

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



## St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School Killester, Dublin 5

<b>Date ratified by Board of Management:</b>	<b>March 2015</b>
<b>Last reviewed:</b>	<b>August 2018</b>

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School, Killester Attendance and Punctuality Policy has been drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, including the Board of Management, the teaching staff, the parents and the students.

## Rationale – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:

The Attendance and Punctuality Policy has been informed by the following school policies and educational legislation:

- **Mission Statement** . . . . . St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School
- **Code of Behaviour: General Principles** . . . . . St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School
- **Code of Behaviour: Rules section** . . . . . St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School
- **Education (Welfare) Act, 2000** . . . . . Educational legislation

## Mission Statement:

St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School, Killester is a Catholic girls Secondary School. Our aim is to provide an excellent, all-round education in a Christian environment. We strive for academic excellence. We seek to enable each student to reach her full potential; to accept responsibility for her own actions; to respect the rights of others; and to be motivated to make a positive contribution to the building of a better world.

## Code of Behaviour – General principles:

- ensuring that the core values of respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment will inform all aspects of implementing the code of behaviour
- ensuring a positive learning climate where students can learn and teachers can teach
- promoting a proactive, pastoral, and positive approach in all dealings with students
- ensuring the health and safety and welfare of the school community
- recognising the role and responsibility of parents in resolving discipline matters
- honesty, fairness, justice and kindness are key values of our Code of Behaviour
- high expectations of behaviour are upheld
- promotion of individual responsibility and self-regulation
- a belief in the ability of the student to amend behaviour that is in conflict with the Code

- a spirit of forgiveness will inform the school's response to students who demonstrate a credible commitment to amend their future behaviour and to put breaches of the Code behind them

### **Attendance and Punctuality: Code of Behaviour: Rules Section**

**(a)** Regular and punctual attendance is expected.

A note of explanation from Parent / Guardian is required immediately for:

- absence from school
- late arrival
- permission to leave school before the time of dismissal. (Students are expected to make dental / medical / hospital appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Requests to leave school early must be accompanied by an appointment card).

These notes are to be written in all spaces provided in the school journal and should be shown to all teachers concerned.

**(b)** It is the responsibility of parents / guardians to ensure that students attend school. If a student is absent from school for more than 20 days during the school year the school must inform the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

**(c)** In the case of illness during the school day, students must inform the class teacher who may inform the office. Parents may be notified and arrangements made to collect the student. Students should not themselves contact parents under any circumstances.

### **Education (Welfare) Act, 2000:**

Under this Act all schools are required to do the following (S20 & S21):

- establish and maintain a register of all students attending the school
- keep a record of attendance or non-attendance on each school day of each student registered at that school
- where a student fails to attend, the reasons for this non-attendance must be recorded

The Act requires the following of parents (S18):

- to supply written explanations of all absences from school (S18)

The Act also covers the establishment of the **National Educational and Welfare Board (NEWB)** which has specific functions pertaining to the promotion of regular school attendance up to the age of 16 years. The school is required to notify the NEWB where a student is absent for 20 days or more, or if suspended for 6 days or more in a school year.

### **Aims – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:**

St Mary's wishes to foster a school culture which places a high value on full and punctual attendance at school each day and at each class throughout the day. Through consistent implementation of this policy, St Mary's Secondary School aims to:

- encourage regular school attendance
- promote punctual attendance to school each morning

- maintain reliable records of attendance
- maintain positive communication between school and parents regarding student attendance and punctuality records
- reward students who achieve good attendance and punctuality records

### **Procedures for students – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:**

- Classes begin each morning at **9.00a.m.** with roll call taken on eportal by each teacher.
- Students must be in school by **8.50a.m.** to make any necessary advance preparations e.g. collecting books from lockers and to attend possible scheduled assemblies, so as to be in their base room before 9.00a.m.
- Students arriving late to school are required to sign the 'Late to School Form' at the office. Late arrival on a repeated basis may be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions may apply.
- Students are responsible for bringing explanation notes regarding punctuality and absence and for giving them to the Class Tutor or Year Head on their return to school.
- Students who miss morning roll call must alert their Tutor during the day that they are in school so as to avoid being marked absent for the full day.
- Students who have to leave the school early are required to give a slip requesting permission, signed in advance by a parent, to the Year head or Deputy Principal or Principal. If permission is given, the Year head, deputy Principal, or Principal will countersign the permission slip and the student must then sign out at the office before leaving the school. Where possible, all medical and dental appointments should be made out of school hours. The school may request a doctor's or dentist's note where multiple appointments are requested.
- Any student absent from class or school without permission is in breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and appropriate sanctions may be applied.
- Senior students should be aware that poor attendance and punctuality records will have an implication with regard to references and third-level college application forms.
- In the event of a student becoming ill or being injured in the course of a school, day, she should inform her class teacher. A sick note may be written and sent to the office whereby parents/guardians will be contacted to make arrangements to collect their daughter. Any contact with parents will be made through the school office. **Students should not contact home via a mobile phone.**

### **Procedures for parents – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:**

- As the primary educators, parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for absence.
- Parents are expected to communicate with the school in the following circumstances:
  - a phone call to the school office if a student is absent for more than 2 days due to illness
  - a note in advance where it is known that a student will be absent
  - permission slip, requesting permission to be absent, if a student needs to leave school early
  - a note explaining all absences (including absences where a student is sent home early due to illness) or following a phone call alerting the school to an absence
  - a note explaining lateness to school

### **Procedures for Class teachers and Tutors – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:**

- Class Teachers will take a roll call each morning at 9.00a.m. and will record students absent from class on an Absence Slip which is returned to the office before 10.00am. Class teachers will also input attendance electronically to eportal.
- Tutors will collect absence notes for the Year head.
- Class Teachers will record attendance on eportal and will report any concerns in relation to absences to the relevant Year Head.

### **Procedures for Year Heads – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:**

- Year heads will monitor attendance and punctuality of all students in their year group. They will collect and maintain all parents' notes in relation to absences and punctuality.
- Year Heads will encourage a positive attitude towards regular attendance and punctuality as part of their engagement with students and will mention this regularly at assemblies.
- Year Heads will contact parents/guardians by phone, text or letter to alert parents/guardians regarding poor attendance or punctuality.
- Year Heads will speak to students with poor attendance and punctuality with a view to improving their record.
- Year heads will make a note of the number of full days absent, and part days absent, for entering in the end-of-term school reports on students.
- Year Heads will impose sanctions for ongoing poor punctuality and unapproved absences.
- Year Heads will organise awards for good punctuality and attendance at the end of term.
- Year Heads will alert the Deputy Principal to students who are approaching 20 days absence so that parents can be informed in advance of their daughter reaching the 20 days absent.
- Year Heads will collate details of all students who have exceeded 20 days absence and provide these to the Deputy Principal.

### **Procedures for Deputy Principal – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:**

The Deputy Principal has overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality of students in the school. The Deputy Principal will notify the Educational Welfare Officer where a student's absence has reached 20 days or where a student has been suspended for 6 days.

### **Procedures for Principal – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:**

- The Principal has overall responsibility for the welfare of all students in the school, including their attendance and punctuality.
- Where a student is absent due to suspension, the Principal will contact the parents in advance to inform them of the suspension. Suspended students are expected to use their time on suspension at home productively by applying themselves to their studies.
- Where the student is placed on an in-house suspension, students will not be permitted to attend class or engage in any school activity but will be given work to do under supervision.

## Promoting positive attitudes to attendance and punctuality – Attendance & Punctuality Policy:

We at St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School, Killester will promote a positive attitude to regular and punctual attendance to school. We will do this by:

- fostering a caring and nurturing school environment which has at its heart the core values – respect for self, for others and for the environment
- providing the highest standards of teaching and learning for all our students catering for a diversity of abilities and talents
- by encouraging students to engage with co-curricular and extracurricular activities
- by making every effort to identify students at risk and investigating reasons behind poor attendance and by seeking to put supports in place that will make attendance at school a positive experience
- by using the school's student support services e.g. Guidance, Pastoral Care and Mentoring to help students improve on poor attendance
- by showing our Christian ethos in dealing with cases of poor attendance and punctuality in a just, caring, and sensitive manner – aiming to support parents in their efforts to get reluctant students to improve their attendance
- by giving attendance and punctuality awards at end-of-term and end-of-year awards ceremonies
- end-of-term and end-of-year student reports to parents will include details of student attendance and punctuality.

Finally, it is our hope in St Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School, Killester that our students will graduate from our school with a positive attitude to regular and punctual attendance which they can carry into any future endeavour as a worthy foundation to a good work ethic and in doing so will '*make a positive contribution to the building of a better world.*' **[School Mission Statement]**

– – – – – **END** – – – – –