

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES FOR COLÁISTE CHOLMCILLE, BALLYSHANNON

Coláiste Cholmcille is committed to the improvement of school attendance and to increasing the retention rate of students to completion of secondary education.

Towards attainment of its objectives for attendance and retention the school will:-

- Improve recording and monitoring of attendance and punctuality.
- Encourage good attendance and investigate all absences
- Identify students who have persistent problems in attendance and punctuality and target them.
- Endeavour to ensure that each pupil has access to an appropriate educational programme.
- Provide support for pupil with specific difficulties (e.g. coming from dysfunctional families)
- Create a climate in every class where the pupil feels valued and gains affirmation.
- Reward good attendance and punctuality.
- Convey to parents/guardians and to students the expectations the school holds in respect of each party (parents and students) in respect of attendance and punctuality.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school daily, in uniform, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Explaining their child's absence from school. This should be done by the morning of the child's return to school (by letter or note in the school journal)/
- Informing the school immediately in the case of prolonged absence e.g. illness.

<p><i>Parents/Guardians can expect the school to keep them fully informed if a child's attendance becomes a cause for concern.</i></p>
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Pupils are required to:

- Attend daily, properly equipped and ready to learn, in full school uniform.
- Attend all lessons during the day.
- Ensure that authorised absences are explained in writing by their parents on the morning of their return to school.

Acceptable absences

These include:

- Sickness
- Urgent medical/dental appointments

- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Unacceptable absences include:

- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Minding the house
- Child minding
- Birthdays
- No uniform
- Sleeping

Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time as it causes disruption of their child's academic progress in school.

Procedures for following up unexplained or unsatisfactory absences

We recognise that it is the **responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child attends school on a daily basis**. Where the child has been absent it is also the responsibility of the parent/guardian to furnish the child with a satisfactory **written** explanation for the absence on their return to school and present this note to the **office** who will keep all these records on file.

A student who fails to present a satisfactory explanation for an absence on return to school will be recorded as **an unexplained absence**. Absenting oneself from specific classes or absenting on a daily basis will be regarded as being absent without explanation will be referred to the year head and will also incur sanctions. Should the problem persist, the year head will contact the parent/guardian indicating the seriousness of the problem and requesting their support in improving the situation. Further failure to adhere to school rules with regard to explanation of absences will again necessitate immediate communication with parent/guardian, indicating the parent's/guardian's responsibility with regard to their child's attendance. The matter may also be referred to the school attendance officer.

Strategies for promoting attendance –

- Through ongoing curriculum development we endeavour to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all students.
- Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curricular practices and interventions.
- Parents, pupils and staff are to be regularly reminded of the types of absences that are recognised as acceptable and unacceptable.
- All pupils whose attendance is either excellent or much improved will be rewarded.
- Pupils will be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.
- Every effort will be made to reintegrate students who have been absent for an extended period of time.

- Good liaison with our feeder primary schools will be maintained in order to ensure the fullest support for all pupils during transfer to Coláiste Cholmcille School.

The following practices are carried out in Coláiste Cholmcille

- More thorough Diagnostic assessments of poor attendees are carried out to ensure that the school programme offered them is tailored to their specific needs.
- There are regular meetings of Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, to review the attendance of year group and plans are in place for any further interventions, e.g. visitations that might be appropriate.
- The attendance officer forwards attendance records to the EWB on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.