

# Presentation Secondary School

Listowel

Co. Kerry



## Attendance and Participation Policy

### Date of policy adoption

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Presentation Secondary School, Listowel

Signed Shane O'Donoghue Date 5/12/2023  
Chairperson, Board of Management

## 1 SCOPE

This strategy applies to the students, staff and parents of Presentation Secondary School and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality. This strategy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, including the Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

## 2 RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL'S MISSION, VISION AND AIMS

The Presentation Secondary School Attendance Policy involves helping each student develop to her full potential, both socially and educationally. In Presentation Secondary School we believe this can only happen where each student is encouraged to attend punctually every day.

Through its mission statement Presentation Secondary School is committed to providing a caring, safe and disciplined environment in which all students are challenged and supported to reach their educational and personal potential. The first requirement for students to gain the maximum benefit from their secondary education is that they attend regularly and participate fully in school life.

Research has shown that poor attendance and participation are directly linked to low educational achievement, early school leaving and poor employment prospects. While the primary responsibility for ensuring that children attend school regularly lies with parents, the staff of the school wants to work in partnership with parents to ensure that an environment is created where students look forward to coming to school and participating in school life. In particular, we wish to create conditions where students see that it is in their own interest to attend school regularly.

Where cases of poor attendance and participation arise, research has shown that truancy itself is not the problem but is usually a symptom of other difficulties or obstacles that arise for students. For this reason we are committed to working in a spirit of co-operation with students, parents, and other relevant agencies to help students who have a poor attendance record or who are in danger of developing poor attendance patterns. This policy is drawn up in fulfilment of the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000) which became law in July 2002 and should be read in conjunction with the School's policies on Pastoral Care,

Discipline, Admission, Special Educational Needs, Homework and Assessment, and Guidance. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of all the educational partners, the strategies used to improve attendance and participation, the review dates and review mechanisms for the policy.

### 3 RATIONALE

In Presentation Secondary School we have identified attendance and punctuality as an area for improvement. This strategy is intended to foster a good mature attitude towards attendance and punctuality.

### 4 OBJECTIVES

Through implementation of this strategy Presentation Secondary School expects to:

- To encourage full attendance at school.
- To highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents.
- To positively enforce punctual attendance morning and evening and at each class throughout the day.
- To maintain an effective attendance record-keeping system.
- To develop suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.

### 5 POLICY CONTENT

#### 5.1 National Educational Welfare Board

Under legislation 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. The National Educational Welfare Board

(NEWB) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

As a parent you must notify the school if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that explanations must be given on the compass app. The school will notify the Educational Welfare Board if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise for concern.

#### 5.2 The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 18

Where a child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of the school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent 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 school of the reasons for the child's absence.

#### 5.3 The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21 (4)

The Principal of the school concerned shall inform, by notice of writing to the Educational Welfare Officer,

Where:

- 1) A student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.
- 2) The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during a school year is not less than 20 days.

### **Presentation Secondary School recognises the importance of good attendance and punctuality.**

**Regular or prolonged absences will have a negative impact on a student's learning and development and therefore should be avoided whenever possible.** The school has an Attendance Strategy in place, the aim of which is to promote good attendance in the school. Poor punctuality has a similarly negative impact on the learning of the student, and has the further effect of disrupting the class into which the student is arriving late. The guidelines below should be adhered to by all students.

1. The school day begins at 9.00a.m. Students are expected to be in their classrooms by **8.55 a.m.**

Lunch is from 1.15-1.55pm on Monday to Thursday. Students are expected to be in their classrooms by 1.50 p.m. upon their return from lunch. Students move promptly to their next lesson.

2. Students who arrive late to school in the morning (after 9.00a.m.) and the afternoon (after 1.55p.m) must report to the office.

3. When a student is absent, the absence must be recoded on Compass by the Parent/Guardian.

4. A student may not leave school during the school day without permission

a. If a student needs to attend an appointment or needs to be signed out for part of the day, the Parent/Guardian signs the student out on Compass and is collect at the office, the student remains in the classroom until called.

b. On return the same day, the student must sign back in at the office.

c. Any contact with parents/guardians in relation to leaving school must be made through Compass or the office.

Students will receive sanctions for unexcused absences and lateness in accordance with the Presentation Secondary School Code of Behaviour.

## 6 ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

Presentation Secondary School will recognise students' who achieve full attendance in the school year by presenting the students with a certificate of full attendance and will acknowledge excellent attendance at the Award Day in May

## 7 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT CONSEQUENCES

7.1 Disciplinary actions consistent with the Code of Behaviour will be imposed by the Principal, Deputy, Assistant Principals and Year Heads for unexcused absences. Individual class teachers will impose sanctions for lateness consistent with the Code of Behaviour.

**The remaining content of this policy outlines in detail the whole school approach to the following attendance and punctuality procedures:**

- Daily monitoring of attendance at 9.00am and 1.55pm.
- Daily monitoring of punctuality at 9.00am and 1.55pm.
- Recording of daily attendance.
- Recording lateness.
- Recording notes and communications.
- Recording early departures and Presentation Secondary School attendance.

- Sanctions for lateness.
- Sanctions for unexcused absences.
- Informing parents when concerns arise.

## 8 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Presentation Secondary School acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community in the implementation of this Attendance and Punctuality Strategy.

Role of Parents/Guardians: Once a student is enrolled at Presentation Secondary School Listowel it is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to ensure that she attends school on each school day.

A student may not leave school before reaching the age of sixteen or completing three years of post-primary education, whichever is later. When a student is absent from school on a school day, parents/guardians must notify the school, as soon as possible of the reasons for such absence via Compass.

Parents/guardians are asked to co-operate with the school in developing strategies to deal with individual cases of poor attendance or participation involving a student in their care.

Through the Parents' Association, parents/guardians are part of a whole school approach to the development and review of policies in relation to school attendance and participation.

Parents are expected to co-operate with the National Education Welfare Board when the Board becomes involved in cases of poor attendance. This is a legal requirement under the Education Welfare Act (2000)

### 8.1 PRINCIPAL AND DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

- Apply disciplinary procedures to students for unexcused absences and lateness, consistent with Presentation Secondary School Code of Behaviour and the National Education Welfare Board legislation on attendance.
- Deputy Principal sends attendance reports to TUSLA twice a year and informs parents.

## 8.2 YEAR HEADS

### Role of Year Heads

- To monitor lateness and absenteeism on Compass
- To oversee the academic progress of students
- To Ensure the Year group follow the code of behaviour
- To acknowledge students' achievements informally and through the Award System
- To encourage students to participate in extra-curricular activities
- To contact parents/guardians on matters concerning attendance and participation in co-operation with the Principal, Deputy and pastoral care team
- To support students at risk and address the needs of vulnerable students
- To meet weekly with Principal and Deputy Principal of the school to discuss and review issues concerning the year group
- Record all verbal and written communication from parents/guardians.
- Apply the Code of Behaviour for unexcused absences
- Contact parents' where appropriate, re student's number of absences on reaching twenty days during an academic year.
- Good attendance and punctuality will be acknowledged in the reports issued to students and parents/guardians at the end of the first term and at the end of the academic year.
- Good attendance is acknowledged at assemblies and students are reminded of the importance of attendance and punctuality

## 8.3 CLASS TUTOR

Role of Class Tutors To encourage good attendance and participation among all students in the Tutor group

To convey concerns in relation to attendance and participation to class teachers, the Year Head, the Guidance Counsellor and School Management as the need arises.

- Liaise with Year Heads concerning students with a high absenteeism.
- Offer encouragement and affirmation for good attendance to students.

## 8.4 CLASS TEACHER

### Role of Teachers

To be part of a whole school approach to promoting good attendance and participation among all students in the school and to co-operate in the development on an effective policy to improve standards of attendance and participation

- To foster a classroom atmosphere conducive to positive relationships between teachers and students.
- To develop lesson plans and teaching strategies which, as far as possible, cater for the range of abilities and learning styles in a particular teaching group

To take and maintain a roll at the beginning of each lesson on compass and to notify the Year head, Principal or Deputy at the earliest possible opportunity of any student whose absence from class cannot be explained.

To communicate concerns in relation to attendance, participation or student welfare to the Principal or Deputy To co-operate in the development of strategies to deal with individual cases of poor participation in classes taught by that teacher

To co-operate in the implementation of strategies outlined in other school policies which have an indirect impact on attendance and participation.

- All teachers will keep individual class attendance records for every class taught.
- Class teachers will follow up on student absences, report to the Year Head if necessary.
- An event must be set up on compass when students are away for school activities
- Promote and encourage good attendance in class.
- Teachers will communicate with parents/guardians at parent teacher meetings on the importance and value of good attendance.



## 8.5 STUDENT

### Role of Students

- To attend school for the full day on each day of term. To be in class and ready to begin work at 9am each school morning, to be punctual and to remain in school for the full school day
- To have the correct text books, materials and other equipment for each class.
- To participate fully in each class and to refrain from interfering with other students' learning
- To provide a written explanation to be signed by a parent or guardian on Compass for each absence. Where a student has to leave school for a dental, medical or other appointment, a parent must come in to the school before the student can be allowed to leave the school. In some circumstances, a parent may contact the school and request permission for a student to be allowed to leave school.

Normally a parent/guardian is expected to meet the Principal, Deputy Principal, or Year Head before a student is allowed to leave. Before a student leaves the school, a parent must come in to the building to sign her out, she must sign the book in the secretary's office

Where a student arrives late on a school day he/she must sign the late book and have the journal stamped by the Principal or Deputy Principal.

A written explanation for each instance of lateness must be supplied to the school. Where a student arrives back late after lunch a note, signed by a parent or guardian must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Students are strongly discouraged from being involved in part-time employment during the school year as this has been shown to have a serious impact on attendance, participation and exam performance

Students are reminded that a busy social life during school term combined with inadequate time for sleep lead to poor attention in school and poor exam performance

Further responsibilities of students in relation to participation are set out in other school policies.

If a student returns to school during class time she must SIGN back in at the office. Students will receive sanctions for unexcused absences and lateness in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. (Ladder of Referral)

## Role of the School

To maintain a register of students attending the school

- To maintain a record of attendance on compass and non-attendance on each school day or part of a school day of each student registered at the school, which specifies the fact of attendance or failure to attend and the reasons for such failure.
- To support students with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis
- To prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school. (Ladder of Referral & Reward)
- To liaise with other schools and educational authorities on school attendance issues.
- To prepare and implement a code of behaviour, setting standards of behaviour and disciplinary procedures in the school.

A student who has not reached the age of 16 years or who has not completed three years of post primary education, cannot be removed from the register except for (a) inter-school transfer and then only after all details regarding attendance and educational progress have been issued to the new school, and (b) where for whatever reason a student is removed from the school under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (4).

After admitting a student from another second level school, the Principal will notify the Principal of that school that she/he has registered the student The Principal of Presentation Listowel will notify the NEWB when any of the following occurs: A student has been suspended for a period of not less than 6 days The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent (for whatever reason during the school year is not less than 20 days

Where, for whatever reason a student's name is removed from the register in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act, Section 20 (4) Where, in the opinion of the Principal, a student is not attending school regularly and there is deemed to be need for remedial action

### **Role of the Board of Management**

To ensure that the statutory obligations of the school with regard to attendance and participation are adhered to

To ensure that a report on attendance levels is submitted annually by the Principal to the Board To ensure that all information is collected and issued in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 and that the information on file should be used only for the purpose for which it was intended.

To ensure that an evaluation of the effectiveness of the process, strategy and policy regarding attendance is carried out regularly.

### **The School's Attendance and Participation Strategy.**

In keeping with the school's Mission Statement, Presentation Secondary School employs a range of strategies to improve student attendance and participation. General Strategies The development and implementation of policies including Pastoral Care, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, and Special Educational Needs policies which aim to make the school a safe, caring and welcoming environment for all students. The development of a broad curriculum to cater for the diversity of interests, abilities and learning styles among our student population.

Leaving Cert Applied is offered as an alternative programme for leaving cert students to encourage continuity into senior cycle.

The promotion and development of student centred and active learning approaches to curriculum delivery The Pastoral Care, Class Tutor, and Year head systems work very effectively to promote a caring environment in the school where each student feels valued and is seen as an important member of the school community In keeping with international evidence that students who participate in sport have better attendance rates than other students, the school supports a wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities Early intervention is seen as central to preventing the development of poor attendance and participation habits.

The school works closely with parents/guardians once concerns are identified about poor attendance. Individual strategies involving various members of school personnel are employed to address problems as they arise.

## Specific Actions

The school works closely with Principals from feeder Primary Schools to ensure that teachers and management at Presentation Secondary School Listowel have good quality information concerning all students who transfer to the school each September.

This is of particular importance in relation to students with interests and talents outside those catered for in the mainstream curriculum and students with Special Educational Needs.

Once concerns about attendance and participation arise in relation to a particular student, the Year head, Principal, or Deputy Principal contacts parents/guardians by phone to discuss the issue. Arising from this conversation a strategy is agreed, where possible, to address the issues raised.

Students who are identified as having difficulties which lead to poor attendance receive support from the Guidance Counsellor or the Additional Needs Coordinator.

When a student has missed 20 days, a letter is sent to Parents and to the NEWB to inform them of the situation.

Academic School Reports and attendance reports are available to parents on compass and include details of each student's absences to date. The ladder of referral will be applied for students who arrive late for school repeatedly without explanation or who miss class time without reason.

Parents or Guardians of students who miss school frequently without explanation may be asked to meet the SST to discuss the reasons for these absences.

### Targets for the Policy

At present the average daily absentee rate for the school is      The school aims to reduce this absentee rate by 2% per year over the next three years. The Policy will be reviewed in

### Appendix 1

Where a child's needs are complex or a targeted plan has been in place and is not working schools staff may wish to use the Assessment Framework to form a deeper understanding of the presenting problem.

UNDERSTANDING NEEDS - ASSESSMENT Framework		
What is/are the identified problems		
To what extent is the identified problem to do with... Please include supporting information	The Student herself	
	The Family	
	The School	

The Community	

Summarise any supports or interventions already in place

**Baseline**

Create a baseline using the last 4 weeks (minimum) as the starting point

Identify any patterns and trends of the presenting problem

**What do the following say about the problem?**

**Student**

**Family**

**School**

**Other Agencies if involved**

**What strengths can be built on?**

**The Student**

**The Family**

**Who could support the family?**

Other family members	
Other Agencies	
Analysis	
Analysis of information gathered	
Completed by	
Date of Assessment	

## APPENDIX 2 Strategies to encourage attendance and punctuality

- All staff are aware of students who are on the “Thread Softly” list
- Monitor attendance and intervening at the early stages
- Movement breaks are offered to students as needed
- Year head checks in with students who are struggling with attendance
- Senior Cycle students are supported and encourage through individual meetings and classwork allowances
- Attendance is celebrated at assemblies and awards night
- Setting short term goals for students and agreeing on an award when completed
- Differentiated materials and tests to encourage students’ sense of achievement
- Additional support through SEN and the Guidance Councillor
- Year heads have regular communication with parents to encourage students’ attendance
- Providing lunch time and extra-curricular activities to encourage student involvement
- Year Head documents on Compass (Chronicle) when they contact parents/guardians regarding attendance and punctuality.



### Appendix 3 Steps to address non-attendance

- Early Intervention – contact parents/guardians to discuss the student’s absence and identify any underlying issues. Offer support and guidance to improve attendance.
- Formal letter – if the student’s attendance does not improve, issue a formal letter to the parents every half term, outlining the consequences of continued non-attendance. Arrange a meeting with parents to discuss strategies to improve attendance.
- Attendance contract – if non-attendance continues, draw up an attendance contract with specific targets and consequences for non-compliance. Involved parents and the student in the contract agreement.
- Referral to Educational Welfare Officer – if the student’s attendance does not improve despite the contract, refer the case to the Educational Welfare officer. Inform the parents that the case has been referred to the EWO.
- Leaving Certificate Applied students and their parents/guardians are reminded of the 90% attendance requirement for the program at the beginning of every year and failure to meet it will impact their qualification received at the end of the course.
- Where school refusal is an issue, gradual integration into the classroom is supported and planned for, on an individual basis and consulted with the parents/guardians and outside agencies.

