



Maryfield College

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Draft

November 2005

In Maryfield College we believe that it is through our relationships with others that we grow to our full potential. Therefore we aspire to create an educational environment where pupils come to learn and to understand themselves, their abilities and their world. In this environment they learn to take responsibility for themselves and others and so can become independent adults.

In this context, pupils must be encouraged to attend fully and regularly. Good attendance makes school a more meaningful experience for every pupil. It not only improves performance in academic subjects but aids all other areas of school life: sports, hobbies, interests, social interaction and development of self-esteem. The pupil gains intellectually, psychologically and emotionally from consistent attendance. Should pastoral needs arise, they can only be addressed if the pupil attends regularly. Good attendance helps pupils obtain secure employment and allows others to perceive them as mature, reliable and responsible citizens. Good attendance is seen in our school as one of the most significant factors in a student's success in school and beyond.

Operating Context

Maryfield College is committed to the implementation of education legislation. In particular we are committed to the Education Welfare Act 2000 (Pr.111 S 18 /22) which relates to absence from school, school registers, school attendance records and school attendance strategies. Under this Act Maryfield College must make an annual return to the NEWB on levels of attendance in the whole school. We must also report throughout the year the number of pupils who have exceeded 20 days absence and give reasons for each of their absences. The NEWB may also be informed of any other student whose absence is a cause for concern to the school.

Rationale

A written Attendance Policy is needed not only to fulfil our legal requirements but also to ensure that school values and principles are reflected in all attendance procedures. As a publicly funded body the wider tax paying community needs to know that we do our utmost to ensure high attendance levels. A written attendance policy also saves time at



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meetings and avoids ad hoc decision-making and it supports parents in their responsibilities regarding their daughter's attendance.

Goals of this policy

Through this policy we, the management, teachers, office staff and parents, aim to create an environment where each pupil can achieve 100% attendance.

This is achieved by agreed methods and procedures involving

- The creation and maintenance of accurate school register
- The maintaining of accurate roll books
- The monitoring of attendance trends
- Immediate follow up action on school absences
- An award system for good attendance
- The identification of poor attendance
- Strategies for improving poor attendance
- Review of attendance performance

Roles and Responsibilities

	Role	Responsibility
BOM	School Management	Ensuring Policy in Place Ensuring it is in line with school ethos Ensuring it is reviewed regularly
Principal	School Management	Facilitating Policy Formation Reviewing and evaluating Policy Analysing attendance trends Ensuring that Curriculum and timetable



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		<p>facilitate good attendance</p> <p>Reporting to BOM on attendance issues</p> <p>Following up on cases escalated from DP</p> <p>Writing letters to parents regarding poor attendance</p>
Deputy Principal	School Management	<p>Reporting to NEWB five times a year</p> <p>Compiling of annual return to NEWB</p> <p>Reporting trends to Principal/YH meetings</p> <p>Follow up on individual cases which have been escalated from YH Random spot checks on attendance</p> <p>Spot checks on appointments</p> <p>Reporting to Principal pupils who have or are in danger of exceeding 20 days</p>
Year Heads	Management of Year Group	<p>Co-ordination of Roll Calling</p> <p>Maintaining Roll books Escalating individual cases escalated to DP</p> <p>Contacting parents</p> <p>Rewarding good attendance</p> <p>Spot checks on attendance/appointments</p> <p>Checking absence letters</p>



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Class Tutors	Management of Class Group	<p>Roll calling</p> <p>Roll book recording</p> <p>Note/cert taking</p> <p>Escalating of individual cases if unresolved</p> <p>Contacting parents</p> <p>Entering number of absences on school reports</p>
Attendance Post Holder	Roll book /Facility interface	<p>Transferring data from roll books to Facility</p> <p>Generating reports from Facility for Christmas/Mocks/ and Summer School Reports</p>
Non tutors	Back up Roll caller	Roll calling to alleviate strain on FT
Class Teacher	Management of Class Rolls	<p>Roll calling for each class</p> <p>Reporting absent pupils to FT for follow up</p> <p>Reporting of trends of absences to FT</p>
School Office	Attendance Administration	<p>Enrolling pupils</p> <p>Making up of Temporary Roll Books for use in September</p> <p>Making up of permanent Roll Books</p> <p>Filing and storage of notes/certs and other</p>



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		<p>correspondence from parents relating to absences</p> <p>Printing and posting letters to parents regarding poor attendance.</p>
Guidance Counsellor		<p>Advising on individual cases referred by YH, DP</p> <p>Counselling individual cases</p>
Parents/Guardians		<p>Ensuring daughters attendance at school</p> <p>Writing explanatory notes explaining absence</p> <p>Supplying of Doctors Cert</p> <p>Keeping school informed</p>

Content

Procedures for maintaining school register

Pupils are entered in roll books and in a Facility database when they enrol.

If a pupil leaves Maryfield College for another school, parents must inform the school in writing, stating where the pupil is now enrolled. This information must be forwarded to NEWB and the pupil deleted from the roll book and from the database. If a student is expelled the student must be removed from roll and database. All students expelled or suspended from school for over 6 days must also be reported to NEWB.

If a pupil changes class in the school the roll books and Facility must be changed.



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Roll taking

Two rolls a day are called at 8:50 and at 1:10.

○ _N	Pupil is absent and a reason is given i.e.Explained absence
○	Pupil is absent without reason given i.e. Unexplained absence
○ _L or L	Pupil is late
○ _s	Pupil is on school business i.e. pupil is present

Data is entered as soon as possible so that reports can be close to real time.

Follow-up on absences

All pupils need to be reminded that the school requests their parents to put in writing the reasons for and the dates of their absence. While a phone call is appreciated the school needs a written explanation.

The pupil must bring this note on the first day following an absence and this is handed to roll caller. Roll caller should also ask for note. The roll book is duly amended.

If after a few days the note has still not been received the FT must let the pupil know that she is escalating this to the YH.

FT should also notify YH of any pupil about whose pattern or number of absences she is concerned.

Medical certs will be requested in the case of repeated/prolonged absence.



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Parents' Role

Parents are legally responsible for their daughter's attendance.

They are asked to inform the school in writing of all absences with dates and the reasons. Prolonged illnesses should be accompanied by doctors certificate. Parents are requested to use discretion in distinguishing between genuine illness which necessitates time off from school and a minor complaint which does not.

Parents can support their daughter's education

- by refusing requests from their daughters for unofficial days/time off for activities like shopping/ visits to hairdresser in preparation for social events
- by planning family holidays in holiday time and not during term time
- by arranging medical and dental appointments after school hours

Part time work by pupils can have a detrimental effect on school attendance. The school strongly disapproves of such part time work and expects the support of parents in this.

Parents are asked to contact the school to explain any difficulties regarding attendance. They are asked to work with the school in bringing about an improvement in attendance.

Communicating attendance information to parents/guardians

Numbers of absences are given at the bottom of the school reports. The number given is a combination of morning and afternoon absences divided by two.

Parents /Guardians of pupils who are in danger of, or who have exceeded 20 absences are informed by writing. Parents/Guardians of pupils whose absences are a cause of concern will be asked to meet YH/ DP/ or Principal to discuss a strategy for improving of attendance.

FT's, YH's and DP may also make phone calls to parents/guardians to check appointments or absences.



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Rewarding good attendance

Year Heads are responsible for rewarding individuals who have no absences or who have greatly improved attendance.

Strategies for improving attendance

School Principal must ensure that Curriculum including extra curricular activities and Timetable encourage good attendance. School Principal and DP must analyse attendance reports and be mindful of trends. Comparisons of attendance levels year on year and against national averages are made.

Pupils with attendance problems are identified. FT/YH /DP/counsellor establish communication links with Parents/Guardians. Reasons for poor attendance are teased out.

Strategies to bring about improvement will depend to some extent on the causes but may involve

- Buddy/mentor/friend in class or Year Group who encourages attendance
- Involvement in extra curricular activity
- Closer monitoring of attendance through 'sign-in' with FT or YH at appointed times
- Incentives to reward attendance

Pupils who are absent for Christmas/Summer/Mocks Exams

The school cannot make alternative arrangements for pupils who are absent for school tests. In these circumstances a projected grade will be given and the reason the absence recorded in the school report.



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Pupils role

As pupils move from 1st to 6th Year Maryfield College expects them to take more responsibility for themselves and their commitment to school in particular their attendance. Pupils are responsible for:

- ensuring a letter to explain an absence is handed to their FT
- catching up on notes missed when absent
- finding out what homework has been set

While teachers will make every effort to help a pupil who has been absent through genuine illness, they cannot always repeat coursework that has been covered in class. References from the school

It is important to note that information regarding attendance at school is the most consistently requested information from prospective employers or administrators of post leaving certificate courses.

Reviewing Policy

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured against the following criteria:

- Improving attendance in individual cases of poor attendance.
- Increased accuracy in record keeping.
- A reduction in the number of unexplained absences.
- A greater awareness of the importance of good attendance among pupils.

The persons responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy are the Principal and Deputy Principal.