

ST. PATRICK'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

School Attendance Policy.

THE POLICY IN CONTEXT

The school Attendance Policy is directed by:

1. The School Mission Statement
2. The Pastoral Care Policy
3. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000

AIM OF THE POLICY

It is hoped that by constantly monitoring and tracking students' attendance records, absenteeism will improve and students will have a positive school experience.

To reflect our obligations relating to school attendance as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

INTRODUCTION:

The Education Welfare Act 2000 provides a comprehensive new framework for promoting regular school attendance and attending to problems of absenteeism. It was signed into law on July 5th 2000. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was set up under this Act to support regular attendance and the education of children and young people. The Board has appointed Educational Welfare Officers (E.W.O.) to provide advice and support to parents and schools and to follow up absences from school. Under the Act parents must notify the school when a child is absent and it is recommended that the explanation be in writing. It is incumbent on schools to notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a child has missed a total of twenty days in the school year.

The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) for St Patrick's Classical school is **Ms. Debbie Carolan**.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 safeguards every child's entitlement to an appropriate minimum education by:

- Developing a national framework to promote regular attendance at school,
- Promoting a positive appreciation among students of the benefits to be derived from education and attendance at school
- Identifying the causes of absenteeism and early school leaving and developing measures for its prevention,
- Providing support to children at risk and those who experience difficulties in school in order to resolve any difficulties or impediments to their regular attendance at school.

THE EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD

The National Educational Welfare Board is given the lead role in implementing the provisions of the Act:

- The principal function of the Board is to ensure that every child in the State attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education.
- The Board also has an advisory and research role in the formulation of Government policy on school attendance and education provision.
- The Board will deploy educational welfare officers at local level throughout the country. These officers will work in close co-operation with parents, teachers, school managers, community bodies and other relevant agencies to promote regular school attendance and prevent absenteeism and early school leaving.

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OFFICER

The Educational Welfare Officers appointed by the Board will focus in particular on children at risk and those who are experiencing difficulties in school in order to resolve any impediments to their regular attendance at school. Alternative schooling will be sought for students who have been expelled, suspended or refused admittance to a school.

ATTENDANCE CODE:

As a school community, St Patrick's Classical school, Navan believes that only full or near-full attendance can guarantee a complete knowledge and understanding of all course material and homework requirements and for that reason students of St. Patrick's Classical School are expected to be in attendance every school day.

- The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is the national agency established to ensure that every child attends school regularly or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the school is obliged to keep a register of all students and inform the area Educational Welfare Officer in writing of any student absent for an aggregate of 20 days during the school year.
- As indicated by Section 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 any student absent for a day or the first part of a day must send in a note of explanation sent via the Unique school app in advance, stating the reason why the student is absent from school. This note will be checked by the Year Head, a Deputy Principal or Principal.
- The letter or note must specify the reason for the absence e.g. illness, urgent family reasons, suspension, other. A written explanation must always be provided. A phone call to the Office does not suffice. All absences and explanations are recorded, details of which are then made available to the Department of Education and Science.
- A student may not leave the school premises during the school day (excluding lunchtime for senior students) unless he has done the following:
A permission to leave note/letter via the Unique school app must be provided, stating the time and reason that he has to leave the school. This note/letter must also state if he will be returning during the same school day and the expected time of return. This note/letter must be checked and approved by the Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal **before the student leaves the premises.** The student must go to the Office and sign out. If returning to school during the same school day he must go to the Office again on his return and sign back into school. **All junior students must not leave the premises until his parent/guardian has arrived to sign him out.**

If the student needs to leave the school premises during the school day but does not have a note/letter from his parents/guardians detailing the information required above he is required to go to the Office and ask the school secretary to ring his parents/guardians to confirm his need to leave school. Contact must be made with the parents/guardians confirming his need to leave school **before the student leaves the school premises.** The parents must send in a permission to leave note via the Unique school app. He must then sign out. All junior students **must not leave the premises until his parent/guardian has arrived to sign him out.** If returning to school during the same school day he must go to the Office again on his return and fill in his time of return in the same book.

- The school accepts no responsibility for students who leave the school premises without proper permission.
- Senior students who go downtown during lunchtime and who are unable to return to school after lunch for some unforeseen reason must ensure that the school is contacted (046- 9023772) immediately to state that they are not returning and the reason. The parent must provide a note of explanation via the Unique school app before the student's return to school the next day.
- When in school students must attend all their time-tabled classes. No student is permitted to absent himself from any class without the prior consent of the Subject Teacher concerned.
- First, Second and Third Year students must remain on the school premises during the Lunch-Break. In exceptional circumstances a student may apply for a Lunch Pass to go home at lunchtime by providing the Deputy Principal with a letter of application signed by a Parent/Guardian. This letter should state the reason why the student requires a Lunch Pass. If the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional by Management the student will be issued with a Lunch Pass.
- Students with Lunch Passes are not, under any circumstances, allowed to stop off at shops or fast food outlets on the way to or from home. Students with Lunch Passes must show them to the Teacher/Supervisor on duty before leaving the school. Students who lose or forget their Passes may not be permitted to leave the school premises.
- If a student who is at home on a Lunch Pass does not return for the afternoon classes, the student's parent/guardian should contact the office 046-9023772 prior to the commencement of the afternoon classes, or as soon as possible, and provide an explanation. A note of explanation must also be provided on the student's return to school.
- In the case of any pre-planned absences e.g. family holidays, attendance at sports events etc. students must inform the school authorities in advance. Notification and explanation of such pre-planned absences must be given in writing via the Unique school app.
- Where a long term illness is concerned, parents/guardians should inform the school authorities of the nature of the student's illness and the likely impact it will have on the student's future attendance.
- In the event of a student contracting a contagious disease/illness, parents/guardians should immediately inform the school authorities of the nature of the illness and under no circumstances should the student be sent to school until the risk of contagion has completely passed.
- A student who is feeling unwell during a class may be given permission by the Subject Teacher to go to the Sick Room for a limited amount of time. Before going to the Sick Room students must inform the Office of which Subject Teacher gave them permission to do so. At the end of one class in the Sick Room, a student must then go to his next time-tabled class. If the student continues to feel unwell he must ask his Class Tutor or Year Head to go home. When permission is granted, the School Secretary will telephone home and arrange for the student to be collected. In the case of illness telephone calls to parents must always be made through the Office and not on personal mobile phones (the use of which for calls or text messaging is banned during the school day, including morning break and lunch break).

- Students who fail to attend the Deputy Principal's Lunchtime Detention will be liable to automatic suspension.
- Students must sit all House Exams i.e. Christmas Exams and (with the exception of Leaving and Junior Cert students) Summer Exams as well. Students who fail to attend some or all of these House Exams should provide the School management with a Medical Certificate stating the reason for the student's absence. Students may be required to sit the missed examinations at a later date.
- A text/app message alerting parents to a student's absence will be sent once the fact has been verified in the second period.

Individual subject teachers can track a student's attendance for their given subject using VShare and are encouraged to contact a parent/guardian if concern arises about absenteeism for a particular subject.

When a Year Head has a specific concern about an individual student he/she may arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians and the Education Welfare Officer to discuss strategies re same.

When a Year Head notes that no notes/letter have been provided by the parent/guardian explaining his absences, the Year Head will contact the parents/guardians bringing their attention to the matter and requesting that explanations be presented.

School Attendance Strategies

The following is a list of strategies in place in order to encourage good attendance:

- Building a warm, caring, respectful and compassionate atmosphere in which every person feels accepted and valued.
- The provision of excellent extra-curricular activities and clubs which encourages the participation of all students
- A varied and comprehensive curriculum, which is inclusive of all students.
- A well-structured pastoral care system
- Transition Year Programme.
- Rewarding and certification of good attendance
- A comprehensive roll attendance system.
- Homework/Maths Club and supervised evening study for exam classes
- A 10 day Absence Alert Letter to Parents and Guardians if required.

Parents/Guardians Role in Punctuality & Attendance

St. Patrick's Classical School recognises fully that Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility to ensure that children of school going age attend school.

- Parents/Guardians should discuss and promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality with their son.
- Parents/Guardians should ensure that their son is in school on time
- Parents/Guardians should contact the school before/on the day of absence.
- Parents/Guardians should ensure that a note of explanation is sent on via Unique Schools in advance of the student returning to school returning to school signed by a parent/guardian.
- Parents/Guardians should organise family holidays/breaks outside school term.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who leave school to work must register with the National Education Welfare Board, so as to ensure that they can be helped with further education and training.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will be available online and from the school office. Students will be made aware of this policy within the context of the SPHE, Tutor Time and Pastoral Care Programmes, and if necessary they can request a copy of this policy freely through the school office.

The Board of Management last approved and ratified the School Policy on the 10-11-2025.

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Signed:



Signed:



Fr. Gerry Stuart

Chairperson of Board of Management

Mr. Harry Mc Garry

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 10-11-2025.

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