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform all staff of the special needs of students.
- A special reward system has been introduced to promote good attendance at school, in partnership with the School Completion Programme.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance of students is monitored by the Class Tutor in the first instance, and the class tutor will notify the Year Head of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Students with a poor attendance record are supported in an effort to improve their attendance by all the support services within the school, including School Completion Programme, HSCL, Family Therapy, Care Team and Attendance Strategy Group etc.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of students is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a student is not attending school regularly.
 - When a student has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a student has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - When a student's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a student.
- Establish an Attendance Strategy Team to track/monitor student attendance.
- Promote a Whole School Approach to school attendance and punctuality, utilizing the School Development Planning Initiative, School Completion Programme and DEIS.

Year Head /Class Tutor

The Year Head/Class Tutor will:

- Maintain the student's attendance record in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing, or are of a persistent nature.
- Promote a reward system for students with exceptional and improved attendance.
- Encourage students to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform Senior Management and SCP of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any student.

Class Teachers

- Teachers are expected to keep and maintain records in relation to each student's attendance for all classes during the school day, also academic progress including examinations/assessment results.
- Teachers are expected to accurately maintain the computerized roll sheets as well as the daily class registers as developed by the school.
- Promote the reward system for students with exceptional and improved attendance.
- Encourage students to attend regularly and punctually.

School Completion Programme

The SCP team will:

- Work in partnership with all school personnel to promote good school attendance.
- Provide additional support to students whose attendance is of concern to the school authorities.
- Provide information to Year Head, Class Tutors and other staff in relation to students who may be experiencing difficulties, and the support structures and interventions being put in place.
- Promote the reward system for students with exceptional and improved attendance.
- Provide personnel to monitor and track student attendance.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of students who transfer to another school will be passed to the Principal of the new school, where such a request is made.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of students who transfer from another school will be sought from the previous school.