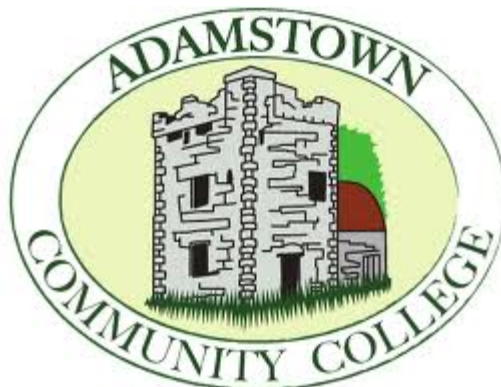


Attendance Policy



Adamstown Community College

General Statement:

Adamstown Community College is committed to ensuring that all students benefit fully from the education provided by regular and punctual attendance at school. The Education Welfare Act of 2000 places a statutory responsibility on schools and parents to provide for the optimum attendance of every student. Under this act, Education Welfare Boards have been established to oversee school attendance nationwide and each school has been assigned an Education Welfare Officer whose duty it is to liaise with the school in relation to any attendance problems which may emerge.

The College Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer where any of the following occur:

- A student is suspended from school for a period of more than 5 days
- The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is more than twenty
- A student's name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register by the Principal
- A student is, in the opinion of the Principal of the school in which he/she is registered, not attending school regularly.

A positive approach to attendance and punctuality:

Good attendance in Adamstown Community College is fostered by encouraging each student to take responsibility for his/her own learning and to achieve full potential through regular presence in class.

Throughout the academic year, students are made aware of the incremental nature of learning and the implications for them of irregular attendance and continual lateness.

The above is also promoted through the Pastoral Care programme whereby the Year Head and/or Tutor meet with students for whom attendance or punctuality has been identified as an issue. Reports to Parents/Guardians include an account of attendance for the period in question.

Responsibilities and Roles:

Students:

1. In Adamstown Community College students must register their attendance before 8:35am by using the electronic swipe card provided. This is recorded on the school administration system, VSware. Parents can access VSware to see their child's attendance.
2. If absent the student must present, on the first day of their return, a parental note in their journal explaining the reason for their non attendance.
3. All students must attend scheduled classes every day and on time unless there is a valid reason for not doing so. If a student is not attending class they should have a note in their journal from a member of staff.
4. If leaving school, students must present a parental note to be signed by their Tutor/Year Head. Students must sign out using the attendance book at the school office, giving the time of departure and the reason for leaving.
5. In cases of absence students must catch up on the work missed at the earliest opportunity.
6. If a student feels unwell during the day, they must first get a note from their Tutor/Year Head before going to the office to ask the secretary to call home. Students will only be allowed to leave if given permission by a parent/guardian

Parent/Guardian:

1. In Adamstown Community College parents must make whatever arrangements necessary to ensure that their son/daughter attends school on time every day during the school year.
2. Parents/guardians should not withdraw students from school during the academic year, unless for extraordinary reasons. Where possible parents should ensure that medical or other appointments and family holidays take place outside school hours/academic year.
3. A note explaining reasons for absence must be supplied to the school through the class tutor. A medical certificate should also be presented where applicable. A space is provided for these notes at the front of the school journal.
4. Parents/guardians should monitor punctuality and attendance to school by checking the journal/VShare for late attendance and absence.

5. Parents/guardians should also respond to a school text that will be sent out when a late or absence occurs.

Class teacher:

1. The class teacher monitors and records the punctuality and attendance of all students through the VSware facility at the beginning of every lesson.
2. If the problem of lateness or poor attendance is persistent, the teacher implements appropriate sanctions
3. If there is no resolution to the lateness/attendance the teacher refers the matter onto the Tutor.

School Management:

1. Adamstown Community College values good punctuality and attendance.
2. Management has established a pastoral care programme which monitors attendance and punctuality which includes an intervention with parents and the student, should the occasion arise.
3. The school has an electronic system (VSware) for recording attendance. Parents can access their son's/daughter's VSware profile at any time.
4. Year Heads communicate with parents if students record ten days absence from school, outlining the consequences of allowing further absence.
5. This is followed by further communication to parents once a student reaches twenty days absent from school. This communication informs them that these absences will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer and TUSLA.
6. School management has put in place a sanction system for students who consistently breach punctuality rules with regard to attending school on time or classes during the school day.

The Role of the Tutor:

In Adamstown Community College the caring atmosphere nurtured by the tutor aims to encourage full attendance and participation in all areas of school life.

The tutor is responsible for checking the official roll call each day during morning break registration on VSware. During this time the tutor will follow up on absence notes from parents that have been recorded in the student's journal. The tutor will amend the computerised registration system so that records of attendance and punctuality are maintained accurately.

The tutor is supported in their role by the Year Head and should seek their support if they have concerns about a student's attendance and punctuality. The tutor should inform the Year Head if a pattern of lateness or absence occurs. Once a regular pattern becomes apparent, the Tutor or Year Head will contact home.

The Role of the Year Head:

The Year Head supported by a team of tutors is responsible for monitoring patterns of attendance and punctuality across their year group. The Year Head will liaise with parents where a pattern of absence or lateness to school emerges. In some instances the Year Head may feel that referral to a member of the Guidance Team is an appropriate strategy in improving attendance.

The Year Head supports the tutors in ensuring that all absences are explained by a note from parents. In a minority of cases the tutor may have difficulty in accessing a note from home. If appropriate the Year Head will intervene to ensure that these absences are explained.

The Year Head will notify parents with a written letter when a student has in the region of 10 absences, a second letter will be issued when a student reaches 20 days and this report will be sent to the National Educational Welfare Board. All events are recorded on VSware.

The school is sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of its students and is aware that some students need encouragement to attend school regularly. The Year Head plays a role in supporting students overcome difficulties relating to attendance. This can be done by liaising with relevant staff, working closely with parents, initiating a referral to the Guidance team and regularly reviewing strategies that have been put in place.

The Role of the Principal /Deputy Principal:

The Principal and Deputy Principal are responsible for the effective implementation of the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy. The Principal and Deputy Principal are responsible for making the appropriate attendance returns to the Education Welfare Officer and TUSLA.

The Role of Administrative Staff:

1. The office staff check the VSware system daily to identify what students are absent.
2. They send a daily text to the parents of students who have not swiped in or are absent.
3. Administrative staff receive calls from parents for absences and update the system accordingly.
4. Students leaving the school during the school day must sign out in the School Office, where the time and reason for departure is noted.

Strategies to Promote Student Participation:

The school recognises that good attendance is achieved when students feel happy, secure and part of the school community. It is through encouraging the full participation of all students in all aspects of school life that Adamstown Community College hopes to maximise attendance patterns. We aim to do this in the following ways:

- **Curriculum**

Adamstown Community College offers a wide range of subjects at both Junior and Senior cycle. A comprehensive Transition Year programme and LCA programme is also offered. Students have the support of two Career Guidance Counsellors in the school and resource teaching where appropriate.

- **Methodologies**

In teaching the curriculum ACC teachers use a variety of methodologies, which encourage and facilitate the participation of all students. The school management provides and supports professional development of teachers by facilitating their attendance at in-service sessions and by offering staff training days.

- **Extra-Curricular**

The school's programme of co-curricular and extracurricular activities caters for a wide range of interests in order to maximize student participation. Activities range from sport, drama, tours, language exchanges, charity awareness/events, yearbook and field trips.

- **Pastoral Care:**

The school's pastoral care allows for all students to participate in the life of the school in a way that promotes their personal development and educational enlightenment. Attendance and punctuality are greatly affected by a student's housing situation. Staff will be mindful to discover in any particular case of poor punctuality or attendance whether homelessness is a factor and if so consider student centered solutions to mitigate against this circumstance.

- **Class Tutor /Year Head:**

The positive atmosphere nurtured by the class tutor also encourages full participation in school life. The tutor, supported by the Year Head, plays a role in instilling a good class spirit to promote friendship and learning. This structure also provides a medium through which parents can contact and meet with teachers.

The Year Team is also responsible for ensuring that standards of attendance and punctuality are a priority within the Year Group. This can be done through Year team meetings, assemblies, certificates, end of year prize giving etc.

- **Care Meetings:**

Care meetings are put in place to support any student who is experiencing difficulty which may impact on their school life. Students on this list are supported by the Guidance Department who inform staff of the names of these students.

- **LCA:**

Teachers, tutors and the Year Head work closely with students to ensure that the Department of Education and Skills requirement of 90% attendance is met, as failure to reach this will affect the students' results.

- **TY/Work Experience:**

Two periods of assessment are put in place of which attendance and punctuality are key components of the credits awarded to all subject areas. Students are expected to apply the same expectations of attendance and punctuality for work experience as they do for school.

- **Parents' Participation:**

Parents participation is encouraged through various opening evenings and meetings e.g. parent/teacher meetings, Parent's Association meetings, etc which are held during the school year.

- **Reward system:**

One hundred percent attendance is rewarded through a merit and certification initiative at the end of each term.