



St Joseph's Secondary School, Castlebar.

Attendance and School Participation Policy/Attendance Strategy

Mercy philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents/Guardians and the wider community.

CEIST Core Values

The Core Values of CEIST are:

- Promoting Spiritual & Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Being Just and Responsible

Mission Statement

St. Joseph's Secondary School Castlebar, Co. Mayo is a voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust). We aim to provide a holistic Christian Education in co-operation with staff, students, parents/guardians, Board of Management and the Community. We work to create equality for all in an atmosphere of mutual respect. We strive to excellence in learning and endeavour to help each student to reach her full potential in a positive, caring and happy environment.

School Ethos

The characteristic spirit of St. Joseph's Secondary School, Castlebar is based on the Mercy Philosophy of Education which espouses the core values of respect, justice, care and joy. The School's Ethos is holistic and person centred. The school encourages students to use and share their talents to their full potential, to recognise God's presence in their lives, to celebrate their Christian faith and to show respect to all persons in all areas of life and work. Students are encouraged by school staff to strive for excellence in learning and to participate to the best of their ability in all aspects of school life.



Rationale

- The purpose of the **Education Welfare Act 2000** is to encourage regular school attendance. Under the Act 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.
- Regular attendance and participation in school life enhances the quality of education experienced by a student.
- Regular attendance at school also develops a student's sense of community and belonging
- St Joseph's Secondary school encourages in a positive way, regular school attendance and participation in school life
- The school accepts and affirms that parents/guardians have a primary responsibility to ensure that children of school going age attend school

Scope of Policy

- This policy applies to all students, parents, teaching staff and Board of Management of St Joseph's Secondary School

Legislation

- Under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency is responsible for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education and for providing education welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation and retention in education

Aims and Objectives of policy

The aims of this policy are:

- To help reduce absenteeism and late arrival at school
- To encourage students to attend school in support of their learning
- To develop in students an awareness of the importance of attending school and participating in school life as an important life skill

School Attendance

- Students are expected to be present for class at 9.00 a.m. every day and until 4.00 p.m. on Monday and Tuesdays and until 3.20 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- Students are expected to be present for weekly assembly:
1st, 2nd & 3rd years Friday 8.45 a.m.- 8.55 a.m.



Transition Year, 5th & 6th Year Monday 8.45 a.m.- 8.55 a.m.

- To inform the school of appointments i.e. medical, dental etc.
- To present a note of explanation for all absences from school
- To present a Consent form prior to departure on all school outings and activities
- To sign in at reception on late arrival at school
- To sign in at reception on return from an appointment and to sign out when leaving the school unless otherwise directed.
- The Year Head will follow up on notes not presented and students who are late on a regular basis
- The school will on occasion inform parents/guardians of daily absence by text
- If a parent is unaware of their daughters absence they should contact the school immediately

Absence from School

- Year Heads monitor students attendance at school through the attendance management system vsware
- Year Heads may contact parents if they have a concern regarding a student's absence from school
- If a student's absence is of concern an Educational Welfare Officer of the Educational Welfare Services will be contacted and may work with the school and the parents/guardians to help support the student in attending school

Students who need to leave school for Appointments

- If a student has to leave school during the school day for an arranged appointment they must present a note of explanation signed by a parent/guardian to their year head by 9.00am or inform the Year Head/school through the school app.
- The student must show the note to their class teacher before leaving class
- The student and the person signing the student out from school must both sign the Sign Out book in reception before leaving the school
- All notes regarding appointments are held by the school.
- The school advises that all appointments where possible be made outside of school time.
- In the event that a student is returning to school following an appointment they must sign back into school at reception

Strategies to encourage attendance and participation

- Students who have full attendance records are acknowledged as part of the Celebration of Student Achievements Day
- Encouraging students to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Maintaining close contact between home and school



- Monitoring of attendance and absenteeism by Year Head and class teacher
- Supporting students who experience difficulties with school attendance
- Identifying students who may be at risk of poor attendance and working with their families and support agencies if appropriate
- Establishing links with support agencies such as the Educational Welfare Service
- Creating a welcoming and caring school environment for all

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- The Board of Management is obliged to prepare a school attendance strategy
- Schools are obliged to keep a register of students enrolled with the school and to maintain attendance records.
- Schools are obliged to inform the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency if they have concerns regarding a student's absence from school and/or when a student is absent from school for over twenty days (cumulatively).

Principal

The Principal will:

- Communicate with Parents/Guardians where there are serious concerns concerning the non-attendance of a student
- Communicate with support agencies including the Educational Welfare Service where students are not attending school and if a student faces expulsion from school
- Inform the Board of Management of school attendance

Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal will:

- Work with the Year Heads in monitoring student attendance
- Inform the Educational Welfare Services of students who are absent 20 days or more as required and make referrals where a student's absences are of concern
- Complete the attendance end of year report for the Educational Welfare Service
- Communicate with the Principal any concerns relating to student attendance
- Inform Parents if the Educational Welfare Service have been informed about their daughter's absences

Year Head

The Year Head has a particular responsibility for the pastoral care of their year group which includes:



- Recording and monitoring student attendance using the attendance management system vs-ware
- Retaining notes/app notifications from parents regarding student absences from school
- Encouraging students to attend school and participate in school activities
- Maintaining contact with home regarding student's attendance and welfare
- Communicating with the Principal and Deputy Principal any concerns regarding student absences in their year group
- Rewarding students who have full attendance records at the Celebration of Student Achievements Day

Class Teacher

- Each teacher takes a class roll for their class and enters it in the school attendance management system vs-ware
- Each class teacher will inform the Year Head if they have a concern regarding a student's absence from their class

Parents

- Generally there are good reasons why a student is absent from school but parents/guardians must inform the school if their daughter is absent
- The reason for the absence must be stated in writing/communicated via the school app and signed/verified by the parent/guardian
- All notes must be signed/verified by the parent/guardian.
- Parents/Guardians are requested to use the school app or the Absence Section at the back of the school Journal for recording all absences
- The school retains all absence notes/communication from parents/guardians.
- In the event of a prolonged absence the school must be informed as soon as possible by parent/guardian.
- Parents/Guardians are strongly advised not to take their daughter out of school for holidays during term time. Taking a holiday during term time means a student may fall behind with school work

Students are expected:

- To be present for class at 9.00 a.m. every day and until 4.00 p.m. on Monday and Tuesdays and until 3.20 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- To be present for weekly assembly:

1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd years	Friday	8.45 a.m.- 8.55 a.m.
Transition Year, 5 th & 6 th Year	Monday	8.45 a.m.- 8.55 a.m.
- To inform the school of appointments i.e. medical, dental etc.
- To present a note of explanation for all absences from school



- To present a Consent form prior to departure on all school outings and activities
- To sign in at reception on late arrival at school
- To sign in at reception on return from an appointment and to sign out when leaving the school unless otherwise directed.
- Truancy from class or school is forbidden. In a situation where a student has taken an unauthorised absence from school, they will be subject to disciplinary measures as per school Sanctions

Monitoring Procedures

The Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads will monitor the implementation of the policy

Success Criteria

- Improved attendance
- Less disruption to class
- Improved student achievement
- Improved sense of school community by students
- Report on absences to be given at staff meetings

Review Procedures

The Deputy Principal in consultation with the Principal, Year Heads and the Pastoral Care support team will review and report the attendance of students in each year group

A report will be given to the Board of Management each term on absences

The policy will be reviewed each year

Reviewed and Ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on: <hr style="width: 40%; margin-left: 0;"/>	
This Policy is operational from: _____ 	
<hr style="width: 80%; margin-left: 0;"/> Mr. John Caulfield Chairperson of Board of Management	<hr style="width: 80%; margin-left: 0;"/> Ms. Marie Mac Cabe Principal