

# Eureka Secondary School

EUREKA



## Attendance Policy

*December 2019*

## **Mission Statement**

1. Eureka Secondary School aims to provide the highest quality education possible to meet the needs of all students, within the limits of available resources, and within the environment and ethos that promotes Christian values, mutual respect and responsible citizenship.
2. The school aims to offer opportunities equally to all its students, whatever their ability, circumstances or religious experiences, in order to develop each person's potential to the full. Programmes are provided to facilitate students whose goal is further education, those who wish to enter the world of work, and those who wish to return to full-time study.
3. The school is committed to maintaining a supportive partnership with parents who are the primary educators of their children, with employers, schools, the local community and the parishes from which the pupils come.
4. The staff, the schools most valued resource, are supported and encouraged in their work, and we aim to promote their individual and corporate development through supportive structures and in-service training, both internal and external.
5. The school is committed to developing a community where mutual respect reigns, where personal standards of work and behaviour are high and where students grow to recognise fully their responsibilities both to themselves and to others. Our hope is that when they leave school they may be better able to take their place in society as mature and responsible citizens imbued with the Christian values which are the inspirations of this school.

### **1. Scope of Attendance Policy**

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

A good education provides a student with the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every student stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

Good attendance is promoted in the school by a culture of high expectations, encouraging each student to take responsibility for her own learning and achieve her full potential through regular attendance in class.

### **2. Relationships to the School's Mission Statement, Vision & Aims.**

- Eureka Secondary School is an all girls' secondary school, which is based on the vision of Catherine McAuley education based on Gospel values.
- To further these aims we envisage the development of a community wherein –
- Student and Staff members are valued, and their talents and abilities recognised and developed to prepare for changes in society.
- Each person recognizes his/her own responsibility in implementing agreed standards of conduct.
- Good communication is maintained between all members and where liaison with parents and local community involvement is encouraged.
- The Eureka Secondary School Attendance Policy involves helping each student develop to her full potential, both socially and educationally. In Eureka Secondary School we believe this can only happen where each student is encouraged to attend punctually every day.

### 3. Rationale

In Eureka Secondary School we have identified attendance and punctuality as an area of focus. This policy is intended to foster a good mature attitude towards attendance and punctuality.

### 4. Objectives

Through implementation of this policy Eureka 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 through our VSware 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.

Parent must notify the school if their child is absent and provide reasons why. It is school policy that explanations must be given in writing. 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. This is outlined below:

#### 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 recognized 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 recognized school during a school year is not less than 20 days. Eureka 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.**

Throughout the curriculum, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance. This is also promoted through the Pastoral Care programme. The Tutor/Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal will meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue.

1. The school day begins with Tutor/Wellbeing at 8.49am. All students are expected to attend. When Tutor is finished, students then proceed to their first class at 9.00am.
2. Lunch is from 1.07 p.m. to 1.47 p.m. and students are expected to be in their classrooms by 1.47 p.m. upon their return from lunch. Time in between lessons should only be used to move from one class to the next.
3. Students who arrive late to Tutor/Wellbeing in the morning (between 8:49am and 9:00am) must have a signed note in the student's journal. The student must sign in late in the Main Office. She will be given a late stamp, which she will then show to the Subject Teacher.
4. All reasons for Absence must be entered on the School App by the registered user ie. Parent/Guardian before 9am on the day. The absence will then be recorded on roll by the Main Office.
5. A student may not leave the school during the school day without permission.
  - a. All permission to leave requests must be submitted via the School App. Before 9am on the day. The office will then compile a list and a copy of this list will be sent to all teachers via email. The teacher will then allow the student to leave class at the appropriate time. The student must present to the office to be signed out by their Parent/Guardian. The School Register in the Main Office must be signed by both student and parent/guardian on leaving the school
  - b. On return the same day, the student must sign back in at the Main Office
  - c. If a student leaves school and does not return on the same day, the absence must be registered on the School App. If a Parent/Guardian has not notified the school that a student is leaving the school at an appointed time, then the student will not be allowed leave without the permission of the of the Principal or Deputy Principal. Contact is made with parent/guardian to confirm the leave
  - d. Any contact with parents/guardians in relation to leaving school must be made through the office.

Students will receive sanctions for unexcused absences and lateness in accordance with the Eureka Secondary School's Code of Behaviour (Ladder of Referral)

## **6. Attendance Incentives**

Eureka Secondary School will recognise students' who achieve full attendance in the school year by presenting the students with a certificate of full attendance at our annual awards ceremony. They will also be rewarded by term when the class in each year group with the best attendance will be rewarded as will a number of individuals from across the year group.

## **7. Disciplinary Consequences**

Meetings with Parents/Guardians, student and Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal can be arranged when concerns arise. A detailed breakdown of attendance will be given to Parents/Guardians for the period in question.

If a student has been identified as leaving school without permission or not attending school when meant to be in school, parents/guardians will be contacted and invited into the school for a meeting with the Year Head. Students may be put on report which ensures that the student's overall behaviour is monitored.

Disciplinary actions consistent with the Code of Behaviour will be imposed by the Principal and/or Deputy Principal in consultation with the students and parent(s)/Guardians(s) 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 Roll taken at 8:49am and 1.47pm.
- Daily monitoring of attendance for all class periods throughout the school day.
- Daily monitoring of punctuality at 8.49am.
- Text sent to parent/guardian by 9:30am if student is recorded absent.
- Recording lateness.
- Recording notes and communications.
- Recording early departures.
- Sanctions for lateness.
- Sanctions for unexcused absences.
- Informing parents when concerns arise.

## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Eureka Secondary School acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community in the implementation of this Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

A good education provides a student with the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every student stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

### **8.1 Year Head, Principal and Deputy Principal**

- To ensure that all registers are taken in the am and pm. Roll Calls are checked by the Office.
- Apply disciplinary procedures to students for unexcused absences and lateness, consistent with the Code of Behaviour and TUSLA (National Education Welfare Board) legislation on attendance.
- If a student has no note she may not leave school without the permission of the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents will be contacted where possible. Students will not be allowed leave the school without parental permission.
- Year Heads are given a weekly Printout of Absences & Lates and chase up any outstanding absences.
- Year Head , on a weekly basis, check for best attendance and announce at assembly to promote competition and full attendance.
- Year Head contact parents' where appropriate, re student's number of absences on reaching 10 unexplained days during an academic year.
- Promote positive attendance and punctuality at weekly assembly.
- Arrange meetings with Parents/Guardians, student and Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal when concerns arise over attendance. A detailed breakdown of attendance will be given to Parents/Guardians for the period in question.
- If a student has been recognised for leaving school without permission or not attending school when meant to be in school, parents/guardians will be contacted and invited into the school for a meeting with the Year Head. Students may be put on report which ensures that the students overall behaviour is monitored.
- A student recorded with 3 lates is put on detention

A report is prepared for TUSLA four times a year, listing students under sixteen years of age who have more than twenty days absence from school. This report is signed by the Principal. Parents/Guardians are informed of the report and may contact the Deputy Principal regarding same. To prepare a report for the TUSLA at the end of the school year on the total number of absences throughout the year plus a summary of the information previously sent to TUSLA. This report is signed by the Principal.

## **8.2 Year Head**

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and punctuality
- Record the number of days a student is absent in student reports to parents.
- Good attendance and punctuality will be acknowledged at the end of year Awards and in all school reports issued to students and parents/guardians on completion of House Examinations. On a weekly basis at assembly and at the end of year awards etc.
- Encourage students to become involved in extracurricular activities therefore promoting student involvement in the school community giving students a sense of belonging.

## **8.3 Subject Teacher**

- All teachers will keep individual class attendance records for every class taught on the VSware system.
- Students identified as vulnerable will be flagged by teacher and office alerted.
- Students away for school activities are marked accordingly by the office.
- Promote and encourage good attendance in class.
- Teachers may communicate with parents/guardians at parent teacher meetings on the importance and value of good attendance.

## **8.4 Guidance Counsellor**

- Support from Guidance Counsellor for students who present with school attendance issues.

## **8.5 Student**

- Must punctually attend all classes every day unless there is valid reason for not doing so.
- If Parent/Guardian is unable to register an absence on the School App for any reason then the students must present an absence note in their school journal to class teachers on the day they return to school and explain the reason for the absence.
- It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation (e.g. appointment slips, notes etc.) and present them to the office for all appointments that will prevent her from attending a class. Such documentation should be presented prior to her release from school.
- Students must sign the late register if they are late for Tutor/Wellbeing time.
- Students must report to the office if late arriving to school in the morning and the afternoon.
- If a student has no note she may not leave school without permission from the Principal or Deputy Principal and SIGN the leaving school register in the office.
- 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.

## **8.6 Parents/Guardians:**

- To support the school's Attendance Policy.
- To provide a written explanation for the student's absence on the first day of return to school in their school journal.
- Inform the school if a student is going to be absent for a long period. Provide medical certificates if applicable. The school will notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a student is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise to concern.

## Procedures for managing attendance

### Daily:

- Students attend Tutor/Wellbeing at 8:49am.
- Students who are late for Tutor/Wellbeing sign in the late book in the Office.
- Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Heads to ensure all students attend Tutor/Wellbeing and those who are late sign in.
- Students who arrive late for school 'sign in' in the Office. VSware is updated with this information daily.
- Tutors take the roll on VSware.
- Students arriving late or departing early are monitored by the Office where they must 'sign in' or 'sign out'.
- Where students are absent from school for school-related extra-curricular activities, this is entered in the system by the Office as School Activity (SCH). If a student has not provided a reason for their absenteeism it is recorded as Unexplained. Other explanations include illness, urgent family reason, suspension, and other.
- A list of all students who are absent for the day are posted on VSware and emailed to all Teachers. A list is also posted on the staff notice board every morning.
- If a concern is raised about a student's attendance on a given day Parents may be contacted by the Year Head/Principal/Deputy Principal.
- If a student has not received permission to be absent from school or to leave school from parents/teachers/school management, the procedure follows: parents are contacted and the student is placed on report until deemed necessary by the Principal.

### On-going:

- The Year Head has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance and alerting the Tutor and the Principal to students with patterns of non-attendance.
- Supervision and record keeping of lates is overseen by the Office.
- Students who are late three times in the one term are given Detention.
- Contacting parents when any concern arises in relation to attendance or lates.
- Inform Parent(s)/Guardian(s) by letter when students attendance are a concern.