

School Attendance & Participation Policy

Introduction

As a school community at DVS, we believe

- That there is a direct relationship between a student's success in school and regular attendance
- That students who have good attendance and punctuality records enjoy their school experience more than students who do not attend regularly.
- That forming good habits of attendance and punctuality will serve our students well in the future

The policy in context

The school Attendance Policy is directed by

1. The School Mission Statement
2. The Pastoral Care Policy
3. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
4. DES – "Time in School" Circular

Aims and Objectives

This school policy sets out to:

- i. Encourage full attendance and participation where possible
- ii. Identify, as soon as possible, pupils at risk.
- iii. Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance and punctuality
- v. Keep parents informed

Application of Policy

This policy applies to all students of Drumshanbo VS from First to sixth Year.

Attendance Requirements

- There are 167 teaching days in the post-primary school year. The DES may sanction amendments to this in exceptional circumstances – eg: New Junior Cycle Inservice days
- Classes begin every day at 9:05am and finish at 4:00pm (Mon – Thursday) and finish at 2:00pm every Friday
- Lunch time is from 1:20pm to 2:00pm Monday – Thursday inclusive.
- Small break is from 11:05am – 11:20am Tuesday – Friday inclusive and from 11:10am – 11:25am on Mondays
- Any changes in times above will be notified to parents and students. Any changes in lunch times or in school starting and finishing times will only be done in consultation with parents, staff and students.
- The annual school calendar will be posted on the school web-site

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal & Deputy Principal:

- Overall responsibility for students including attendance.
- Principal emphasises the importance of attendance and punctuality at the start of the school year and regularly throughout the year.

School Attendance Officer:

- To monitor the implementation of this policy and to review at the request of the BOM
- To ensure that the late book and signing out book are in place at the start of every term
- Monitor attendance and punctuality patterns on a regular basis and meet with students, parents and Year Heads as necessary
- Notify home when total number of absence days is approaching 20.
- Notify E.W.O. when 20 absences or 6 days (cumulative) suspension have been reached.
- Provide Attendance Reports to the BOM if required

Year Head:

- Monitor attendance in Year Group and make students aware of importance of regular attendance.
- Keep records of absence notes for the School Attendance Officer
- Contact parents/guardians regarding unexplained or frequent absences
- Keep teachers informed of any long-term absences
- When necessary make referrals to Pastoral Care Team or School Attendance Officer

Class Tutor:

- Assist Year Head by collecting absence notes during weekly Assembly

Class Teacher:

- Responsible for student registration (first class) and marking the roll accurately on VSware for all classes at the start of each lesson
- To report to Principal/Deputy Principal or Year Head any students missing from class without explanation
- Bring any concerns to the appropriate year head.

Pastoral Care & Student Support Team:

- Take referrals from Year Heads and consider actions that may need to be taken
- Monitor students referred on an ongoing basis.

Parents:

- Parents / Guardians have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence.
- Students should not be kept at home from school in cases where other students in the class may be out due to sports etc
- Absence notes must be submitted to the school

Students:

- Each student has a responsibility to attend school each day, to attend each class on time and to participate fully in each class.

Procedure for recording absences

- Explanations for Absence notes (blue colour) are provided to students in the back of their Journal for Learning.
- If a student is absent, an absent note (blue colour) must be completed and handed to the Tutor or Year Head at Monday Assembly.
- The counterfoil of the absent note is signed and dated by the Tutor or Year Head.
- The reason for the student's absence is entered by the Year Head on the student's record on VS Ware.
- The Year Head of each year group monitors the attendance of each student in his/her Year and seeks further information where necessary

School extra/co-curricular activities

- The teacher will record on VS Ware using the appropriate code if a student is away on school business for example sport or a school tour. This is recorded as "Sport" or ExCurr" on VSware.

Punctuality

- Students are requested to get into the routine of being at school on time.
- The subject teacher will enter the code "Late" on the VS Ware system when the student presents him/herself for class.
- Students that miss morning registration (ie the first class), must report to the Secretary's Office to get marked in late. Otherwise, they will be recorded as absent for that day. A "late" stamp will be recorded in the student Journal

Truancy

- Truancy is considered a violation of the School Code of Behaviour and incurs appropriate discipline procedures administered by the Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal. Every effort shall be made to determine the reasons for the truancy before any decision is taken to implement disciplinary procedures.

Leaving school early

- Normally a Parent/Guardian will be required to sign his/her child out in the book provided. However, in exceptional circumstances, taking into account the age of the child, the Principal or Deputy Principal or a staff member acting on his/her behalf may allow a student to go home, following contact with the parent/guardian.
- The Secretary/staff member will record the student's name on the *Signing Out Book* in the presence of the Parent or Guardian.
- When a Parent/Guardian arrives to collect his/her daughter he/she must sign the Signing Out book and indicate whether or not the student is expected to return.
- The administration staff will record the student's departure from the school on VS Ware.
- In the event of a Parent/Guardian collecting his/her daughter during lunchtime the member of staff on duty at the door will oversee the correct use of the *Signing Out Book*.

Opting out of subjects or changing subjects

Changing subjects or opting out of subjects can only be done in consultation with the Guidance Counsellor, parents, subject teacher and with the authorisation of the principal.

Opting out of PE is only permitted on medical grounds

Religion is provided for all students and all students are encouraged to participate. Students may only opt out with the written consent of their parents, following a meeting with the principal. However, no alternative classes are available so those students will be required to study or do homework in the Religion class.

Exemption from the study of Irish can only be granted under the terms of Circular M10/94.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

- Parents/Guardians are informed of their sons/ daughter's attendance and punctuality record at the Parent/Teacher meetings and on term reports.
- They have access to VShare and so can monitor their children's attendance and punctuality themselves on a class by class basis.
- The Journal for Learning is used to communicate reasons for absence to the school
- The Year Head/School Attendance Officer will contact Parents/Guardians where attendance or punctuality is becoming a concern or when the number of absent days is approaching 20.

Sanctions for Students for breaches of the School Attendance Policy

- Unexplained lates or absences from class may be recorded in the Journal by the teacher as a discipline issue. Three such records may result in a Report Card and consequent lunch time detention.
- Truancy may incur a Report Card or a suspension if deemed appropriate.
- **Students may be referred to Year Head/Principal/Deputy Principal** for arriving late without a satisfactory reason
- Students should be aware that a poor attendance and punctuality record can have negative consequences for their School Reference in the future.

