

SHIMNA INTEGRATED COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Full attendance at college is all important. Lost days and lost opportunities can never be made up to you.

Full attendance is essential:

- (a) for the student to cover the full programme of study and achieve her/his full potential in every aspect of school life;
- (b) because a student's attendance record will appear on the student's record when s/he leaves the college. An attendance total will be read by any admissions officer, and by any prospective employer, when a student applies for a university or college place or for a job. Fairly or unfairly, a bad attendance record is likely to count against a person in any application;
- (c) because Shimna Integrated College, like every other school, will be judged by its attendance record. Attendance is one of the measures the Department of Education Inspectorate considers when judging the performance of a school;
- (d) because parents and guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive full-time education.

At Shimna Integrated College, the first bell rings at 8.55am and the attendance register is taken at the beginning of each day at 9.00am by the form teachers. A student arriving late must report to the office to be marked in.

At the beginning of each class, attendance is marked on SIMS, which includes an electronic note explaining any absence. Unexplained absence from class is referred to the office and to the form teacher.

Attendance figures will be analysed each month by Roberta, and acted upon as appropriate, liaising with the vice principal and the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents/guardians are asked to:

- * ensure their child's full attendance;
- * inform the college as soon as possible between 8.30am and 9.00am when a student will be absent;
- * send a note of explanation for absence with the student on the first day back after an absence, to include the student's name, the dates of absence and the reasons for absence;

- * contact the college in any circumstance where they feel that their child's absence should be authorised by the school, eg where the child is to represent her/his county or country;
- * never send to college a child, who is ill. Schools do not have qualified medical help on the staff, nor is it suitable for a child to spend more than an hour in our medical room. If a student becomes ill during the school day, and, after an hour, feels unable to return to class, the college will inform a parent/guardian, or other nominated contact, so that the student can be cared for at home;
- * make medical, dental and other appointments outside college hours whenever possible;
- * respect the dates of the school terms, and not to request absence for holidays. We feel we must emphasise this message, as, under assessment procedures, work completed throughout the school year contributes to a student's grade or level. While teachers will make every effort to work with parents in making up work and assessment opportunities for any student absent unavoidably through illness, it is not feasible to do this for students absent on holiday during the school term.

Form teachers, with administrative assistance, are asked to:

- * record attendance on the C2k system and its absence report forms;
- * contact a student's parent/guardian on the first day of absence, unless a phone call or note has already been received;
- * follow up all absences, and ensure that a note of explanation is received;
- * retain all notes in the student file held in the college office;
- * ensure that each student knows who to turn to if there is a problem, which is making her/him reluctant to come to school;
- * encourage their form class to take pride in its attendance record, while taking care not to single out a student who is absent unavoidably for health or family reasons;
- * respond to analysis of attendance and absence patterns in the form by raising any apparent problem with the vice principal, through discussion with the student and by contact with the parent/guardian;
- * liaise with the EWO, through the vice-principal, and work with her/him in a preventative approach to problem attendance patterns.

Students are asked to:

- * maintain a personal record of attendance in the appropriate section of the homework diary;
- * include attendance in the self-evaluation and target-setting exercises, which form part of the pastoral care programme;
- * contribute their views on issues relating to attendance through their form reps at meetings with the principal;
- * work with their parents, teachers and the office staff to ensure that attendance is correctly registered and that absence notes are brought in promptly.

The college as a whole will:

- * promote full attendance by developing a happy and purposeful working atmosphere, in which each student feels in control of her/his learning;
- * ensure that each student feels s/he has a voice and a say in how the college is run;
- * ensure that parents/guardians are involved in issues of attendance, and that they understand how important attendance is to the student, to the staff and to the college;
- * work with other agencies such as the EWO, social services and the college medical officer to provide support before absence becomes a problem;
- * record attendance using the C2K system and its absence report forms, and analyse the attendance and absence patterns which emerge;
- * include attendance as one factor in target setting exercises undertaken in pastoral care;
- * celebrate good attendance as one of the range of achievements valued by the college;
- * present certificates to mark the achievement of good attendance

The Board of Governors agrees with, and fully supports the contents and implementation of this policy