



Inver College School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Attendance and Punctuality Policy is to promote regular school attendance and punctuality for all students of Inver College. In line with national attendance campaigns and the focus on tackling chronic absenteeism, the policy aims to support students to engage fully with their education. Inver College recognises that consistent attendance is essential for student wellbeing, inclusion, and positive educational outcomes, and is committed to early intervention and supportive approaches where attendance concerns arise.

Relationship to the School's Mission Statement

This Attendance and Punctuality Policy is rooted in Inver College's mission statement, which places **the student at the heart of everything that we do**. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to ensuring that all students can fully access learning, develop positive relationships, and experience a sense of belonging within the school community. By promoting consistent attendance through supportive, inclusive, and proactive measures, this policy seeks to remove barriers to engagement, uphold the wellbeing of students, and ensure that every learner is given the opportunity to reach their full potential in line with the school's core values.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of this Attendance and Punctuality Policy are to promote regular school attendance and punctuality among all students and to support each student to engage fully with learning. The policy aims to create a positive, inclusive, and supportive school environment where attendance is valued as a key factor in students' academic progress, wellbeing, and personal development. Inver College is committed to early identification of attendance concerns, timely intervention, and collaborative approaches involving students, parents/guardians, and staff in order to address barriers to attendance and reduce levels of chronic absenteeism. Through fair, consistent, and

supportive procedures, the policy seeks to foster personal responsibility, strengthen school-home partnerships, and ensure that all students are given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Policies linked to the Attendance and Punctuality Policy

This Attendance and Punctuality Policy supports and operates in conjunction with a number of key school policies that together promote student wellbeing, engagement, inclusion, and positive behaviour across the school community.

1. ICT Acceptable Use Policy
2. Bí Céineálta Policy
3. School Code of Behaviour
4. Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
5. Extra-Curricular Policy
6. Homework Policy
7. Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
8. Social Media Policy
9. Substance Abuse Policy
10. Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The promotion of regular attendance and punctuality is a **shared responsibility** involving all members of the Inver College school community. A positive culture of attendance is fostered through collaboration, early intervention, and supportive relationships between home and school.

Students are expected to attend school regularly and punctually, engage fully in learning, and follow all school procedures relating to attendance and punctuality. Students are encouraged to take increasing personal responsibility for their attendance as they progress through the school.

Parents/Guardians play a vital role in supporting attendance by ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time, notifying the school of absences or lateness in a timely manner, and engaging proactively with the school where attendance concerns arise.

Teaching Staff promote the importance of attendance and punctuality through positive relationships, consistent expectations, and high-quality teaching and learning. Staff record attendance accurately, monitor patterns of absence or lateness, and report concerns in line with agreed school procedures.

Year Heads, Senior Leadership and School Management oversee the implementation of this policy, monitor attendance data, coordinate early intervention and support, and liaise with parents/guardians and external agencies where necessary. They ensure that responses are fair, proportionate, and in line with legislation and national guidance.

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) plays a key role in supporting attendance by strengthening links between home, school, and community. The HSCL works collaboratively with families experiencing attendance difficulties, supports positive engagement with school, and assists in removing barriers to regular attendance through a supportive and restorative approach.

Other members of the school community, including ancillary and support staff, contribute to a positive school climate by promoting respectful behaviour, observing attendance-related concerns where relevant, and sharing information appropriately with designated staff.

Expectations for Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless prevented by illness or another valid reason.
- All appointments required by a student should be scheduled where possible outside of school hours as per our Code of Behaviour.
- Arrive on time at the start of the school day.
- Attend all scheduled classes during the school day.
- Follow all school procedures relating to attendance and punctuality.

Persistent lateness, partial attendance, or irregular school attendance are recognised as **indicators that a student may be experiencing barriers to full engagement with school**. Such patterns can result in a loss of learning time and reduced educational outcomes and therefore require **early identification, supportive intervention, and collaborative responses** between school, home, and relevant support services.

Notification of a Student's Absence

In accordance with **Tusla Education Support Services (TESS) guidelines** and the requirements of the **Code of Behaviour**, parents and guardians have a clear responsibility to notify the school when a student is absent or will arrive late. Timely and accurate notification of absences is essential to ensure student safety and welfare; to maintain accurate attendance records, and to support early identification of attendance concerns, as required under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Inform the school as early as possible, and where feasible before the start of the school day, if their child will be absent
- Notify the school if a student will be arriving late
- Provide a reason for the absence or lateness, indicating whether the absence is certified or uncertified

In line with Tusla guidance, notification should normally be made through the school's approved attendance recording system, as agreed by the school and communicated to parents/guardians. Where parents/guardians experience difficulty accessing the online system, the school should be contacted without delay to ensure the absence is recorded appropriately.

Parents/guardians may also notify the school by:

- Telephone: **042 966 1282**
- Email: **info@invercollege.ie**
- Direct contact with the **school office**

Where notification is made through these channels, the school will ensure that the absence or lateness is accurately recorded on the school attendance system, in line with Tusla requirements for recording and monitoring attendance.

Attendance Communication and Monitoring

The school's online attendance management system / school app is the primary method used by the school to communicate attendance information to parents and guardians.

Parents and guardians are expected to check the attendance management system regularly, particularly where they wish to confirm that their child has arrived in school.

If parents or guardians have concerns about their child's attendance on a given day, they should check the system after 9:30 a.m. to confirm that their child has been marked present.

If a parent or guardian believes that their child is absent from school without permission or may be truant, they should contact the school immediately so that the matter can be addressed.

While the school may communicate with parents regarding unexplained absences where possible, the attendance management system is considered the primary source of attendance information for parents and guardians.

Parents and guardians therefore share responsibility for monitoring their child's attendance through the system and notifying the school of any concerns

Attendance Health and Tiered Monitoring System¹

The school monitors attendance using a tiered attendance health system. This system helps the school identify patterns of attendance early and provide support where necessary.

Attendance health is an important indicator of a student's ability to fully participate in their education. High levels of attendance are strongly linked to better academic progress, engagement with school life, and student wellbeing.

The school categorises attendance into three tiers:

Tier 1 – Excellent Attendance

Students with 95% attendance or higher are considered Tier 1 students. This is the expected standard for all students and represents excellent attendance. Students in this tier attend school regularly and benefit fully from their education.

Tier 2 – At Risk of Attendance Decline

Students with attendance between 90% and 95% fall into Tier 2. This level of attendance may begin to impact a student's learning. The school will monitor attendance more closely and may intervene early to support improvement.

Tier 3 – Serious Attendance Concern

Students with attendance below 90% fall into Tier 3. This level of absence significantly impacts learning and engagement with school. Students in this tier may require targeted interventions and increased monitoring by school staff.

¹ TESS 5 YEAR Plan for School Attendance 2023-2028

The tiered system allows the school to:

- Identify students whose attendance is beginning to decline
- Provide early support and intervention
- Monitor persistent absence or lateness
- Work with parents/guardians to improve attendance

Students who move into Tier 2 or Tier 3 may be referred to Year Heads, school management, the HSCL coordinator, or attendance monitoring systems for support and intervention.

(This Attendance and Punctuality Policy is informed by the **Tusla Education Support Services (TESS) Five-Year Plan for School Attendance 2023–2028**, which promotes a **Multi-Dimensional Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MD-MTSS)** to support schools in monitoring attendance data, identifying patterns of need, and implementing timely, appropriate interventions. Inver College is engaging with this model as part of a **pilot approach** to tiered attendance monitoring and support)

Understanding Attendance Percentages

Attendance percentages can have a significant impact on a student's learning and progress in school.

For example:

- 95% attendance means approximately 9 days missed per school year.
- 90% attendance means approximately 18 days missed per school year.
- 85% attendance means approximately 27 days missed per school year.

Missing this amount of school can significantly affect a student's academic progress, engagement with learning, and connection to school life. For this reason the school closely monitors attendance health using the tiered attendance system outlined in this policy.

Recording of Attendance and Lateness

Late Arrival Procedure

Where a student arrives late:

1. The student must report to the school office before going to class.
2. The lateness will be recorded.

3. Patterns of lateness may be monitored by the Year Head or school management.
4. Repeated lateness may result in sanctions such as detention or referral to school management.

Attendance and punctuality are recorded daily through the school's attendance system.

Repeated lateness may result in disciplinary action in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Very Late Arrival / Partial Attendance

Arriving significantly late during the school day is treated as a serious attendance concern.

Where a student arrives significantly late (for example after 10:00 a.m.) without prior communication from a parent or guardian:

1. The student must report immediately to the school office.
2. The student may not be permitted to attend normal classes that day.
3. The student may be placed in supervised study while the school contacts the parent or guardian.
4. The incident will be recorded as partial attendance.

Where this occurs, the student may be required to return home and may only resume normal school attendance when accompanied by a parent or guardian to meet with school management.

Escalation for Persistent Lateness or Partial Attendance

Where patterns of lateness or partial attendance develop, the school will follow a staged response:

Stage 1 – Monitoring

- Attendance and lateness are recorded and monitored.
- The student may receive reminders regarding punctuality expectations.

Stage 2 – Initial Intervention

- Parents or guardians are informed of the pattern of lateness.
- The student may receive detention or other sanctions.

Stage 3 – Parental Meeting

- Parents or guardians may be required to attend a meeting with school management.
- Strategies to improve attendance and punctuality will be agreed.

Stage 4 – Formal Intervention

- Continued lateness or partial attendance may result in formal written communication with parents.
- The matter may be referred to Tusla Educational Welfare Services where required.

Stage 5 – Attendance Intervention Plan

Continued non-engagement with attendance supports may result in referral to the Principal and the Board of Management and may lead to a **formal attendance intervention plan**, parental meeting, or referral to the **Educational Welfare Service (Tusla)** where appropriate.

An attendance intervention plan will be drawn up in consultation with the EWO, HSCL, Principal/Deputy Principal. This is a plan to aid the student with reintegration and the monitoring of school attendance.

A Return to School meeting with parents or guardians will normally take place following any attendance intervention plan. This meeting will be attended by the student, parents, HSCL and a Principal/Deputy Principal.

Stage 6 – Board of Management Review

Where attendance concerns persist despite all reasonable interventions, the matter may be referred to the Board of Management in line with the school's disciplinary procedures.

Home School Community Liaison

The **Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)** plays a central role in the **early and supportive escalation** of cases involving persistent lateness, partial attendance, or emerging patterns of irregular attendance. In line with a preventative, tiered approach to attendance monitoring, the HSCL works collaboratively with school leadership, Year Heads, and support teams to strengthen engagement between **home, school, and community** where attendance concerns are identified.

As attendance patterns move beyond initial monitoring and early in-school interventions, the HSCL supports families by facilitating open communication, building trust, and

identifying barriers that may be impacting regular attendance. Through **solution-focused and restorative engagement**, including home visits where appropriate, the HSCL helps families to access supports, understand school procedures, and re-establish positive routines that promote consistent attendance.

The HSCL also contributes to the school's **data-informed escalation process** by working alongside school staff to ensure that patterns of persistent lateness or partial attendance are addressed at the appropriate tier of support. Where necessary, the HSCL supports coordinated engagement with wider TESS strands and external agencies, ensuring that escalation remains **supportive, proportionate, and focused on re-engagement**, rather than punitive measures.

Failure to Notify the School of Absence

Failure to notify the school of a student's absence or lateness is a matter of concern, as it impacts the school's ability to ensure student safety and welfare and to maintain accurate attendance records, as required under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Timely parental notification enables the school to identify patterns of irregular attendance at an early stage and to respond in a supportive and proportionate manner. Where parents or guardians experience difficulty in complying with attendance notification procedures, the school is committed to working collaboratively with families to provide guidance, support, and alternative communication arrangements, in line with Tusla Education Support Services (TESS) guidance.

Students Leaving School Due to Illness

Where a student feels unwell during the school day, the following procedure will apply:

1. The student must inform the class teacher they have at that time of their illness
2. The student will be referred to a designated staff member for review.
3. If it is considered appropriate for the student to go home, the school will contact the parent or guardian.
4. The student will normally return to class and remain supervised until the parent or guardian arrives to collect them, unless they are too unwell.
5. Students may only leave the school premises when collected by a parent/guardian or with permission from school management.

Students should not contact parents themselves to arrange collection and may not leave school without permission.

Students are advised that acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour and all school policies signed at enrolment persist throughout the student's time in Inver College regardless of their age.

Communication with parents of students who are over 18 remains in place for school personnel in an emergency or situation where the student's vital interests need to be protected or where the wellbeing of a student is being supported.

Student Meetings During Class Time

From time to time, it may be necessary for school personnel to meet with a student during the school day to discuss matters relating to attendance, punctuality, behaviour, wellbeing, or other pastoral concerns.

Authorised staff members (including members of the Senior Management Team, Year Heads, Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, Attendance Officers, or other designated staff) may request that a student attend a meeting. This will normally take place outside of class time but from time to time may occur during class time.

Students may therefore be temporarily withdrawn from class in order to address attendance concerns, behavioural matters, or wellbeing issues.

These meetings form part of the school's normal pastoral care, behaviour management, and attendance monitoring procedures.

Prior parental contact is not required for such meetings to take place. However, outcomes of meetings may subsequently be communicated to parents or guardians where appropriate.

The school will ensure that such meetings are conducted in a reasonable, respectful, and proportionate manner while minimising disruption to learning.

Return to School Explanations

Where a student has been absent from school and an explanation has not been provided, the school will seek clarification on the student's return to school.

Parents/guardians are expected to provide an explanation for the absence through the school's approved attendance system or by contacting the school office, so that the absence can be accurately be recorded and monitored in line with safeguarding and statutory requirement

Statutory Reporting to Tusla

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is required to notify Tusla Educational Welfare Services where a student has been absent for 20 days or more during the school year. The school may also engage with Tusla where there are ongoing attendance concerns.

Commitment to Support

The school recognises that difficulties with attendance may arise for a variety of reasons. The school is committed to working constructively with students and families to support regular attendance and punctuality.

Disciplinary measures are used only where necessary and after reasonable efforts have been made to engage with families and address the issue.

Communication of this Policy

In line with national developments, Inver College engages with **ANSEO**, a Tusla Education Support Services (TESS) attendance support framework, which assists schools in analysing attendance data and responding to patterns of absenteeism through a tiered, evidence-informed approach. This framework supports early identification of attendance concerns and the implementation of appropriate, timely interventions to promote regular school attendance and student engagement.

This Attendance and Punctuality Policy forms part of the school's Code of Behaviour and is approved by the Board of Management.

The policy will be made available to parents/guardians and students through the school's normal communication channels, which may include:

- the school website
- the school app or student management system
- direct communication from the school to parents/guardians

Parents/guardians are expected to familiarise themselves with the contents of the school's policies and procedures. If any would like this policy translated into another language, please contact the school and we will be happy to facilitate this.

By enrolling a student in the school, parents/guardians acknowledge that they have access to the school's policies and that the school will implement these policies in the management of attendance, behaviour, and student welfare.

Acceptance of a place in Inver College signals that the school's Code of Behaviour and all linked policies have been accepted. That includes the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

Extracurricular Activities, Attendance and Catching Up on Work

The school strongly encourages students to participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including sporting, cultural, and school representation activities. These activities contribute positively to students' wellbeing, personal development, and engagement with school life.

However, regular attendance and engagement with class learning must remain the priority.

Where students miss class time due to participation in extracurricular activities or other school events, they remain responsible for catching up on any work missed.

Students are expected to follow the following order of procedures

- check any materials or assignments posted on Microsoft Teams or other digital learning platforms,
- make reasonable efforts to obtain notes or information from classmates,
- speak with their subject teacher where clarification is required.

Where work has not been posted online, the onus is on the student to obtain the missed work, including contacting another student in the class to find out what work was covered.

Teachers are not expected to re-teach lessons that were missed due to absence or extracurricular participation, although reasonable guidance may be provided where appropriate.

Students must make every effort to complete missed work within a reasonable timeframe.

Where a student's attendance, punctuality, or ability to keep up with classwork begins to decline, the school may review the student's participation in extracurricular activities.

In such circumstances, the school may recommend to parents/guardians that a student temporarily withdraw from some or all extracurricular activities in order to prioritise

attendance and academic progress. This may also apply where a student is involved in multiple extracurricular activities that are affecting their ability to maintain satisfactory attendance or complete schoolwork.

Student Withdrawal / Removal from School Register

In accordance with the provisions of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, the school is required to maintain an accurate register of all students enrolled. Where a student has been absent from school for a prolonged period and the school has made reasonable and documented efforts to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) using the contact details provided (including telephone calls, text messages, emails, or written correspondence) without receiving a response, the school may determine that the student is no longer attending.

In some cases, students may have left the country, transferred to another educational setting, entered employment, or otherwise ceased attending school without formally notifying the school. Where the school has made multiple attempts to establish contact and clarification regarding the student's status has not been received, the matter may be referred to the **Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)** in line with statutory reporting requirements.

The school will continue its efforts to contact the parent/guardian and will maintain records of all attempts made. All decisions relating to the removal of a student from the register will be taken with due regard to the student's welfare, educational rights, and the school's statutory obligations.

In cases where a student has not reached the minimum school-leaving age, they cannot be removed from the school register unless a confirmed transfer to another recognised school or educational programme has been verified and TESS has been appropriately notified.

Where the school has made multiple, reasonable attempts to contact parents/guardians, and the student has reached the minimum school-leaving age as defined above, and there is evidence that the student is no longer attending the school, the school may update the student's enrolment status on the Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) in accordance with Department of Education procedures. This action will only be taken following consultation with TESS and completion of all required documentation.

1. The student has reached the minimum school-leaving age, which is 16 years of age or completion of three years of post-primary education, whichever occurs later.

2. The school has established that the student has transferred to another recognised educational setting, or

A student may only be considered as having left school when:

Where these efforts do not result in successful contact or clarification, the matter will be referred to the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) in line with statutory reporting obligations.

Attendance, Supervision and Leaving Class

Students are required to attend all timetabled classes and remain under the supervision of the school for the full duration of the school day. Students may not leave class, leave the school building, or move to unsupervised areas without the permission of school management or a designated member of staff.

In order to maintain appropriate supervision of students, ensure the orderly operation of the school, and protect the integrity of the school timetable, students are not permitted to leave timetabled classes for personal activities during the school day.

The school respects the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the school community. However, the school is not in a position to facilitate requests to leave class or scheduled school activities for personal or religious observance during instructional time.

Students who wish to engage in **personal or religious observance** may do so during **non-instructional times**, such as before school, during break times, or at lunchtime, provided that such observance does not interfere with the school's supervision, safety, or organisational arrangements. Any such arrangements will be **discussed and agreed in advance with the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s)**, in order to ensure that the needs of the student are accommodated in a respectful and practical manner within the normal operation of the school.

Any absence from class during the school day must follow the school's established attendance procedures and may only occur with the permission of school management and with appropriate communication from a parent or guardian.

Failure to attend scheduled classes without permission will be treated as a breach of the school's attendance and supervision rules and will be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

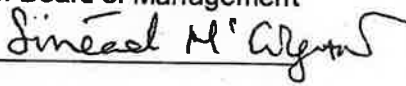
Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Management to ensure that it remains in line with Department of Education guidance, Tusla requirements, and the operational needs of the school.

This policy was ratified by the Inver College Board of Management on 26.05.26

Signed 

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed 

Principal