



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Cookstown High
School

2014

RATIONALE

At Cookstown High School we believe there is a high correlation between attendance and academic achievement. Learners are more likely to complete and achieve their qualifications if they attend classes regularly.

ETHOS

Cookstown high school is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students. Full attendance is vital to:

- Ensure success in all aspects of school life, including public examinations;
- Ensure that each student is within the care of school;
- Secure a positive reference which will assist in securing a place in further education and/or employment;
- Reduce the amount of time students are not in class, either from sickness or other reasons, there will be high expectations and consistent processes to monitor, follow up and report on attendance.

The expectation is for 100% 'present' at all scheduled classes. The focus is on 'presence' rather than absence. Students should be in class ready for the start of their lessons; late is late.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT:

- It is required by law; The Education Act 1996 requires parents and guardians to ensure their children receive full time education by regular attendance at a school or by other arrangements. Parents have the responsibility for making sure their children attend school and on time;
- Learning – absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will negatively impact on their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines and may also affect the learning of others in the same class;
- Safeguarding – your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of Cookstown High School, promoting the welfare of your child will also draw on procedures highlighted in the following related policies:
 - Positive Behaviour Policy
 - Health and Safety
 - Bullying
 - RSE

- Child Protection
- Attendance at school promotes social development.

Cookstown High School is responsible for recording student attendance twice a day, one at the start of the morning sessions and once during the afternoon session.

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- Employers of school leavers will take into account the young person's school attendance and punctuality record before making a job offer.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students

- Students must value education;
- Students must attend school every day;
- Students must be in by 9.20am at the latest, to ensure that they are in their registration rooms by 9.25am. Students, who arrive late, must report to reception, where the time and reason for lateness will be recorded. Any student who is late for a valid reason must provide a note from a parent/guardian. A student who is late without a valid reason, three times in any given half term, will be required to do an after school detention;
- If a student needs to leave school early they must present a note in their homework diary from their parent/guardian to a Vice Principal or a Senior Teacher (if VP is unavailable), who will sign it;
- Students will present their signed homework diary to the office and sign out;
- Students are expected to return to school promptly after an appointment;
- It is the students responsibility to catch up on all work missed;
- Students must undertake detention in order to catch up on any work missed if he/she truants from class/school;
- Post 16 students whose attendance rates fall below 85% will be interviewed by the Head of Sixth Form. Students entitled to E.M.A payment will **not** receive their payment unless they have full attendance in all classes except in exceptional circumstances.

Parent/Guardian

- Parents are obliged to contact the school by phone on the first day of absence;
- A written explanation for absence must be provided on the first day of return to school, using the corresponding page in the homework diary;
- Students leaving early must have written permission from parent/guardian. This should be recorded in the appropriate section of the homework diary for the student to show to a Vice Principal or a Senior Teacher (if VP is unavailable), and at the school office when signing out;
- Parents should attempt to make non-emergency dental and medical appointments outside school hours.

Subject teacher

- Complete the register using lesson monitor at the beginning of every lesson;
- Raise initial discrepancies in class attendance with Attendance office;
- Report occurring discrepancies to the Head of Year;
- Monitor student punctuality – use the Positive Behaviour Policy procedures for those who are persistently late for class.

Form tutor

- Monitor student attendance;
- Ensure reasons are supplied for absence;
- On-going concerns about student attendance will be reported to the Head of Year;
- Record persistent latecomers to Head of Year;
- Inform Head of Year if a student is absent for **three consecutive days**;
- Refer pupil to Head of Year if late three times in a half term;
- Complete detention slip and forward to Head of Year on 4th late in a half-term.

Head of Year

- Conduct an audit every half term;
- Initiate contact with parents on third day of absence;
- Identify students with attendance figures below 90% in the year group, monitor and inform parent. VP pastoral will send a letter to parents of pupils with attendance below 90% at October and February half terms;
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer regarding truancy, condoned absence or recurring short absences. A referral to EWO will be made when attendance falls below 85%;
- Contact parent/guardian by letter outlining concerns, about attendance, and informing them of the possible referral to EWO. For students whose attendance falls below 85%, if improvement is not evident, initiate referral to EWO;
- Liaise with form tutors to clarify reasons for absence;
- Interview students giving cause for concern regarding attendance/punctuality;
- Monitor persistent latecomers; establish a reason then either offer support or initiate sanctions;
- Monitor the signing in book on a daily basis in order to highlight persistent latecomers and early leavers from school;
- Promote and reward good attendance within the Year group within a whole school approach;
- When students are late four times in one half term, without valid reason, issue an after school detention;
- When students fail to provide a reason for absence, after three days, issue an after school detention.

Attendance Officer

- Make contact with parents of absent students on request from Head of Year. Use Text messaging service on first day to clarify reason for absence;
- Ensure that reasons for individual student absences are well documented and recorded;
- Maintain SIMS attendance database and update on a weekly basis;
- Provide reports from SIMS to governors, Head Master, other school staff and other agencies;
- Manage signing-in system, including the recording and monitoring of lateness following morning registration and reporting to the pastoral team;
- Ensure all registers are taken, the correct codes used and registers closed at the appropriate time;
- Refer persistent latecomers to the Head of Year;
- Monitor systems to address lateness to AM and PM registration and to lessons.

Strategies for promoting good attendance

Cookstown High School is renowned for its very good quality of pastoral, academic and extra-curricular provision. Associated with this are other key strategies which the school applies to help promote good attendance:

- Positive school ethos and culture;
- Implementation of this attendance and punctuality policy and target setting;
- Designated staff with roles and responsibilities;
- Additional support for poor attendees;
- Strong relationship with staff and parents/guardians;
- Links with the wider community;
- Collaboration with the EWO when attendance is below 85%.

Strategies used to tackle absenteeism:

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils;
- Positive relationship with home;
- Extra-Curricular activities;
- Supportive atmosphere;
- Strong links with external agencies;
- Referral to EWO.

Key Contacts

Your son's or daughter's form teacher

Your son's or daughter's Head of Year

Mr W Brown – VP Pastoral

Mr G Montgomery – Headmaster

Miss E Henry – Attendance Officer

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