

CLONFERT COLLEGE

Attendance and Participation Strategy

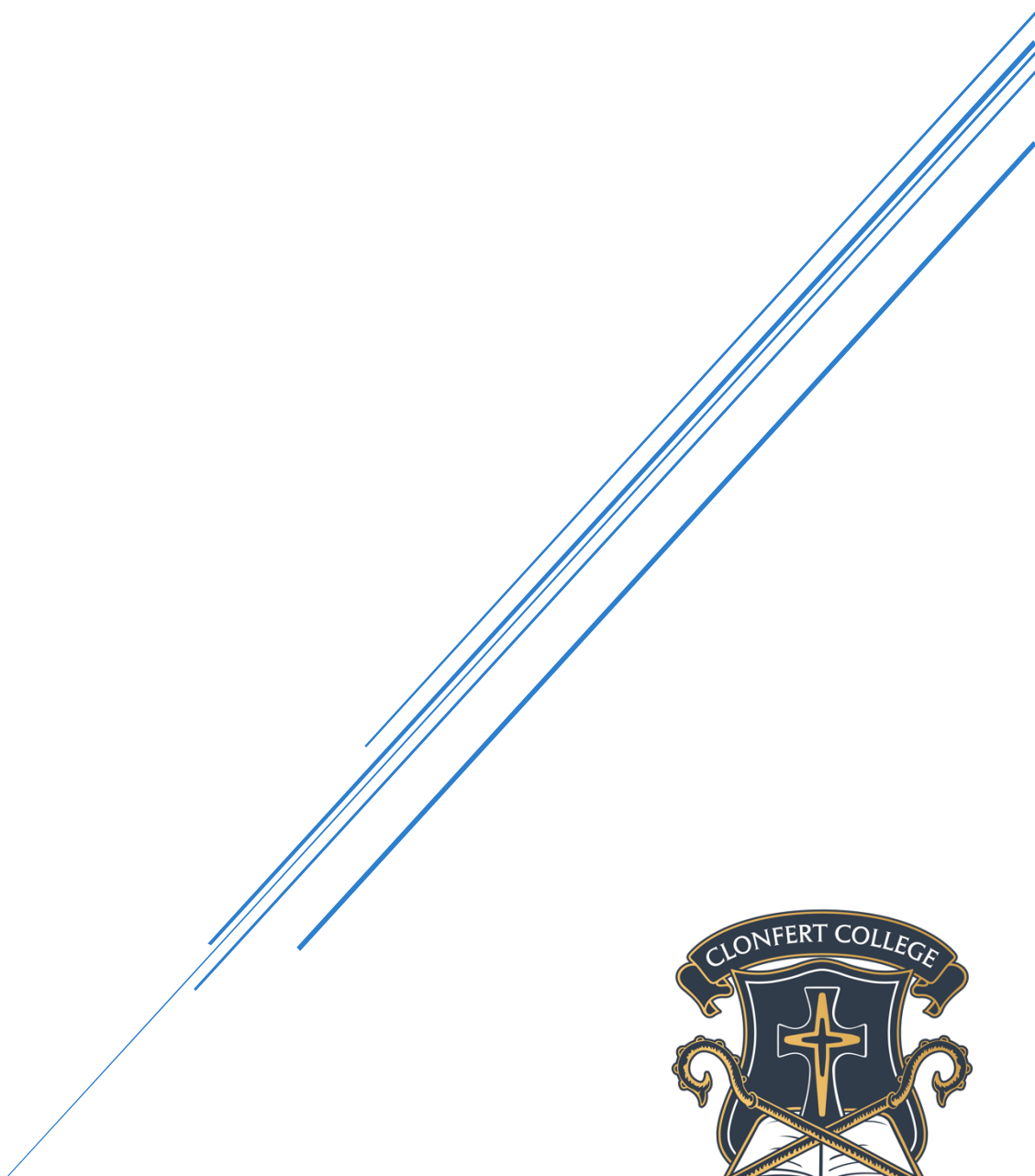


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1.0 Introduction

Clonfert College is a co-educational secondary school under Joint Patronage of CEIST and the Bishop of Clonfert. Clonfert College is designated as a DEIS Secondary School.

2.0 Scope

This Attendance Policy was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the Board of Management, staff, parents, and students. It applies to all aspects of attendance and punctuality at Clonfert College, a co-educational secondary school dedicated to fostering a culture of inclusion, respect, and academic excellence.

3.0 Vision and Values

Clonfert College is committed to providing a holistic education that nurtures the personal, academic, and social potential of all students in a caring and disciplined environment. Regular and punctual attendance is essential to achieving this goal and is a shared responsibility among students, parents, and staff.

The Clonfert College **Mission Statement** states:

At Clonfert College our Catholic faith guides us in building a learning community where each person feels supported in their pursuit of excellence. We are committed to offering a nurturing, holistic education, which allows students to thrive in a safe, welcoming atmosphere of love, compassion, and respect. Guided by the teachings of Jesus, we foster a joyful, inclusive community where every student is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Our mission is to promote equality, kindness, and fairness, while encouraging a deep sense of care for self, for others and for God's creation. With faith as our foundation, we strive to form young people who will lead with integrity, serve with compassion, and contribute positively to our community and the world.

4.0 Rationale

- To safeguard student welfare and ensure continuity in learning.
- To maximise student engagement and participation in educational opportunities.
- To instil the importance of regular attendance in fostering academic success and classroom cohesion.
- To ensure compliance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- To enable early intervention when attendance concerns arise.

5.0 Goals

- To promote a positive culture around attendance and punctuality.
- To encourage students to take ownership of their attendance habits.
- To maintain accurate and transparent attendance records.
- To establish early interventions for students with attendance challenges.
- To emphasise the role of parents/guardians in supporting school attendance.

6.0 Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

- School begins at 8:50 AM each day. Students arriving after this time must sign in at Reception and a valid explanation should be provided by the parent/ guardian via the Compass App or in writing.
- Students are expected to be on time for their classes. Students who deliberately absent themselves without permission from some or all of a class or classes will be deemed to be playing truant (mitching).
- Attendance is recorded at the beginning of every lesson by the teacher using the school's digital attendance system.
- A parent/guardian must provide a written explanation for any absence via the Compass App or in the student's journal.
- Students who need to leave early must have prior parental consent via the Compass App and be signed out at Reception by a parent/ guardian or a person nominated by a parent/ guardian. This must be completed before the child leaves the school and cannot be done retrospectively.

7.0 Whole-School Approach to Attendance

- Attendance and punctuality are reinforced through assemblies, tutor time, newsletters, and school-wide initiatives.
- Parents are regularly informed about their child's attendance via reports, meetings, and digital tracking tools.
- Staff receive training on attendance protocols and digital record-keeping.
- A reward system acknowledges excellent and improved attendance.
- Class teachers and/or support staff may notice absences that cause concern. These concerns should be reported to the Year Head or Attendance Co-ordinator.

8.0 Monitoring Attendance

- Attendance is monitored daily, and patterns of absence are identified early.
- Attendance is monitored using Compass, our Information Management System.
- Students who accumulate three unexplained lates will be subject to intervention measures.
- Students who accumulate five unexplained absences will be subject to intervention measures.
- Referrals will be made to the HSCL Coordinator and SCP where attendance concerns exist and initial attempts to improve attendance have failed.
- Unexplained absences exceeding 20 days will be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) as required by law.
- A dedicated Attendance Coordinator liaises with tutors, Year Heads, and parents to address ongoing concerns.

9.0 Responding to Poor Attendance and Punctuality

- Year Heads and the Attendance Coordinator meet with students showing poor attendance trends on a formal/ informal basis.
- Detention may be assigned for persistent lateness.
- Individual support plans, including parental meetings and external agency referrals, may be implemented where necessary.
- The HSCL co-ordinator will support parents and students to improve attendance.
- Students exhibiting poor attendance may be referred to in-school support systems such as the Pastoral Care Team, Guidance Counsellor and/or School Completion Programme (SCP) as appropriate. It is important to note that the SCP has an intake framework and screening process that must be completed prior to the child accessing the supports.
- Poor Attendance is often an indicator of disengagement in school. Attendance and punctuality are reviewed for all students applying to enter a programme (Transition Year (T.Y) and/or Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)) in Clonfert College (Please see Admissions to Programmes Policy). It is important to note that students completing LCA must maintain an attendance record of above 90% for each subject/ module. Students who do not maintain this level of attendance will be removed from the programme by the Principal (following a meeting with the Parents/ Guardians) and the place can be offered to another student who is on the waiting list.

The following protocols are in place to support student engagement and attendance at school.

- Parents/ Guardians have instant access to attendance data using the Compass App. This shows both lates and absences from every class. Parents/ Guardians will receive training on using the Compass App at the start of the school year. Our HSCL Co-ordinator is available to support parents/ guardians who are struggling to set-up/ use the app.
- If a student is late for three lessons, they will be scheduled for a lunchtime detention. This will be communicated to parents/ guardians via push notification on the Compass App. If a child receives three detentions for lateness, the matter will be referred to the Year Head. This matter will then be dealt with using the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Parents/ Guardians will receive a push notification/ email when their child has 5 unexplained absences and/or if there are concerns about attendance.

- Parents/Guardians will receive a phone call when their child has 10 unexplained absences and/or if there are concerns about attendance.
- Parents/Guardians will receive a further push notification/ email when their child has 15 unexplained absences and/or if there are further concerns about attendance. The HSCL and/or SCP will be notified. They will make contact with the parents/guardians to offer support.
- This message will inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)/ Tusla educational Support Service (TESS) will be notified if the child reaches 20 days of unexplained absences. A meeting will be offered to support the student and their parents/ guardians to improve attendance.
- If a child reaches 20 days of unexplained absences, the parents/ guardians will be invited to a meeting and the mandatory report will be submitted to TESS. A letter will be posted to the parents/ guardians informing them of the referral.

10.0 Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 Principal & Deputy Principals

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will ensure attendance policies are in place, evaluated and monitored. One Deputy Principal will oversee the implementation of this strategy and complete annual returns for Tusla Educational Support Services (TESS) .

10.2 Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

The EWO will support parents/ guardians, students and the school to establish and maintain good attendance routines. The EWO will facilitate attendance clinics for parents/ guardians and their child/ children who have been highlighted as having attendance concerns to establish barriers to attendance, offer support and they will also liaise with the school regarding referrals/ cases that are assigned to them.

10.3 Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Co-ordinator

The HSCL will support parents/ guardians and their children to improve attendance/ engagement. They will liaise with parents/ guardians in relation to barriers to school attendance. They will communicate with all stakeholders to support the child's engagement with education.

10.4 School Completion Project Team

The School Completion Programme will assess referrals that have been made via the Intake Framework. Students that meet the criteria will receive targeted and evidence-informed interventions to support the student's engagement, participation and attendance.

10.5 Year Heads

The Year Heads support students in maintaining good attendance at school. The Year Head will work closely with the attendance co-ordinator to ensure that students are adequately supported.

10.6 Guidance Team/ Pastoral Care Team

Students may be referred to the Guidance Team or the Pastoral Care Team to support students with engagement in school and/ or their learning. These teams will assess barriers to attendance and support the child to engage meaningfully with their education. They will report back to the Year Head/ Attendance Coordinator/ SLT as necessary.

10.7 Attendance Coordinator

The Attendance Coordinator tracks attendance and oversee attendance data, interventions, and parental/ TESS communication. Organise initiatives to promote positive attendance during the year.

10.8 Class Teachers

Class teachers record the attendance during each lesson accurately and report concerns. Encourage students' attendance by facilitating active and engaging classes where students' participation is both encouraged and praised.

10.9 Students:

Students attend school regularly and punctually, taking responsibility for their own attendance.

10.10 Parents/Guardians

Parents/ Guardians ensure their child attends school and they must inform the school of absences in a timely manner. We expect parents/ guardians to support their child's educational engagement. It may be necessary to attend meetings to support your child's attendance or engagement in school.

11.0 Review and Evaluation

The College will monitor, review, and evaluate the Policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

Ratified by Board of Management on 29th April 2025

Signed by the Chairperson on behalf of the board of Management

Gearóid Leen pp
Chairperson

29th April 2025
Date