

Kilrush Community School

School Attendance Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

In an Irish, European and Christian context, Kilrush Community School endeavours to create a community atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect within which students learn, mature and develop their respective talents.

Kilrush Community School Aims

1. To develop a challenging learning environment which promotes high expectations of individual performance from students and enables staff to professionally discharge their duties.
2. To give students access to a broad and balanced curriculum within a caring, co-operative community.
3. To ensure that all staff and students enjoy equality of esteem and opportunity.
4. To foster among students an awareness of their environment, heritage and health enabling them to play a positive role within the local and wider community.
5. To equip students with a strong sense of self-esteem, self-discipline and self-motivation.
6. To foster universal values of compassion, integrity, honesty and respect.

School Policy

The legislative context for this School Attendance Policy arises essentially from the Education (Welfare) Act of 2000.

The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) was established, “to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives a minimum education.”

The NEWB has appointed Education Welfare Officers throughout the country. The Board of Management, Principal, Teachers and other members of the school’s staff are obliged to give “all such assistance as may reasonably be required by an Educational Welfare Officer in the performance of his/her functions”.

The Obligation of Parents

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 obliges the parents of a child to: “cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day” and “where the child is absent from the school at which he/she is registered during part of the school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parents of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the Code of Behaviour prepared by the school under Section 23, notify the principal of the reason for the child’s absence”.

The school is obliged to record the reason(s) for a student’s absence on any particular day. The school code states that each student is obliged:

“To attend school on all school days and to present to the Class Tutor an explanatory note from his/her parent(s), legal guardian(s) in the case of each absence”.

While parents may phone the school, so as to inform it of a student’s absence, all absences must be recorded in the designated space at the back of the School Journal. The school records student absence under the designated regulations of the NEWB. These are:

- Illness.
- Urgent Family Reasons e.g. Bereavement.
- Expulsion.
- Suspension.
- Other e.g. holidays.
- Unexplained.
- Transfer to another school.

It is helpful if parents indicate the particular reason for a student’s absence.

Parents/guardians should ensure that their son/daughter comes to school on time and in her/his full school uniform.

Should a student be absent from school for a period of **five days or more**, without the school being informed as to the reason for the absence, parents/guardians will be contacted by telephone. Failing this a letter will be sent home seeking the reason(s) for absence.

The school will also periodically conduct “spot checks” on student year groups for absences as to a particular day’s or half-day’s absence. This will be conducted by telephone.

The School’s Obligations

The school is obliged to inform by notice in writing an Educational Welfare Officer where:

- A student is suspended from school for a period of not less than six days.

- The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during the school year is not less than twenty.
- A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the school register.
- A student is, in the opinion of the principal, not attending school regularly.

The school will also submit an annual report to the NEWB on the levels of school attendance. Also, the school will report on student absences on four other occasions, as outlined by the NEWB, to the NEWB, during the school year.

The school will seek an explanation, where one hasn't been provided, for the failure of a student to transfer from Primary School into the Community School, where an application has been accepted.

School Register

The school will maintain a full register of all students who have a place in the school. A student will only be removed from the register where:

- (a) A student has been expelled and all appeal procedures have been exhausted.
- (b) The school has received confirmation that the student is registered in another school.
- (c) A student has been registered with the NEWB as in receipt of an education in a place other than a recognised school.
- (d) Parents/guardians (or students over the age of 18 years) withdraw their child from the school for a specified reason.

Attendance Records

A student's attendance or absence will be recorded twice a day in school. The Attendance Roll is taken in the morning at the Morning Assembly and in the afternoon at the Afternoon Assembly.

Notes relating to absence must be presented at Reception, in the School Journal, for school records.

Parents/Guardians are officially notified, by way of the school reports twice/three times a year, of the number of days their son/daughter was absent from school.

Any student leaving the school building/grounds, for whatever reason, during the school day, must report to Reception with a note in his/her journal explaining the reason(s) for leaving. Likewise any student coming to school late or returning to school having left for an appointment earlier must report to Reception.

Teachers should check their attendance register before each class and relay any concerns regarding absence to the relevant Year Tutor.

School Attendance Strategies

The school will:

- (a) Conduct a twice daily attendance record for the morning at the 9.00 a.m. Assembly and for the afternoon at the 1.50 p.m. Assembly (except Wednesdays due to an early finish).
- (b) Notify parents/guardians whose child has reached 15 days absence.
- (c) Where possible, will seek adequate explanations from parents/guardians regarding unexplained absences/unsatisfactory explanations.
- (d) Through the offices of the Home School Liaison co-ordinator and the school's Pastoral Care Team, seek to identify underlying causes for persistent absenteeism.
- (e) Provide counselling/support for students with underlying attendance problems.
- (f) Praise/award with recognition those Junior Cycle students, especially in First and Second Year, whose attendance merits such recognition.

The policy is required under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and lays down the parameters of school attendance in the context of the School's Mission Statement.

The aim of this policy is to clarify the school's obligation under the Education Welfare Act 2000 and to lay down clear guidelines for teaching staff, students, parents/guardians and the Board of Management as to the school's position vis-à-vis school attendance.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or in the light of ongoing developments in the area.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

**Sr. K. Conway,
Chairperson – B.o.M.**