Attendance Policy of ETSS Wicklow

School Address: The Glebe, Wicklow Town

Roll number: 68345R

School Patrons: Educate Together

Rationale:

The rationale underpinning this policy is as follows:

- Compliance with the *Education Welfare Act 2000*
- Compliance with the guidelines set out by The Child & Family Agency TUSLA
- The evidence from research that high levels of attendance have a positive impact on teaching and learning
- The important objective of our school to help develop a sense of personal responsibility in our students by encouraging regular and punctual attendance
- The evidence that absenteeism, lateness and unwarranted withdrawal of students from a school day or period of time can lead to underachievement at school
- The knowledge that good systems for recording attendance and punctuality provide information about supports needed to assist students struggling with these life skills

Aims:

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To accurately record students' attendance
- To detect and correct patterns of poor attendance as early as possible
- To promote a positive learning environment in the school

Monitoring Attendance:

As a school we will be monitoring attendance closely and encouraging a high attendance rate among the student body.

1. **_Roll Calls_** – *the school uses the data gathering application named* VsWare *to take the roll call at tutor time in the morning and at the start of every class during the school day. Tutors and class teachers are responsible for ensuring rolls are taken accurately.*

2. **_Lates_** – Students who are late in the mornings (arrive after the tutor roll call) must go to the office to sign in. The secretary, Student Support Co-Ordinator, Deputy-Principal and/or Principal, will add details of 'lates' to the VsWare system.

3. **_Absences_** – Absences from school need to be communicated with the office and a note explaining the absence brought into the class tutor on return to school. The School Administrator will add details of these absences to the VsWare system, where appropriate. If the absence is certified by a medical professional, a copy of the certificate needs to be provided to the school.

4. **_Repeated Absences_** **–** If a student has missed 20 days or more in the school year or if the school is concerned that a student is missing too much school, the school will notify the statutory **Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency** in accordance with the **Education Welfare Act 2000** and the guidelines set out by the **Child and Family Agency TUSLA.**

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. *Principal, Deputy Principal, Student Support Coordinators and Administration*

   (a) Ensure adequate systems are in place to record student attendances and absences.
   (b) Monitor attendance records regularly.
   (c) Amend database to reflect latecomers to school.
   (d) Maintain a record of the dates and times when students are withdrawn during the school day and their return to school.
   (e) Ensure that when a student leaves school early, parental/guardian permission has been given.
   (f) Once the attendance threshold is reached or a duty of care issues arises, report such cases to TUSLA as required by the Education Welfare Act 2000.
   (g) Communicate with parents/guardians and students of the procedures for notification of absences and/or withdrawal of students from school.
   (h) Remind parents/guardians and students of the importance of regular attendance.
   (i) Monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from the school or from classes.
   (j) Contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences are suspected.
   (k) Complete TUSLA returns and cross check a percentage of rolls for quality control purposes.
   (l) Liaise with teachers in identifying at-risk students.
   (m) Implement strategies for supporting at risk students.
   (n) Develop positive strategies for encouraging full attendance.
   (o) Contact parents/guardians when students reach 15 days absent
   (p) Analyse attendance data each term in order to assess the success levels of present strategies;

2.	*Class Tutor*

- **(a)** Conduct roll call during tutor time and enter data into the school database.
- **(b)** Record notations by parents/guardian and assign reasons for absences.
- **(c)** Phone parents/guardians following three lates within a term
- **(d)** Create a welcoming atmosphere for returning students, particularly after a prolonged absence.
- **(e)** Praise students in the group with full/good attendance and set targets for class group to reach.
- **(f)** Check student journals for 'Absence slips' signed by parent/guardians from students who have been absent and sign that they have been seen.
- **(g)** Communicate with parents/guardians regarding non-production of absence slip.
- **(h)** Keep record of matters relating to attendance/absences of students.
- **(i)** Note trends in absence records of individual students.

3.	*Teacher*

- **(a)** Take roll call for each class and enter data into school database.
- **(b)** Create a warm welcoming atmosphere in class for returning students.
- **(c)** Contact the relevant Student Support Co-Ordinator if a student presents as unwell in class and is seeking permission to leave school early.
- **(d)** Discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher/Student meetings.
- **(e)** Communicate with students the importance of regular attendance and ensure understanding of the links between academic achievement and regular attendance.
- **(f)** Make comments on report forms regarding positive and negative attendance levels.

4.	*Parents/Guardians*

- **(a)** Ensure regular attendance of students and avoid unwarranted absences.
- **(b)** Keep all holidays outside school term.
- **(c)** Notify the School in writing of reasons for all student absences – such notice should be provided prior to the absence if possible or otherwise immediately afterwards.
- **(d)** Provide the school with reliable contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the school may contact parents/guardians or other authorised parties if necessary.
- **(e)** Adhere to procedures set out in this policy for the withdrawal of students from school during the school day.
- **(f)** **Acknowledge** and **reply** to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.

Attendance Records:

- **(a)** Attendance will be recorded during all classes by subject teachers.
- **(b)** Letters from parents/guardians regarding student absences will be given by students to the class tutor.
- **(c)** Parents/guardians are required to give advance notice in writing of all foreseen absences and giving reasons for the absences.
- **(d)** Where an absence is unforeseen, the parent/guardian is required to notify the school by telephone on the morning of absence. This must be confirmed by a written letter stating the reason and duration of the absence and whether it is certified or

uncertified. If an absence is longer than three days, a medical certificate may be required.

(e) Where a student is to be withdrawn from the school during the school day, the student must present a written and/or VS Ware request from the parent/guardian to the class teacher. This notice must be presented to the office when the student leaves the school.

(f) Parents/Guardians give written or oral communication when a student is being withdrawn from the school during the school day

(g) Failure to comply with any of the above procedures for leaving the school during school hours is considered a serious breach of the school's code of conduct.

School Strategies to Promote Attendance:

ETSS Wicklow aims to provide a safe welcoming positive learning environment for our students.

- Positively rewards students with full attendance and improved attendance in tutor classes.
- Encourages full attendance by students through a range of strategies (reminders, assemblies, personal targets, eligibility for certain extra-curricular activities etc…) at all times during the year.
- Support services for parents/guardians including Home School Community Liaison, the School Completion Programme and the Educational Welfare Officer.

Communication

Effective modes of communication via email/text/letter/phone call home are some of the options for contact between teachers and parents/guardians. Regular contact takes place on issues such as homework, curriculum problems, etc… to ensure such issues do not contribute to the non-attendance of pupils. Class tutors will contact parents/guardians following three lates in any term. Student Support Co-Ordinators will contact parents/guardians once 5, 10, 15 and 20 school absence days has been reached by a student.

Early intervention

New parents/guardians to the school are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality at ETSS Wicklow:

Information

(a) Parents/Guardians are discouraged from taking holidays during school time.

(b) Parents/Guardians will be informed of the responsibilities of the School and their responsibilities with regard to the Education Act.

(c) Students with poor attendance will be identified.

Success Criteria

(a) Clear outline of responsibilities of all school partners.

(b) An effective record of attendance and trends which is monitored and analysed by school management and the staff attendance committee.

(c) Clear lines of communication between parents/guardians and school on the issue of attendance.

Review Procedures

This policy will be reviewed every second year basis by all school partners and amended as necessary to further develop this policy for the future.

The board of management carried out this review on Thursday 22nd February 2024.

The next planned review: 2025-2026