

Piper's Hill College Attendance Policy

Legislative Context

All children must attend school from the age of six years until reaching the age of sixteen or have achieved a minimum of three years post-primary education (whichever is later). Thereafter all children have a right to attend school until they have reached the age of eighteen or have achieved Leaving Certificate standard. Government stated objectives are that 85% to 90% of all children will be retained in the education system until Leaving Certificate level.

It is the primary responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are properly registered in a recognised school of their choice. It is the responsibility of school management to facilitate parents in meeting this obligation. The school is obliged to support parents by adopting a School Attendance Policy. This requirement arises from the Education Welfare Act 2000.

The Attendance Policy of Piper's Hill College must be viewed in the light of the legislative context and our Mission Statement.

Piper's Hill College is a co-educational school with an ongoing tradition of service to the community. We provide a caring learning environment where all aspects of the student are valued and nurtured. The ethos and culture of the school promotes high standards of effort and achievement. We encourage everyone to appreciate his/her own worth and creativity so that they become capable and fulfilled members of society.

In order for our school to achieve the objectives outlined in our mission statement and fulfil the requirements of legislation, then the fullest possible attendance is required from every student.

Students: For students the fullest possible attendance will enable them to develop academically, physically, socially. It is essential training for the life after school in work and further education.

Teachers: Full attendance enables teachers to achieve the best possible academic performance from each student in their classes. The dynamic of a well attended and committed class is an important source of professional satisfaction for teachers.

Management: It is within the remit of the BOM to be aware of and monitor attendance in the school. Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, the BOM must, in conjunction with the Principal, teachers and parents, make available to Tusla a statement of the strategies and measures it proposes for encouraging regular attendance at school.

Parents: Parents who engage with the school in achieving the best possible attendance from their children will maximise the educational outcomes and opportunities for their them. The extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, the supports offered and the annual Awards Ceremony also promotes good attendance and better educational outcomes. Parents are obliged to send their children to ‘a recognised school each and every day’ and ‘where a child is absent from school during part of a school day or for a school day or more than a school day the parents must notify the principal of the reasons for the child’s absence.’ In Piper’s Hill College communication of absences is usually done through the school journal. Phone calls must be followed up with a note.

The school communicates the absence of a student through same day texting/e mailing. For prolonged absence due to illness, the school requires a medical certificate. Parents are asked to provide phone numbers including an emergency number so that effective communication can take place.

Parents are informed that Tusla will be informed where a student’s aggregate absence is 20 days or more. The HSCL teacher will have made interventions prior to this with the support of the EWO.

Community: The wider community recognises that a school where students participate and attend to the fullest extent is a great asset to the local community. The greater the attendance among students and the longer they are retained in the school is better for students and the community.

Registration: Procedure in Piper’s Hill College registration takes place each morning at 8.55am. Latecomers sign in at the main school office and are added to the school attendance. Failure to sign is a very serious breach of the School Code of Behaviour. Students must take responsibility for signing in at all times. Before 11am break a text is sent to the parents of each absent pupil. Same-day-texting is therefore a key component of our efforts to monitor and improve attendance.

Signing Out and In: A sign-out book is used where students have to leave the school due to illness, for appointments or other reasons. Permission to sign out can only be given by a Year Head, the Deputy Principal or Principal where a note is provided. Parents or guardians may be contacted before students are allowed home. Where such students return to school on the same day, this is also recorded in the sign-out book.

Notes: Notes for absences and medical certificates are kept in the student’s file. Notices of suspension are also kept in the student’s file.

The Deputy Principal works with the Home School Liaison Teacher, Year Heads, teachers and Office Staff to ensure the accuracy of the school register and the recording of attendance and absences.

In Pipers Hill College the monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of every teacher in the school. Each teacher is provided with a register of his/her classes with an obligation to record attendance at the beginning of each class session. Where class registration uncovers unauthorised absence from class by a student who is present in the school that day but has absented themselves for one class or more, this should be reported to the school office immediately and the Year Head subsequently.

Students who have been absent must bring in a note signed by parent or guardian on return to school.

Christmas and summer reports contain the aggregate number of absences for each student.

TUSLA: In relation to Education Welfare Officers, schools are obliged to give “all such assistance as may reasonably be required by an Education Welfare Officer in the performance of his/her functions”.

Section 21(4) of the Education Welfare Act 2000 obliges the Principal of a school to inform the EWO by notice in writing where:

- A student is suspended for a period of not less than six days.
- The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent exceeds 20.
- A student’s name is removed from the register.
- A student, in the opinion of the Principal, is not attending regularly.
- When a student misses 6 days unexplained the HSCL teacher will make contact with the home. At 10 days a letter from the Principal is sent home.

In Pipers Hill College when a student misses 20 days or more in the school year the matter is referred to the local EWO. As a matter of course the EWO will have regular meetings with the HSCL teacher and Principal to follow-up on student with poor attendance records and in particular those who missed 20 days or more. TUSLA receives quarterly reports from the school with details of those students who have missed more than 20 days. The absences are categorised under various headings such as illness, urgent family reasons and so on.

At the end of the school year the school must submit a report to the EWO.

HSE: In extreme cases it may be necessary to refer the matter to the HSE where there are suspicions of collusion between parent and child not to attend school.

Factors leading to poor attendance.

Behavioural issues leading to sanctions, suspensions and exclusions can be a major contributory factor to poor attendance. Where this emerges as an issue it will be dealt with through the Care Team.

Family reasons may also be a factor and this again will be dealt with through the Care Team structure.

A poor history of attendance in primary school will usually be flagged during our transfer programme with the local feeder schools and through the H.S.C.L structure. Students and

parents will be encouraged to view 2nd level in Pipers Hill College as a new start and such students will be monitored very closely.

Strategies to promote student participation and good attendance:

Good attendance is achieved when students feel happy, secure and part of the school community. We aim to achieve this in the following ways:

Relevant curriculum

Suitable teaching methodologies

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

Pastoral Care

Care Team structure

Schools completion activities

Reward and prizes for good attendance

Positive reinforcement at Award Ceremonies both academic and endeavour.

School Attendance Contract

Date of Meeting: _____

Student Name: _____ **D.O.B:** _____

Year Group & Class: _____

Year Head: _____

REASONS FOR ATTENDANCE DIFFICULTIES:

Student's explanation for attendance difficulties: _____

Parent's view of attendance difficulties: _____

School staff input regarding attendance difficulties: _____

AGREEMENT:

Student agrees to the following to address the above attendance concerns: _____

Parent agrees to the following to address the above attendance concerns: _____

School staff agrees to the following to support the attendance improvement of the student:

Signature of Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Parent: _____ **Date:** _____

Acceptance

I accept the Pipers Hill College Policy Statement on Attendance Policy.

Signed: _____ **(Parent/Guardian) Date:** _____

Signed: _____ **(Student) Date:** _____

By signing, school staff has tried all efforts to obtain signature of contract from the student.

Signature of School Designee: _____ Date: _____

Contract is NOT signed by student and/or parent due to the following reason:
