

Statement of Attendance

Here in Clonturk Community College we understand the positive impact that high levels of attendance can have on student engagement, peer relationships and academic achievement. We have high expectations of ourselves and of our students in terms of attendance and participation and we communicate these expectations to all our stakeholders: staff, students and parents.

Prevention Strategies:

Above anything, it is our school culture that encourages and supports attendance. We believe that there must be a positive climate in the school and in the classroom. Student-teacher relationships are positive and respectful. For students we have worked hard to develop:

- A caring & safe environment
- The promotion of positive behaviour strategies and rewards, we are a restorative practise school and our Code of Positive Behaviour reflects and supports this
- An emphasis on positive values
 - Respect, fairness, kindness, self-discipline & hard work.
- Relationships – interpersonal connections
- An equitable & inclusive atmosphere and culture
- Opportunities for students to have an active role in life of school
- Opportunities for students to be involved in cross-curricular & extra-curricular activities to support their sense of belonging and their relationships with both teachers and peers
- Opportunities for students to succeed academically at their own pace, differentiating to meet the needs of individual learners in our classrooms, class organisation based on mixed ability
- Opportunities for parental & community involvement
- An active and effective student support team

We also work very hard to ensure a healthy transition for students from primary school via:

- Open communication: student, school, family and primary school
- Building self-esteem: acknowledging progress
- Addressing any sudden changes in behaviour
- Actively listening: encouraging students to discuss their feelings
- Encouraging involvement in extracurricular activities: builds confidence & an extended network of peers
- Running Friends for Life Programme for ALL students (4 teachers are currently trained as facilitators)
- Student Enrichment Programme
 - *Well Being*
 - *Ethical Education*

- *Development Education*
- *Transition to 2nd Level*
- *ICT*
- *Build Learning Power*
- *Study Skills*
- *Internet Safety*
- *Healthy Eating*
- *Anti-Bullying*

Vertical Clann System:

To enhance student's sense of belonging in the school, to ensure all students have opportunities to contribute and to ensure students can always access support, every student is assigned to a Clann. Clanns are not a class groups but rather groups of students across the different years. Each Clann has a leader called a ceannaire. The ceannaire meets with this group of students every morning for 10 minutes. This provides an opportunity for the ceannaire to "check-in" with students.

These Clanns are designed to be a "family away from home". Student are encouraged to support each other to seek support from their peers or their ceannaire should they need to, parents are directed to the ceannaire as the person to contact/build relationships with within the school as they will be the person in the school who will know their child best.

Opportunities for success in the school are provided via clann awards each month. The ceannaire will award a clan member each month under particular categories such as "Role Model", "well Organised" and "Involvement in Extra-curricular" and they will receive a certificate. Clans will also compete against each other on sports days.

Promoting Good Attendance:

An information evening is held for enrolled students' parents in the spring prior to entry. Attendance is an important feature of this presentation. It is highlighted to parents how missed classes can have a negative effect on student's achievement and can cause stress for the student. Parents and guardians are advised of the procedures to follow should their child be late or absent from school.

First years parents have an induction session on the morning of their child's first day. Again, the importance of full attendance is underlined in detail at this meeting. Parents are reminded that holidays should not be booked during term time and that appointments such as dental appointments should take place after school.

Parents have legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend (Section 17 of Education (Elfare) Act 2000). Only absences

relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Section 21 (9) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Therefore, the school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time.

Schools should strongly discourage parents from taking students on holiday during term time and this should be documented in school's communication to parents. If a parent decides to child out of school for holidays, the principal should request the parent to provide a letter to school to say they are doing so and are aware of the implication.

Where there are regular holiday absences, the school should remind parents of the educational and potential legal impact of removing students from school for periods of time.

Tusla Guidelines for Schools "Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance" 2015

To support parents a yearly calendar is sent out in June each year which outlines school holidays and other dates that have been fixed.

Parents are given access to their child's live attendance record on vsware and absences are recorded on school reports.

During the student induction parents have an information session and again the importance of attendance is underlined and what to do should an absence be unavoidable.

Students are rewarded for full attendance at the end of the Christmas term and at the end of the year. We continuously reinforce that this is an award that anyone can achieve. We have a Full Attendance Wall whereby students names are posted that have not missed a day – this is a very positive and attractive display and we encourage students to be proud of their names being present.

Attendance & punctuality are regularly discussed at our weekly assembly.

Recording and Monitoring Attendance:

- Rolls are called for every class and recorded on VSWare. Roll-Call is set up for the first class of the day the first class after lunch. Attendance and explanations for absences are checked recorded.
- Students who present late must sign in at reception.
- Students who are leaving early must have note in their journal, this note must be shown to their ceannaire and signed by them before they will be permitted to sign out.

- No student under the age of 16 will be permitted to leave the premises unaccompanied if they are leaving school early. A parent or guardian (or another adult, appointed in writing, by the parent) must accompany the student when signing out early.
- If a student is absent they must have a signed note from home – slips are in the student journals. Students and parents have been shown how to fill these in.
- Parents have been asked to notify the school by mail or by telephone if their child will be absent. The office then informs the student's ceannaire.
- They must show this note to the ceannaire on their return.
- If a student is absent for more than 2/3 days the ceannaire will phone home
- If there are any suspicions regarding absence, even if it is less than 2-3 days, the ceannaire will phone home.
- For unavoidable absence such as illness work is available through our virtual learning platform. This is modelled by our teaching staff who will provide work for all of their classes should an absence resulting from illness or CPD occur. The expectation that there would be full attendance for teachers is very clear.

Responding to Poor Attendance:

- Positive relationships and regular communication with parents and students regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Working with students to identify and understand causes of poor attendance and developing strategies and possible solutions with students and applying a timeframe.
- Using Student Support Team to devise ways of supporting students who are experiencing issues at school or at home which are contributing to their absenteeism.
- Working with teachers and ceannaire to develop opportunities for success inside and outside the classroom.
- If needed, involving other agencies in developing strategies to support the student.
- Rewarding the student for any improvement in relation to attendance and punctuality, reaffirming their contributing to school life and how they are missed when they are not here and underlining how stress and anxiety may actually increase through absence.
- Working with family/parents/guardians who themselves may have had a negative school experience. Inviting them in, involving them in school life.
- The school may need to seek the support of other agencies such as CAMHS, ISPCC, HSE.
- Finally, a referral may need to be made to TUSLA.