



Terenure College

Templeogue Road

Dublin 6W

STATEMENT OF
STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE

VISION AND VALUES RELATING TO ATTENDANCE

Alongside contemplation and service, community is a key value of the Carmelite Order. Terenure College is convinced that good attendance leads to students being successfully bound into the “centre of learning” and “community of faith” that is Terenure College. In addition, there is a direct relationship between a student’s regular attendance and both their enjoying their experience in the College and ultimately achieving success in their schooling. Ultimately, regular attendance at school is essential for all students so that they may reach their potential. Students cannot easily be active participants in their own learning process if they are not present in school.

Terenure College aims to foster a culture of regular attendance at school for all pupils. Good attendance is encouraged by the hospitality and genuine warmth which are the hallmarks of the welcome for all who come into the College. This applies especially to the students of the College who – alongside the teachers and staff of the school – enter into the College on a daily basis.

AIMS

The provisions of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2002* inform and support this statement of strategy which aims to:

- i. Encourage full attendance where possible
- ii. Identify pupils at risk of non-attendance
- iii. Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- iv. Foster an appreciation of learning.
- v. Embed effective communication with parents in relation to school attendance
- vi. Ensure compliance with the relevant legislation

HIGH EXPECTATIONS AROUND ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school every day unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.

All students must attend at the scheduled times every day:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8.45am to 1pm & 1.45pm to 3.45pm.

Wednesday: 8.45am to 1pm.

Students are expected to be present each day. They may not be absent from school except when the absence is unavoidable due to illness, urgent family reason or other legitimate and unavoidable reason. In addition, students are expected to maintain high standards of punctuality throughout the day.

During the school day, every student must attend every class according to their timetable unless prior permission has been received from the Principal, Deputy Principal, Form Master, or relevant teacher. The unauthorised 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.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Absences from school must be explained in writing by a Parent/Guardian to the Form Master using Absence Notes that are provided in the College Diary. In addition to this parents of Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Year students are requested to ring the College between 8.45 a.m. and 9.25 a.m. on the day of their son's absences, informing the College of the absence.

A student wishing to leave the school premises for a legitimate reason during the school day must have a signed note from their parent/guardian. This note should include the reason for the absence and the time the student is leaving. No student will be permitted to leave without presenting a signed note to their Form Master in advance of leaving the premises. Any student who leaves the school premises without such authorisation will be deemed to have breached the school code of discipline and appropriate sanctions may be applied.

In cases where a student receives late notice of a reason they must leave school from their parent(s) / guardian(s), a phone call to the school must be made, but must be followed by up an appropriate written note.

All students who leave the school during the school day – other than on approved school outings with a teacher, etc. – must exit by Reception after signing the appropriate 'Sign-Out Book' left there.

ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

In the event of a student becoming ill or getting injured during the day they should inform their class teacher who may send them to the School Nurse (or Reception if School Nurse is unavailable).

If permission is granted to go home contact with their parents/guardians will be made by the School Nurse who will also email the relevant Form Master.

Students should not contact home via a mobile phone or prior to getting permission to leave the school premises.

Parents/guardians are expected to make arrangements for the collection of their son at Reception in the event of a student being ill or injured.

In the event of a student taking ill during lunchtime (while off the school premises) the College must be notified immediately by a parent/guardian.

MEDICAL / DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents/guardians and students are requested not to make medical or dental appointments during school hours.

Where this is not possible, a signed note seeking permission to leave the school must be completed in advance and handed to the Form Master.

TRUANCY

Truancy is considered an extreme breach of the Code of Behaviour. This includes in-school truancy where a student remains in the school building but does not attend a timetabled class/classes.

HOW ATTENDANCE WILL BE MONITORED

- In Terenure College, Form Masters take the primary role of administering the attendance strategy. Teachers of the 8.45 class take a roll-call on *VSWare* which is monitored and followed up by each Form Master daily.
- Teachers take a roll-call on *VSWare* in every subsequent class to identify any absences occurring within the school day. These records are monitored and followed up by each Form Master daily.
- Form Masters take a roll and collect absence notes daily.
- Form Masters will inform parents of the number of days of absence by formal school reports unless a situation warrants otherwise.
- School attendance levels are monitored regularly.

PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING EXPLANATIONS FOR ABSENCES

- Pre-printed absence notes are provided to students at the back of the College Diary.
- Parents and students are required to provide notes in advance of planned absences to the Form Master.
- If a student is absent without prior warning, an absent note must be completed and handed to the Form Master when the student's return to school.
- If a delay occurs in the providing absent notes sanctions may be applied by the relevant Form Master, Principal or Deputy Principal.

PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING ABSENCES FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Where students are not present in the College because of participation in a school activity (including approved Work Experience or Care Week), these are not recorded as an absence.
- Teachers organising activities (school trips, extra-curricular activities, etc.) where students will not be present will provide the relevant Form Master(s) and class-teachers with names of students who will be absent and the length of the expected duration of the absence.

- On occasion students may be absent from class due to school related activities such as sport and drama. Such absences are sanctioned on the understanding that students ensure all homework is sourced and carried out to a satisfactory standard. Students may be removed from such activities if they are having an adverse effect on their academic progress.

PROCEDURES FOR ENCOURAGING AND RECORDING TIMELY ATTENDANCE

- A 'warning-bell' is sounded a few minutes before class begins officially at 8.45am, 11am, and 1.45pm.
- Students are expected to be inside the building before this warning-bell, and at their desks when the class-bell goes at 8.45am, 11am, and 1.45pm.
- Students who are late at 8.45 or 13.45 must enter the school via reception and have their lateness recorded. Such students are expected to produce a note from their parent/guardian explaining the reason they were late or face sanction.
- Late arrival to school on a repeated basis will be viewed as a breach of discipline and appropriate sanctions may apply.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO ATTENDANCE

THE WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

- The calendar for the forthcoming academic year is sent to parents with Summer reports. In addition, it is published on the school website and in the school journal. This should assist parents / guardians in planning to minimise non-attendance during the school term.
- Parents' Information Evenings are conducted for each year group at the beginning of the academic year. At these evenings, both the Principal and Form Master stress the importance of regular, timely attendance to each student's progress and explain the procedures for notifying the school of absences.
- There is regular communication with parents regarding isolated and repeated incidents of non-attendance, outlined above.
- The importance of school attendance is emphasised to students at year assemblies at the beginning of each academic year.
- Support and advice is provided to parents and students through Form Masters, Chaplaincy Team, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal in ensuring high-levels of attendance and in resolving attendance related issues.

- Where necessary a student's attendance record is discussed with the Form Master and/or class teachers at Parent-Teacher Meetings.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Terenure College's commitment to its core values, as a centre of learning and a community of faith, provides a safe and welcoming environment for all its students. This commitment is delivered through the efforts of the teaching staff, the Chaplaincy team, the Guidance Counsellor and the Management of the school.
- Good attendance is promoted in the school through its commitment to the holistic development of all students, and is reflected in the Carmelite value of community, which permeates all aspects of school-life.
- Form Masters have also a role in making students aware of the importance of regular attendance.
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and encourages all students to be involved in school-life beyond the classroom. Such activities foster a sense of school community and pride which can encourage attendance.
- The school Student Council provides students with a voice in within the school's representative structures and in turn promotes a sense of belonging.

RESPONDING TO POOR ATTENDANCE

- Persistent lateness may result in students being placed on Detention.
- Un-authorized absence during the school day may result in the student being placed on Detention, Suspension or the student may be required to attend school on certain date(s) when other students are not required to be in attendance.
- The Form Master identifies, at an early stage, those students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems in order to facilitate an intervention.
- The Form Master meets with students who may be at risk to encourage them to attend. The Form Master may invite parents/guardians to the school to discuss and attempt to resolve any difficulties or impediments to their regular attendance at school.
- The Form Master communicates the names of students of concern to the Pastoral Care Team at their weekly meeting. The Pastoral Care Team may make recommendations to support the student, for example, the Guidance Counsellor, the Chaplaincy Team, Learning Support Teachers, or outside agencies as appropriate.
- After 20 days absence, the parents/guardians of students under sixteen years of age may be informed of the school's obligation to inform the Educational Welfare Services of TUSLA and inviting them to the College to discuss the situation if they wish.

SCHOOL ROLES IN RELATION TO ATTENDANCE

Each of the partners in the College has a part to play in ensuring good student attendance. Some of the aspects of these roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

STUDENTS

- Each student has a personal responsibility to attend school each day.
- Students are not to leave the school without having informed an appropriate adult, typically, their Form Master in the first instance. If such an adult is not a Form Master they will inform the Form Master (ideally by email or a note).
- Students who leave the school during the school day (other than on an approved school outing with a teacher) must sign the 'Sign-Out Book' at *Reception*.

PARENTS

- As the primary educators parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is an unavoidable and legitimate reason for their absence.
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 obliges parents where a child (under sixteen) is absent from the school during part of a school day, for an entire school day, or for more than one school day, to notify the principal of the reasons for the child's absence.
- Parents are obliged to ensure that the College is kept supplied with up to date emergency telephone numbers or means of contact.
- Parents will ensure, as far as is possible, that discretionary absences occur outside term time. The College management will furnish them with a calendar of the school year to assist them in this regard.
- Parents are requested to ring the College between 8.45 a.m. and 9.25 a.m. on the day of their son's absences, informing the College of the absence.

TEACHER

- The monitoring of school attendance is also the responsibility of every teacher in the school.
- Each teacher has with an obligation to record attendance at the beginning of each class session on *VSWare*.
- This register is to be available for Form Masters, Principal and Deputy Principal to crosscheck attendances of students.
- Teachers have a responsibility to bring any concerns regarding student attendance to the appropriate Form Master.

FORM MASTERS

- Form Masters take the primary role in ensuring a high standard of attendance.
- Form Masters are responsible for monitoring and recording the attendance of students in their year group.

- Where sanctions or intervention are deemed necessary Form Masters initiate the actions as outlined above.

PRINCIPAL

- The Principal has overall responsibility for students including attendance.
- The Principal delegates the immediate monitoring of attendance to Form Masters who liaise with the Principal if they have concerns regarding a students' attendance.
- The Principal is obligated to inform in writing an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) where:
 - a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than six days
 - the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during the school year is not less than twenty.
 - a student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the school register
 - a student is, in the opinion of the principal not attending school regularly.
- The principal will provide each teacher with access to registers for their classes on *VSWare* on which they record attendance at the beginning of each class.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

- The Deputy Principal liaises with the Principal on all issues regarding students including attendance.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

The Attendance Strategy will be reviewed annually, by the management team, considering the attendance rates for that each school year and amended as deemed necessary.

Following review, the Statement of Strategy will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

This Statement of Strategy was ratified by the Board of Management on 23 October 2017 and will be reviewed annually.



Mr. Frank Gallen,
Chairperson of Board of Management



Fr. Éanna ÓhÓbáin O.Carm.,
Principal / Secretary to the Board of Management

This Statement of Strategy was submitted to Tusla on 29 November 2017.

This Statement of Strategy was reviewed on 28 January 2019.

This Statement of Strategy was reviewed by the management team and approved by the Board of Management on 20 January 2020.