



STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

This policy applies across the College at all age ranges including Early Years, Prep and Senior Schools.

St. Columba's College is conducted in the educational tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. As such it nurtures a holistic environment which includes a commitment to academic excellence, religious values, friendly discipline, and personal attention.

Policy owner:	Head
Date reviewed:	December 2022
Date of next review:	May 2024
Ratify by governors:	No

Section 1: Aims

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Section 3: Absence Authorisation and Reporting Procedures

Section 4 : Punctuality

Section 5: Monitoring and Review

Section 1: Aims

For students to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the College, they must maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality. The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to good pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its Attendance Policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

St Columba's College takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. It endeavours to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy pays regard to the following guidance documents: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022) and Schools Attendance (2019). It is supported by policies on Safeguarding and Behaviour.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

the Governors will:

- a) ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance for parents and staff
- b) regularly review the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively
- c) nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- d) ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- e) take time at Governors' meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen

the College will:

- a) be active in its approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- b) ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- c) coordinate with the Governing body to monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and its effectiveness
- d) ensure that staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- e) ensure that the College is compliant with legislation and government guidance on attendance
- f) nominate a Lead to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision. This is the Deputy Head for the Senior School and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Prep School.
- g) report to the Governing body regularly on attendance records, data and provision
- h) ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- i) aim to develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- j) have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for pupils who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education
- k) notify the LA and provide all necessary information when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register or when a child's name is added to the admission register other than at the usual point of transition. (e.g. entering reception / Year 7 / Year 12).
- l) support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence

Parents and Carers will:

- a) engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- b) Promote the value of a good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- c) encourage and support their children's aspirations
- d) ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- e) follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return
- f) do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- g) keep the College informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- h) enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- i) not take their children out of school for holidays during term time.
- j) inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren) along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live.

Pupils will:

- a) be aware of the school's attendance rules, and when and what they are required to attend.
- b) recognise the importance of good attendance and maintain as high a level of personal attendance as possible
- c) speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- d) attend lessons on time and ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.

e) follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. Pupils are held responsible for their punctuality. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

Section 3: Absence Authorisation and Reporting Procedures

Most absences are short-term, for good reasons and will generally be authorised by the school, for example sickness, unavoidable medical or dental appointments (preferably, these should be made after school or during holidays), days of religious observance, or exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement. For prolonged or regular absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

The following reasons will not be authorised: looking after the house; looking after brothers and sisters or sick parents; shopping during school hours; birthdays; day trips.

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking family holidays during term time. The dates are published sufficiently far in advance for proper arrangements to be made. Parents are reminded that they do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday. Retrospective requests for absence due to holiday will not be considered, and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. Apart from this, leave in term time can only be given in exceptional circumstances.

All absences not agreed according to the above criteria will be recorded as unauthorised and will appear as such on the school record of the student concerned.

The College will not provide opportunities for remote learning via the use of technology for any form of absence unless in the case of long term school closure which necessitate students being educated at home.

To record student absences, the Secretary for the respective school (Prep or Senior) must be telephoned as soon as possible and preferably prior to the start of the school day. The Main Office is staffed from 7.30am Monday - Friday. There is a dedicated facility on the phone system to record absences. Alternatively, absences should be reported as soon as possible via Edulink, by selecting Absence on the front page, once logged in.

Absences which are not notified to the school will be followed up by the secretarial staff who will send a text message followed by a phone call/email that morning. This acts as a check. However, parents are requested to phone or use Edulink for notification as this saves time.

Requests for leave of absence longer than for one day must be addressed to the Head of Prep or the Headmaster for Senior School students.

If, for any reason, a student needs to leave the College campus during the School day, their parent must contact their Form tutor or the Front Office in advance, to request the absence and give a reason. Students must then sign out at the front office. No student should leave the campus without permission from the nurse or a member of CLT, or prior notice given to the front office in the case of an appointment. During after school activities, children are not allowed off-site without a member of staff.

Parents can see their child's attendance on the Edulink app and the College will contact parents directly if attendance patterns are causing concern.

Section 4: Punctuality

Punctuality is an extremely important life skill and the College's expectations are high in this regard. The school day starts at 8.15am in the Prep School and 8.25am in the Senior School. Pupils are expected to be in their form rooms by this time, or they are likely to receive a late mark. Concerns regarding punctuality, similarly to those regarding attendance, will be flagged to parents by the College.

Section 5: Monitoring and Review

Attendance and punctuality are monitored regularly by Form Tutors, Heads of House, the College Leadership Team and the Governors. The Leads for Attendance will, in conjunction with colleagues, review attendance and punctuality for all students each term and write to parents where there are concerns (usually where attendance drops below 90%). In cases of severe absence, additional measures are likely to be taken by the College, involving the parents and also the Local Authority, to support improved attendance.