



Kennedy College Attendance Policy



Vision and Values

Kennedy College maintains a caring and pastoral ethos with regard to students and strives to ensure that the college is a positive experience for all students.

Kennedy College affirms that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school-going age attend school regularly once they are enrolled at school.

Kennedy College affirms that parents have a statutory obligation to notify the school principal or their nominee, in the form of a written explanation or a doctor's certificate, explaining the reason for each absence.

Attendance Expectations

Kennedy College expects that students are present for all lessons on every school day and that a student is absent only when absolutely necessary.

Kennedy College seeks to comply with the Education Welfare Act 2000 and all other relevant statutory legislation and undertakes to:

- co-operate with the Educational Welfare Service and with the Educational Welfare Officer and shall seek to establish good and positive relationships with them.
- maintain accurate records of students' school attendance
- form habits of regular and punctual attendance in students
- discourage absenteeism, lateness and unwarranted withdrawal of students during the school day or school term
- develop a sense of personal responsibility in students
- make students aware that a good school attendance record enhances employment opportunities

How attendance will be monitored

A register of all students who have been admitted to the school is maintained by the Principal of Kennedy College.

Kennedy College affirms that a record is maintained of attendance and non-attendance on each school day or part thereof of each student registered at the school, which specifies the fact of attendance or failure to attend and the reasons for such failure. Attendance is marked by the subject teacher for every lesson on the school's management information system (MIS). Parents/Guardians have online access to this attendance record.

Kennedy College affirms that the principal may at their discretion, delegate duties regarding school attendance to other professionals working in the school.

Kennedy College, shall in as far as is possible, co-operate with Tusla and with the Educational Welfare Officer and shall seek to establish good and positive relationships with them.

As per The Education (Welfare) act 2000 Section 22(1) and 22(2) Kennedy College has drawn up an attendance policy, subject to the functions of the Minister pursuant to section 7 (1) of the Education Act 1998 and WWETB.

Kennedy College uses the following strategy to promote good attendance/participation. The DEIS plan lists detailed actions planned to promote good attendance.

DEIS

Attendance data is gathered and analysed on an annual basis and comparisons done with previous years. The data gathered includes the following:

- Absent rate (% of student days lost to absence)
- Chronic absent rate (% students absent for more than 20 days)
- Expulsion rates
- Suspension rates
- Signing out early data
- Late sign in data

From this data targets are set for the following year with a desire to reduce each rate year on year. Specific targets are included in the Kennedy College DEIS plan.

The whole-school approach

The development of whole school structures is a positive and proactive attempt to deal with the issues of attendance and non-attendance, supported by the Pastoral Care programme in the school and includes

- Discussion of attendance and school procedures for attendance with every parent/guardian on enrolment.
- Provision of variety of educational programmes to meet the varied needs of students.
- First Year Induction Programme
- Meitheal Programme – mentoring of 1st Year students by trained 6th Year Meitheal Leaders
- Daily record of school attendance and recording of reasons for any absence by Class Tutors.
- Texts sent home everyday informing parents/guardians of child's unexplained absence that day.
- Inclusion of attendance statistics on school assessment reports.
- Login details for online system provided to parents/guardians who can check child's attendance in real time.
- Early identification of "at risk" students, beginning with transition meetings with primary schools.

- Establishment and commitment to a student support team consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, HSCL Coordinator, Behaviour for Learning Coordinator, SCP project worker and year-heads for the purpose of identifying and supporting at risk students.
- Establishment of and commitment to a Relate team for the purpose of developing strategies that promote positive behaviour.
- Provision of courses for parents through HSCL, with parents of at risk students identified for courses.
- The fostering of school and community awareness of the factors affecting school attendance.
- The JCSP and LCA Programme emphasises the importance of regular attendance of students through profiling, initiatives, cross-curricular work and recognition of student achievement.
- School Meals provision in collaboration with the Department of Social Protection.
- Commitment to developing the use of Restorative Practice.
- Attendance drives annually for one month each with rewards for those with full attendance.
- Letters and texts sent frequently informing parents/guardians of their child's rate of absence so far that term.
- Attendance clinics with parents/guardians of students who have chronic absences or are approaching a chronic absence rate.

Promoting good attendance

- The rewarding of students regarding good and improved attendance/participation on a regular basis and as part of the annual awards.
- Making explicit links between attendance and progression in school.

Responding to poor attendance

- Establishing the reasons for poor attendance and development of tailored strategies to the student or groups of students.
- Referral to Student Support Team/Attendance Team/Behaviour for Learning Programme/SCP/Tusla
- Statutory reporting to TUSLA
- Communication with parents – provision of advice and support, from Year Heads/HSCL/Deputy Principal/Principal/ SCP
- Incentives/Reward
- Provision of supports to enable attendance – HSCL, NBSS, Guidance Counselling, External Counselling, SCP support, TESS, NEPS.
- Any other strategy that may be of relevance to the needs or circumstances of the school.

- Establishment of close links with the homes of at risk students, primarily by HSCL Coordinator
- Cooperation with 'Meitheal' of professional supports such as Social Work, CAMHS, JLO, EWO etc.
- Fostering, promoting and establishing contacts by the school with other schools and bodies engaged in youth work.

Roles & Responsibilities in relation to attendance

Students

- Each student has a personal responsibility to attend school and be punctual each day and for every lesson.
- Each student must keep their journal neat and present it as requested
- To ensure that an absence note is completed in the Student Journal and to present this note to the school office and any school personnel who wish to see the note.
- To ensure that should they sign in late they get a late slip and present it to their teacher.
- To ensure that if they are signing out during the school day that they remain in class until called to the school office where they are signed out and collected by their Parent / Guardian.
- To not leave school premises without permission.
- To find out details of work missed and catch up. This applies to students are absent for a day(s) or who miss class due to sporting or other extra-curricular activities.

Board of Management

- The Board of Management of Kennedy College shall ensure that the statutory obligations of the college with regard to college attendance and participation are adhered to.
- Kennedy College shall submit a report on attendance levels in the College to the Educational Welfare Officer/TESS, as required.
- Kennedy College shall ensure that all information is collected and issued in accordance with the Data Protection act (1988).
- Kennedy College shall ensure that an evaluation of the effectiveness of the process, strategy and policy regarding attendance is carried out regularly.

Principal

- A register of all students who have been admitted to the school will be maintained by the principal of Kennedy College.
- Kennedy College affirms that the principal must maintain a record of attendance and non-attendance on each school day or part thereof of each student registered at the school, which specifies the fact of attendance or failure to attend and the reasons for such failure.
- Kennedy College affirms that a student, who has not reached the age of 16 years and who has not completed three years of post-primary education, cannot be removed from the register, except:
 - For inter-school transfer and then only after all details regarding attendance and educational progress have been issued to the new school.

- Where for whatever reason a student is removed from the school under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 20(4)
- Kennedy College affirms that the principal shall, after admitting a student from another second level school request the principal of said school to release the student on PPOD for transfer.
- Report to the Board of Management on student attendance.
- Kennedy College affirms that the principal must notify the Tusla as follows:
 - Where a student is suspended for a period of six or more consecutive days or suspension for a total of twenty days or more.

- Where the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent (for whatever reason) during a school year of 20 days or more.
- Where, for whatever reason, a student's name is removed from the register in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 20(4) and under Section 3.2 above.
- Where in the opinion of the principal, a student is not attending school regularly and the reasons for such non-attendance. In addition, such information should be available to the Board of Management, as appropriate.

The principal has a responsibility to ensure that any duties delegated to college staff are carried out effectively.

Deputy Principal

- monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the school or from classes
- contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences are suspected with 'spot check' phone calls.
- Liaise with relevant staff regarding student attendance issues
- The Deputy Principal assumes the role of the Principal in the absence of the Principal

Attendance Coordinator

- To identify at risk and high priority students.
- Notify home when 10 and 15 absences have been reached by text or letter.
- Organise attendance drives and rewards.
- Send out daily absence texts to parents/guardians of students with unexplained absences.
- Monitor attendance in Year Group regularly and make students aware of importance of regular attendance.
- note trends in absence records of individual students e.g. Monday or Friday absences and to bring this to the attention of the parents/guardians of the students concerned
- liaise with Class Tutors and the HSCL person on matters relating to attendance records of students.
- Respond when students leave school without permission including contacting parents
- Arranging meetings with parents/guardians
- When necessary, make referrals to Student Support Team
- contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected
- impose sanctions where appropriate

HSCL Coordinator

- Take referrals from any member of staff who expresses concern regarding student attendance.
- Establish contact with Parents/Guardians.
- Try to establish reasons for student absences.
- Nurture confidence and trust in Parents/Guardians.
- Encourage Parents/Guardians to adopt a positive attitude to school attendance.
- Establish contact and trust with students.

- Work with students to counteract any 'gaps' in education which may lead to further absences.
- Work with Care Team and School Completion Programme to set in place appropriate supports to keep students at school.
- Maintain contact with Parents/Guardians.
- Monitor progress of certain students and keep Principal informed.
- Liaise with Year Heads on attendance issues.

Student Support Team

- Take referrals from members of staff regarding concerns for any students. Discuss appropriate supports to be put in place for student and refer to other student supports as appropriate.
- Monitor students referred on an on-going basis.

Subject Teachers

- Responsible for student registration for every class throughout the day using the school's MIS system.
- Bring any concerns regarding student attendance to relevant staff.
- notify the Principal / Deputy Principal in the event a student is missing from the class
- provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance
- agree punctuality and attendance standards with students as part of classroom rules
- support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty attending school on a regular basis
- support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling

- discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Meetings
- impress on students the importance of regular attendance and ensure they understand their responsibility to find to 'catch up' on work missed during their absence

Parents

- Parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school-going age attend school regularly once they are enrolled at school.
- parents have a statutory obligation to notify the school explaining the reason for each absence by completing the section at the back of the Student Journal, sending in an absence note on the school's MIS, calling or emailing the school office or sending in an absence note through the school app.
- Parents should ensure that their child is punctual.
- Parents/Guardians should:
 - ensure regular attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences
 - notify the College in writing of the reason for all student absences: such notice should be provided prior to the absence if possible or otherwise immediately afterwards.
 - provide to the College reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the College may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary.
 - adhere to the procedures set out in this Policy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day

Administration Office

- maintain a record of students withdrawn from school during the school day and their return to the school
- ensure that when a student is withdrawn from the school, a parent/guardian personally accompanies the student who is leaving the school and signs the appropriate record before the student is withdrawn. In the event of an emergency the secretary will contact the home and confirm who is to sign the child out with the parent.

Date the Attendance Policy was approved by the Board of Management: 14th April 2026