



Policy & Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

In Coláiste Chillian, we recognise the vital role that regular school attendance plays in the academic, social, and personal development of every student. In this regard, great emphasis is placed on encouraging students to attend school.

Of particular importance in this case is the cooperation between parents/guardians, students and staff members, for it is through this cooperation that we can ensure that every student has the opportunity to develop and to reach their potential.

Our approach to attendance is **supportive, preventative, and collaborative**, rather than solely punitive.

This Statement of Strategy for School Attendance has been developed in accordance with **Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000**. Its purpose is to:

- Promote a culture of **regular attendance and punctuality**.
- Identify, prevent, and address **patterns of poor attendance**
- Comply with the **Education (Welfare) Act 2000** and Tusla reporting requirements.
- Support families, staff, and students to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Provide clear procedures for monitoring, recording, and reporting attendance.

Advantages of Regular Attendance

- Improved education and career prospects
- Enhanced Social skills and self-confidence
- Development of positive life and work habits
- Greater opportunities for extracurricular activities

Roles and Responsibilities

The School timetable is as follows:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 08:30 – 15:20
- Wednesday: 08:30 – 12:50

Students are expected to:

- **Arrive on the school grounds before 8:25am** to organise locker, books and to set-up for the day. Students may access lockers from 08:15.
- Be in class, prepared for learning, at the start of the first lesson commencing at 8:30 am

- Students who arrive to school after 8:30 am must sign-in on the tablet at the main office.
- The unauthorized absence of a student from any class during the school day will be viewed as a breach of the Code of Behaviour and appropriate sanctions may apply.
- Students should attend school every day unless they are unwell or have a genuine reason.
- Students are expected to be punctual for all lessons and seek the teacher's permission to leave if necessary. If a student is late to class, they must have an excuse note and present it to the subject teacher.
- Leaving school during the day requires a note from a parent/guardian in the Dialann or on the app, approved by the Class Teacher/Year Head, the Deputy Principal or Principal.

Parents/Guardians are asked to

- **Discuss the importance of attendance and punctuality** with your child.
- **Arrange holidays outside of the academic year.** (Schools are open for tuition 166 days every academic year)
- **Arrange appointments outside school hours**
- **Notify the school via the app before 8:30 a.m.** about absences, early excuses or appointments.
- In the case of long-term absences, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to inform the school.
- **Support your child's attendance** by ensuring that students are in school every day unless there is good reason for the absence.
- Stay in contact with the school and
- Attend parent/teacher meetings.
- If you have any concerns about your child's attendance or punctuality, please contact the Year Head or Class Teacher.

Subject Teachers:

- **Record attendance for each class** using VS Ware. If there is any doubt on behalf of a teacher about an absence, they should discuss it with the relevant teacher and/or Year Head.
- **Issue late notes** to students who arrive late.
- **Monitor absences**, addressing concerns with students and parents/guardians.
- Absences are recorded on VS Ware under the following categories.

ALGM = As láthair gan míniú (Absent without reason given)

ALM = As láthair le míniú (Absent with reason given)

Déan = Déanach (Late)

DéanM = Déanach le míniú (Late with excuse)

Fionraí = dalta ar fionraí (Student suspended)

Gníomh Scl. = Dalta ar ghníomh scoile (absent on school business)

Class Teachers/ Year Head/ Attendance Officer/ Deputy & Principal

- The Class Teacher in consultation with the Year Head will address attendance & punctuality concerns by addressing concerns with students and parents/guardians through informal check-ins, phone calls, meetings and agreement of an attendance support plan.
- The Class Teacher/Year Head will **maintain regular communication with Parent(s)/Guardian(s)** regarding prolonged or frequent absences including poor punctuality
- The Year Head in consultation with the Attendance Officer and Deputy & Principal will send a letter home when absenteeism exceeds 10 days. Regular communication regarding prolonged and/or regular absences is maintained between the Principal, Deputy principal and the Year Heads.
- The Attendance Officer will present attendance reports to the Principal, and in the case of students under 16 who are absent for 20 days or more in any one school year, submit these details to TUSLA, ensuring compliance with Tusla reporting obligations.
- The Principal in consultation with the Year Head may refer to the Educational Welfare Officer for support in cases of ongoing attendance concerns.
- The school will promote good attendance and punctuality through various initiatives and awards throughout the year. Our focus is always on helping the student **re-engage positively with school.**

Attendance Procedures

Daily Recording

- Attendance is recorded at the beginning of each class.
- Late arrivals after 8.30am must sign-in at the office.
- Students leaving early must have an excuse note on the app approved by the Year Head and must sign-out at the office.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified if:
 - A student is absent without explanation.
 - A student signs in late to school
 - A student's attendance becomes a concern
 - A student's punctuality declines
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must communicate absences or early excuse notes with the school before 8:30 am through the school app.

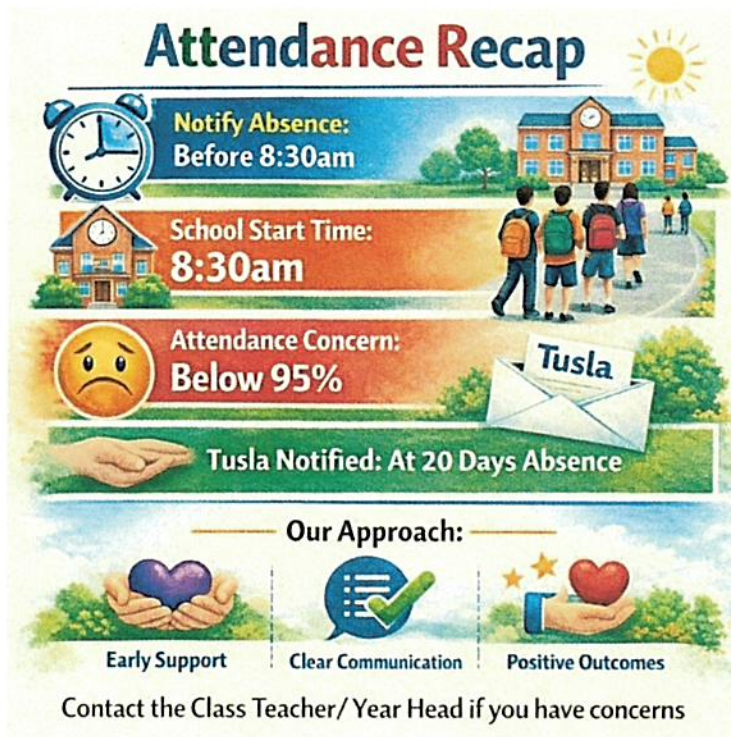
Responding to Poor Attendance and Punctuality

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 8 days absent or less (5%) | Satisfactory Attendance |
| Up to 16 days absence (5 - 10%) | Cause for Concern |
| 17 days absent or more (10% +) | Chronic Absenteeism |

- Informal contact (email/call) after 3 unexplained absences.
- Meeting or phone call with parent/guardian if attendance continues to decline.
- Individualised attendance support plan.
- Referral to Tusla Education Support Service if internal supports are not successful and the student attendance is still of concern.
- Students who have three unexcused lates will receive an after-school detention.
- In the event of students feeling unwell, they must go to their Class Teacher/Year Head to call home. This is recorded on the school app.
- Where students are absent from class due to a school related activity, this is recorded on VSware as Gníomh Scoile.
- **Repeated lateness will be addressed as follows:**
 - **3 unexplained late arrivals:** Student will receive an after-school detention
 - **Ongoing lateness:** Meeting arranged and support plan agreed

Encouraging Attendance

We promote attendance by:



Good

positive

- Recognising good and improved attendance
- Celebrating classes & year groups with high and improved attendance in assemblies
- Encouraging students to take pride in being present and on time
- Issue certificates for students with excellent or improved attendance.
- Promote attendance progress in school updates and on noticeboards.

Education Welfare Act 2002

- Under the **Education (Welfare) Act 2000**, schools must inform **Tusla Education Support Service** if a student reaches **20 days of absence** in a school year.
 - This applies to **all absences**, whether explained or unexplained.
 - A report does **not automatically mean legal action**.
 - Tusla's role is to **support families and schools** where attendance is a concern.

- The Education Welfare Officer must be informed if a student is absent 20 days or more or if a student is suspended for 6 days or longer.
- A student must have completed the Junior Certificate/Cycle or be 16 years old before they may leave the education system.
- Parents/Guardians must inform the school in writing of the reasons behind absences.

We will always try to work with families **before and during** this process.

Review and Evaluation

This Statement of Strategy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Informed by attendance data and trends
- Updated in consultation with staff, students, and parents
- Revised where necessary to reflect Tusla guidance or legislative change

This strategy was approved by the Board of Management of Coláiste Chillian

on: _____

Review Due: Annually

Signed: _____

Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bhainistíochta