

# ST NESSAN'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

(Pobal Choláiste Neasáin Naofa)



## School Attendance Policy

January 2008

# **ST NESSAN'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## **SCHOOL ATTEDANCE POLICY**

### **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY/MISSION STATEMENT**

St Nessian's Community College is a non-denominational, co-educational school. It is comprehensive in its intake and in its curricular provision.

St Nessian's Community College is committed to maintaining an educational environment where the growth, learning and development (Fás, Foghlaim, Forbairt – school motto) of our students can flourish.

To further the aims of St Nessian's as expressed in the mission statement:

- The pursuit of high standards in all endeavours will be expected and every effort will be directed towards the attainment of such standards.
- The school will do its utmost within its resources to provide appropriate opportunities so that every individual has the opportunity to gain maximum benefit from their experience in St Nessian's.
- The rights, responsibilities and dignity of all individuals within the school community will be respected. However, the Common Good takes precedence where there is a conflict between individuals.

### **RATIONALE**

The role of the school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. A stable learning environment, continuity and maximum exposure to educational opportunity are key elements in the fulfilment of this role. The prime objective of the attendance policy is therefore to maximise the attendance of each student so that educational potential can be fulfilled.

### **POLICY AIMS**

- To develop a system of recording attendance whereby all students attending are accounted for during the school day.
- To identify students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- To establish closer contacts between the school and the families of students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- To develop a system of rewarding students for good attendance at school.

## **DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

An Assistant Principal(s) has responsibility for the administrative aspects of student attendance.

Duties would include:

- Compilation of attendance registers at the beginning of the school year.
- Collection and filing of absence notes.
- Monitoring attendance, sending absence cards and informing relevant post-holders in relation to students with poor/irregular attendance.

The School Attendance Officer (Assistant Principal) has overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality. Specific duties include:

- Liaising with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Staff, Assistant Principals, Class Tutors, Administrative Staff, Community Gardai, Attendance Officer/Board appointed under the Education Welfare Act.
- Ensuring compliance with the terms of the Education Welfare Act.
- Establishment and implementation of systematic monitoring and follow-up of student attendance and punctuality.
- Application of sanctions in accordance with school policy for breaches of the Code of Behaviour in relation to attendance.
- In association with Parents, Pastoral Staff, Home School Liaison and outside agencies to work at addressing those factors which are within the school's control and could help to improve attendance.
- Keeping accurate records and files of all notes and correspondence.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- a) School assembly for the purposes of student registration, will take place at 9.00am and 1.05pm on each school day. Timetabled teachers will record the presence or absence of each student named in the register.
- b) Students are required to "swipe in" on entering the school building. This system, records the time of entry. Students who leave the school, before close of business, are required to "swipe out".
- c) Students who become ill during the course of the school day must obtain a note in their journal from their class teacher and present themselves at the school office. Such students will be allowed home when (a) they have contact through the school office with a parent/guardian who has agreed to come and collect the student, (b) they have signed the 'Student Signing Out Book' in the school office and (c) they have informed their class teacher of having completed (a) and (b).
- d) Students attending games and/or other extra-curricular activities during the school day must have their names on a list, deposited by the teacher in charge of the activity, in the school office.
- e) A student who wishes to leave school for some other reason must present himself/herself to the appropriate Year Head at a designated time with a signed letter from his/her parents/guardian requesting permission to leave. The Year Head will issue the student with a Release Note, which will be presented to the class teacher prior to leaving the school.

- f) At the first assembly on returning to school after an absence, a student must present to the teacher taking the register, a letter signed by his/her parent/guardian stating the students name and address, base class, date(s) of absence and reasons for same.
- g) The class with the best attendance and punctuality vis-à-vis their peers are to be rewarded periodically with a class prize. The class will be identified by the School Attendance Officer.
- h) The School Attendance Officer will inform the Education Welfare Officer when
  - i. the number of absences by a student exceeds 20 days in the same academic year.
  - ii. a student is suspended from the school for more than 3 consecutive days.
  - iii. a student's name, for whatever reason, is removed from the school register.
  - iv. a student is, without sufficient reason, not attending school regularly.
- i) The School Attendance Officer will inform the Board of Management, not later than 6 weeks after the end of the school year, of the levels of attendance at the school during the school year just ended.

## **SANCTIONS**

The parent/guardians of those students who absent themselves from class and/or the school grounds without the prior knowledge or permission of the Principal will receive a letter informing them of the breach of school rules. Subsequent absences without permission will result in a 3-day suspension from school.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be subject to periodic review and will be amended in accordance with changing demands or circumstances.