

## **Borrisokane Community College School Attendance Strategy.**

Name of school	Borrisokane Community College
Address	Ballyhaden, Borrisokane, Co. Tipperary
Roll Number	72370P

This strategy is drawn up to promote school attendance for all students. Staff, Parents, students and the Board of Management were involved in drawing up this document. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007. The policy was reviewed during the school year 2015/2016 and adopted by the Board of Management on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016

### **Borrisokane Community College's Vision and Values regarding Attendance;**

Research shows that those who do not succeed in education have a significantly greater prospect of living in poverty and generally have much poorer life chances. Regular school attendance and participation in training is crucial to avoid this trap.

Children must attend school regularly because:

- a good education gives a child the best possible start in life.
- if a child goes to school regularly he or she will be better able to keep up with schoolwork and may grow to enjoy school.
- employers want people who are reliable. Children who think it is ok to miss out on school may also think it is ok to stay off work.
- missing out on school friendships can affect a child's ability to make and keep friendships throughout life.
- children who attend school regularly are less likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour and/or become involved in crime.

Children should only be absent from school when it is absolutely necessary e.g. due to illness, family bereavement or other exceptional family circumstances.

Class Tutors and Year Heads will remind students regularly of the importance of good attendance.

### **Our high expectations around attendance**

#### **Extract from Code of Behaviour on School Attendance and Punctuality.**

I understand that in order to achieve to the best of my ability my attendance must be regular and I should only be absent from school or leave early in exceptional circumstances. I have a duty to be punctual for school (9.00 a.m) and classes. Eportal is the official record of my attendance at school and will be checked when I need a reference. I will require a note from my parents in my journal explaining absence which must be produced on my first day returning to school. This explanation will be then recorded on Eportal. I understand that prolonged absence will be notified to the Education Welfare Officer/Board. A medical certificate should be furnished for illness where possible.

### **Monitoring School Attendance Daily:**

#### **Strategies for September 2016;**

1. Attendance for each individual subject will be recorded by all teachers. Students records for attendance in each subject will be included on reports sent home.

2. All students will partake in PASS (Pupils Attitudes to Self and School) and their attitudes to attendance will be monitored and intervention strategies imposed earlier to prevent increased absence.
3. Parents/Guardians will be required to present themselves at the school and sign the Sign out book alongside the student.
4. In the event of a student being absent a text notifying Guardians/Parents of this will be sent.
5. Rewards will be put in place for classes with the best attendance and/or students with most improved attendance in the year.
6. Students will be signed in late on Eportal by the subject teacher and followed up the year head. Sign in book when late will also need to be signed by the student and monitored by the year head.
7. Teachers when unavailable for class will provide assignments for students.

**Calling the Roll:** The procedure for calling the roll is attached at Appendix 1.

**Explanation for Absence:** Students must produce a note in their school journal from their parents explaining the absence on the day they return to school. Students who are over eighteen may write their own notes. The note must give the reason for absence. This is a requirement from the Education Welfare Services of Tusla. Reasons for absence will be recorded for the Education Welfare Services of Tusla under the following Headings

- (a) Illness
- (b) Urgent Family Reasons
- (c) Expelled
- (d) Suspended
- (e) Other
- (f) Unexplained
- (g) Transferred to another School.

Note: If for some reason a parent or child does not wish to put the reason for absence in the school journal they should give a general explanation in the school journal with a separate note for the Year Head in an envelope.

If your child has to attend the doctor a Doctor's note should be given to the relevant class tutor.

If your child has an **ongoing Medical Condition** a letter from the Consultant should be supplied to the school at the beginning of the school year with relevant information for the school.

If no note is received from a student on the day they return to school after a period of absence then the Class Tutor will put a note in the relevant page of the students journal and ask him/her to get the note filled in by his/her parents/guardian.

In the case of students who are absent for more than three days the school should be contacted with an explanation. This can be done by phone to the Secretary's Office (067) 27268.

**Leaving the school during the school day:**

Extract from Code of Behaviour:

I have a duty not to leave the college or its grounds without the permission of the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal and if I wish to go home for my lunch I must complete the form in my journal which must be signed by the Principal/Deputy Principal. If leaving the school for whatever reason during school hours a note must be produced from my parents with a contact number in my school journal which must be signed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head. Note: A text message from parents is not sufficient. I should be collected from the school grounds by my parent/guardian or an adult designated by my parents/guardian. The name of the person collecting me must be specified on the note in the journal. This person must sign the register before I have permission to leave. I accept that missing will be immediately notified to my parents. I understand that the school cannot accept responsibility for me if I decide to absent myself from the school grounds without prior permission of the Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal. **Note:** For the purpose of this policy the footpaths and roadway that passes through the school site (i.e. from the walkway entrance on the town end to the entrance gate of the Borrisokane Community Sports Field) will be considered part of the School Grounds for pedestrians. I understand that I must be careful in these areas in order to protect myself from other road users.

### **Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality during the School Year:**

Reports on absences and punctuality will be given to all Year Heads each month. This report shows the number of absences and lates for the month. Class Tutors will record this information in student's journals and a Parent must sign this page each month.

Year Heads will monitor attendance and punctuality.

If five or more absences or lates the Year Head will:

- Discuss the matter with the student
- Make verbal contact with parent/guardian
- Send home letter if the total number of absences in a month exceed 5. This would exclude suspensions

At the end of each term school reports are issued to parents. These will contain details of absences and lates for the year to date. **From September 2016 these reports will include individual attendance record for each subject.**

### **Monitoring Class Attendance:**

At the beginning of each class the teacher will call the class roll through Eportal. Students who fail to attend class will be monitored and dealt with according to the School Code of Behaviour.

### **Class Punctuality:**

Class Teachers will record if students are late for class as events on Eportal. Students who are late without reasonable explanation will be sanctioned in line with the Code of Behaviour. The Year Head monitors the events and makes contact with home after three events are recorded.

### **Students leaving class:**

Students must have permission from their teacher to be absent from class. Students should have a corridor pass in their possession when they are out of class with their teacher's permission. As far as possible students should use the normal breaks for using the toilets. Students who may need to use the toilet on a more regular basis maybe for medical reasons

should have a note from their parents explaining this in their journal. Students must not use the toilets or lockers at change of class outside of lunchbreaks.

**Partnership arrangements with Parents/ guardians;**

**Support for Parents:** If parents have difficulty in getting their child to attend school they should make contact with the relevant Year Head for their child. Parents and children will be supported through the school Pastoral Care System. This may take the form of a meeting or meetings with one or more of the following – Career Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal.

**Monitoring Attendance/Punctuality by Parent/Guardian:**

Parents/Guardian should monitor their son's/daughter's school journal on a weekly basis to keep up to date on attendance and punctuality. Parents/guardians must sign an absence note on returning to school and give an explanation. In accordance with the Homework Policy, from September 2016 all junior students must get their journal signed daily by parents/guardians,

**Holidays during Term Time:**

Parents should not take their child out of school for holidays. This has the potential to damage their education. It is very difficult for any child to catch up with what has been missed when out of school for an extended holiday.

There are, of course, exceptional circumstances where parents may have to take their child out of school during term time. However, parents should always be aware of the potential risk to their child's education, and therefore these situations should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Please note also that a report will have to be made to the NEWB if the total absences over the year is in excess of 20 days OR if the school is concerned.

**Reporting to the National Educational Services of Tusla:**

Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Borrisokane Community College is obliged to report:

- It decides to expel a student
- A student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason
- A student has reached 20 days absent cumulatively
- A student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- The Principal is concerned about a student's attendance

Five reports will be made to Education Welfare Services during each school year. Parents will be informed when a report is being sent to the Education Welfare Services through the student's school journal or by letter.

If the school is not satisfied with the level of information received about a prolonged absence then the school may have no option but to make a report to the Education Welfare Services.

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. The review will take place with the school partners – students, staff, parents and board of management.

## Appendix 1: Roll Call

Roll is called at 9.00 each morning.

The Roll call is taken each morning through Eportal.

**Morning Notes:** Students are given an opportunity on a regular basis to write a confidential note at roll call, on those mornings, an envelope will be provided, notes should be placed in the envelope which is then sealed and handed into the Deputy Principal or Principal's office. Students should be encouraged to use the notes as an opportunity to make constructive suggestions for the improvement of College life and also to bring cases of bullying etc. to our notice.

The following guidelines should be used when completing the Roll:

1. Students should be assigned seats
2. Check that each student is present.
3. If a student is not present choose from the following options
  - Absent
  - Illness
  - Other
  - School Activity
  - Suspended
  - Unexplained absence
  - Urgent family reason
  - Late
4. Ask students for a note for absences if they were marked absent the previous day(s) .
5. Click into the date which the note is for and chose one of the following to explain the absence
  - Illness
  - Urgent Family Reasons
  - Suspended
  - Other
  - Unexplained

Receiving this information is important as it is requested by the Education Welfare Services of Tusla.

6. If student has not furnished a note, ask for student diary and fill in absence details on the page provided and ask student to have note signed by Parent/Guardian.

