

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Rationale

The Board of Management, Principal and Teachers wish to:

- Meet the legal obligations as laid down under the Education Welfare Act
- Inform parents of the code of practice used in Mercy College for recording absences/lates and of the requirements of the Education Act.
- Provide for welfare of students entrusted to their care.

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for students' progress in school. The school day begins at 8.45 am when all students attend either School Assembly or a meeting with the class Year Head. Class begins at 9.00 am. At the beginning of first class the morning roll is taken. Absenteeism, lateness and irregularities in relation to uniform are noted and reports are sent to the office where attendance records are then entered on the computer. If a student has been recorded as absent and arrives in school at a later stage she/he must report to the office with a note stating the reason for the lateness, sign the late book so as to have his/her record amended. Failure to do so will mean that the student will remain recorded as absent. Regular lateness may be regarded as absence.

An explanation, including the reason, for absence and lateness is expected and is also a legal requirement (The Education Welfare Act 2000) on the student's return/arrival to school.

Ready notes are printed at the back of the Students' Journal and these should be used, one for each absence. Failure to present such documentation may result in detention of a student at lunch-time.

- Regular school attendance is essential for all students. Students must be present for school Assembly or Year Head meetings at 8.45 a.m. Latecomers must sign the "Late Book" before being admitted to class. Persistent latecomers may be detained (during school hours).
- If a student is absent from school he/she must provide a note (on the appropriate form at the back of the school journal) on the day he/she returns to school.
- If a student has a dental/medical appointment, permission to leave school must be sought from the Principal or Deputy Principal. The Signing Out/ Signing In book must be signed in secretary's office before leaving school and on return to school.

Education Welfare Act 2000

This Act provides for the establishment of the National Education Welfare Board, with wide powers in respect of schools and attendance at schools and for the appointment of Education Welfare Officers. The school Board of Management, Principal and other teachers are required to give all such assistance as may be reasonably required by an Educational Welfare Officer.

The Act requires that parents notify the school, not later than three days after the child's last attendance, of the reasons for the child's absence from school and if a child is absent due to illness and the nature of the illness. The school is required to record these reasons.

The Act provides for the keeping of records on school attendance.

- The Principal is obliged to keep attendance registers which state the reasons for the absence of any child.
- The school is required to make an annual report to the Board on its attendance record.

- The Principal shall notify the Education Welfare Officer when a child had been suspended for not less than six days, or is generally not attending school regularly, or has been absent for not less than twenty days.
- The school shall cooperate with the Education Welfare Officers in exercise of their right to inspect the school register and school attendance records.

Strategies used to encourage good attendance

In addition to the above

- Parents are informed of irregular attendance, continued absence or lack of punctuality.
- Year Heads are informed and provided with attendance records every month.
- Attendance statistics are provided to parents on school reports.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The aim of a uniform dress code in school is to eliminate competition amongst students and create an environment where students do not feel inferior or pressurised. When attending or representing the school students are required to be tidy, well groomed, hygienic in person and wear correct uniform at all times, including the period of the State Examinations. Mercy College has an agreed school uniform which following consultation with parents, students and staff was decided by the Board of Management, as follows:

- Navy **uniform pants** for boys and **navy uniform pin-striped/plain pants** for girls.
- Plain navy **jumper with school crest**
- Plain **blue cotton shirt/blouse with collar (not a polo shirt)**
- **Plain white, blue or navy T-shirts only (not sports jerseys)**
- Black/navy/white **footwear**
- A good quality, shower proof, fleece lined, reversible navy **jacket with school crest**. This is the only jacket that students will be allowed wear in the classroom.
- **The uniform is available at various outlets including Stauntons in Loughrea.**

Correct uniform must be worn at all times. Alternative **jumpers, jackets** and **hoodies** may not be substituted for the regular school jumper. **Non-uniform** jackets, jumpers etc may be worn when outside or when moving between buildings but may not be worn inside the door of the classroom i.e. **must be removed before entry.**

Please note that there is a **generous annual grant** available to eligible families for the purchase of uniforms. To avoid presenting in school 'out of uniform' it is recommended that a spare pants be purchased, one which the student will grow into before the end of the year.

NB Jeans are not part of the school uniform and are not allowed.

Students may not be required to wear their uniform on certain occasions, such as non-uniform days. However, Mercy College is a mixed school with an age range of 11 – 19 years (approx) catering for **all** students in the community. Students **must dress respectfully** on these occasions. Clothes bearing **obscene/offensive messages or images are not allowed.**

Teachers, Year Heads and Senior Management will monitor compliance with Uniform Policy. Any student who attends school wearing incorrect uniform must:

- **Apologise** to the class teachers
- **Sign the Uniform Book** in the Deputy Principal's office

The Uniform Book shall be checked regularly by Year Heads and management, and offenders will be cautioned at the weekly Year Head/Group meeting. Compliance with Uniform Policy will be used as criteria for end of year awards. Class Awards will only be given to students who conform to School Policy. Lack of co-operation may exclude students from being considered eligible.

Parents/Guardians of students wearing incorrect uniform:

- Will be notified
- May be asked to call to the school to explain the non-compliance.

Please note that such students may **not be selected to represent the school in out of class activities** such as sport/concerts/debates/outings.

JEWELLERY/MAKE UP

The aim of a uniform dress code in a school is to eliminate competition amongst students and create an environment where people do not feel inferior or pressurised. Therefore, the wearing of make up to school is not acceptable and visible jewellery is confined to small stud earrings. Students will be asked to remove offending jewellery and make up. Wearing large earrings and 'piercings' while in school, is a Health and Safety hazard and particularly so when involved in PE and Games. Jewellery for facial and body piercings is not allowed. Any student wearing facial jewellery will be asked to remove it or remain at home until it can be removed. Students will not be allowed participate in school activities if in breach of this code. Parents/guardians who enrol students are expected to support this policy.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students take full responsibility for their own property. At the end of each term all unidentified or unclaimed property left lying around or abandoned in the school is collected, put on display and if not claimed it may then be given to charity. Students are advised to ensure that:

- All personal property is clearly identified
- No valuable items are put in lockers
- Large sums of money for tours etc. are handed to the Principal or teacher in charge before class begins
- No property is left overnight in the school. This applies especially to sports gear and jackets.

N.B. Missing property may be reported to the Year Head or games teacher.