



Coláiste Feirste Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. Coláiste Feirste will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Coláiste Feirste.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal at Coláiste Feirste has overall responsibility for school attendance; The Pastoral Care team are responsible for the day to day implementation of the school's attendance policy. The Pastoral team will also set attendance targets for each year group as well as monitor and review the targets throughout the year.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Form Teachers regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm

Role of Parent

Parents have a legal duty¹ to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

1 Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries Order 1986

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9:00 am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the Form Teacher or Year Head to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Coláiste Feirste must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your Form Teacher when you return.

Absence Procedures

A parent/guardian should provide the Form Teacher with a note explaining the pupil's absence on return to school. A written signed and dated note is necessary for school records. A note is provided at the rear of the pupil diary for this purpose.

Family holidays during Term Time

Coláiste Feirste discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

In Coláiste Feirste the Form Teacher has primary responsibility for the management of attendance in his/her Form Class. The Form Teacher will contact the parent in the first instance if there are concerns regarding attendance.

In the case where there is no improvement or that the pupil's attendance is failing to meet the target set by the Pastoral Team, then the Form Teacher will refer the case to the Year Head and the parent will be asked to attend a meeting in school. The Year Head will then work with the Form Teacher, parent and pupil until there is an improvement.

In the case where a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, then the Year Head will refer the case to the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority (EA) through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

Year Heads at Coláiste Feirste will meet with the designated EWO on a regular basis to discuss attendance concerns

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate, by the Year Head. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.