

Mulroy College
Milford
Roll Number: 712200



School Attendance
Policy

MULROY COLLEGE
Coláiste na Maoile Ruaidhe



School Attendance Policy

Mulroy College embodies mutual respect in a caring environment while enabling students to achieve personal success and move with confidence into a world of endless possibilities.

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

This attendance policy applies to all the stakeholders at Mulroy College. It is a school wide policy implemented by students, parents, staff and the Board of Management to maximise students attendance. Our philosophy of collaboration and collective accountability underpins our approach. Research has shown that poor attendance is directly linked to low educational achievement, early school leaving, higher unemployment levels as well as the impact on wider school aspects of the student's life such as weak peer relationships, risks of engagement in anti-social behaviour and poor family relationships.

Legislation

The legislation governing school attendance in Ireland is the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Under the Act the minimum school leaving age is 16 years, or the completion of three full years of post-primary education, whichever is the later.

Parents are required to ensure that their children from the age of 6 to 16 attend a recognised school or receive a certain minimum education.

The Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency - Tusla

This is the national agency established to ensure that every child attends school regularly,

or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education. It also advises the Government on school attendance and education provision. The agency's emphasis is on helping schools, families, and children, rather than imposing penalties for non-attendance at school. It employs educational welfare officers at local level throughout the country to provide support and advice to parents and schools and to follow up in absences from school. They also help to co-ordinate all policies concerning attendance and educational welfare and provide assistance in helping schools co-ordinate school attendance policies.

Under Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and submit to Tusla a Statement of Strategy for School Attendance. Section 22(1) of the Act states that:

“ The board of management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the principal of, teachers teaching at, parents of students registered at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to, that school, prepare and submit to the Board a statement of the strategies and measures it proposes to adopt for the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending that school and encouraging regular attendance at school on the part of such students.”

Policy Goals

1. To encourage regular attendance and reduce absenteeism.
2. To motivate students to take an active part in their education.
3. To foster an appreciation of learning.
4. To instil a sense of self-worth in students.
5. To support students and parents where there are attendance challenges.
6. To liaise closely with the Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCL) School Completion Programme (SCP) and Tusla.
7. To ensure good communication between school and home.
8. To establish procedures for monitoring and recording attendance and non-attendance.

Strategies Used to Encourage Attendance and Participation

The college uses the following strategies:

- The rewarding of students who have full, good and improved attendance records throughout the year and at the end of year prize giving ceremonies
- The promotion of involvement by students in extra-curricular activities and other areas of school life
- The establishment of a daily subsidised breakfast club
- The development of a supportive, positive and welcoming school environment
- The maintenance of close links and communication between all stakeholders
- The identification and intervention of students who are at risk of disengaging from education and leaving early

- Communication with local feeder primary schools in order to identify students with a history of poor attendance and potential early school leavers
- Mentoring programme to provide support for all 1st years during the transition from primary school
- Provide information on the importance of attendance and the role of Tusla at the transfer day/parent-teacher meetings etc
- Engagement of counselling and pastoral services within the school to examine the underlying causes of persistent absenteeism e.g. curriculum issues, bullying, student illness, family problems, parental illness, part-time work by students, problems with school environment etc
- The establishment of monthly attendance meetings with management, the attendance officer, the HSCL officer, a representative from the SCP and the school secretary
- Communication with the educational welfare officer assigned to the school
- The identification of aspects of the operation and and management of the school and of the curriculum that may contribute to absenteeism and the removal of these barriers is so far as they are not necessary for the proper running of the school

School Attendance and Punctuality

- Registration is held at 8.52 every morning with the class tutors where the journals are checked for explanations of absences
- Class teachers record attendance at the beginning of each period and records it in the school computer system - vsware.

- Students who arrive late must present an explanatory note and must sign in at the main office. They will be recorded late on the computer system.
- Students away from school on a school related activity authorised by the principal will be recorded as such and not marked absent.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school when the child is absent
- Students who have been absent are required to present an explanation in their journal signed by a parent. If a student has attended a doctor/dentist, a medical certificate/dental certificate should be presented to the tutor on return to school
- The school contacts the parents/guardians of students with unexplained absences or those whose attendance is causing concern
- A note from a parent/guardian is required in advance for students wishing to leave the school early. Such students must get permission from their tutor and must sign out at the main office
- Notes must also be signed by the class tutor and all notes remain in the student journal
- School attendance statistics are collated and dealt with during the monthly attendance meeting
- The school communicates with the Education Welfare Officer where a pattern of unexplained or unjustified absences begin to emerge
- Schools are required under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to formally refer a child whose school attendance is off concern to the Educational Welfare Service, Child and Family Agency, Tusla

Participation

Participation helps to develop friendships, fosters self-esteem and improves academic achievement. Mulroy College actively encourages every student to participate in all aspects of school life.

- Students are expected to attend all classes, be punctual and to participate to the best of their ability
- The approach to teaching and learning - Assessment for Learning (AFL) and Instructional Leadership (IL) encourages student participation
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are undertaken
- Activities take place during lunch time as well as after school
- SNAs help to integrate special needs students before school and during break time and lunch time
- Participation is recognised, praised, publicised and rewarded.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management in each school is obliged to prepare a school attendance strategy.

Schools are obliged to keep a register of the students attending the school. They must also maintain attendance records for all students and inform Tusla if a child is absent for more than 20 days in a school year.

The principal must inform Tusla if in his/her view, a student has an attendance problem.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 parents must inform the school if their children will be absent from school on a school day and the reason for the absence e.g. illness. It is best to do this in writing in the school journal. Tulsa strongly advises against taking children out of school to go on holiday during term-time.

Parents and guardians have a legal obligation to ensure that their child attends a school or otherwise receives an education. If Tusla considers that a parent is failing in his or her obligation, it must send the parent a School Attendance Notice warning that legal action would follow if the child did not attend school regularly. Before doing this, it must make reasonable effort to consult with the parents and the child. If the parent fails to comply, he or she may be prosecuted. If a parent claims that suitable alternative education is being provided, he or she must prove this.

Success Criteria

This strategy will be monitored on an on-going basis and it will be deemed successful if it promotes good attendance, identifies attendance problems and encourages students to participate in school activities.

Review and Evaluation

This attendance policy can be reviewed annually.