



Tarbert Comprehensive School

Self-Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan: Attendance

In the last year, we have looked at ATTENDANCE and its impact on teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

Student absenteeism is consistently lower than the National average.

At Leaving Cert level a significantly greater number of students sit HL papers than is the average nationally.

The average points achieved by LC students in Tarbert Comprehensive are consistently higher than the National Average.

At Junior Cycle more students sit papers at HL than the National Average.

The percentage of students achieving As at HL is also higher than the National Average.

The school caters well for the needs of its students, curricular, extra-curricular and pastoral, and there is a high level of engagement by students and teachers in all areas of school life, impacting positively on the atmosphere in the school.

School Inspections have praised '*the high level of collegiality and morale*' in the school (WSE 2013) and noted that '*Collaboration between teachers is of a high standard.*' (SEN Inspection 2016)

Communication between the school and home is regular and takes many forms. The relationship between the school and home is open and supportive. Parents can access the website, the app and newsletter for information. Texts are sent from the school to notify parents of events and of absences. Regular information evenings and parent teacher meetings occur, and teachers communicate via the journal and phone calls.

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better:

During the period from September to March 2017, student attendance/absenteeism and its impact on teaching and learning was evaluated and monitored using our VSWare system, through teacher and management observation and discussion, and by way of a survey distributed to students, parents and teachers. Conclusions were

also drawn from comparisons with national trends and with other schools similar to our own.

This is what we are now going to work on:

Steps will be taken to ensure that attendance procedures are communicated clearly and regularly.

We plan to make explicit the importance of good attendance for academic achievement and encourage students to reflect on the links between attendance and attainment.

As individual classroom teachers we will communicate clearly our expectations regarding students' presence our classes, and the manner and timeframe for work to be caught up following absence.

We aim to address the issue of students choosing to study at home and to reinforce the importance of all subjects and their role in the formation of the individual.

Teachers will ensure accuracy in taking class rolls, and communicate information on patterns of absenteeism to parents.

The TARGETS of our School Improvement Plan for Attendance 2017-2020 are:

1. To create better awareness among students of the link between good attendance and positive outcomes in exams, in order that they take greater responsibility for their own progress, and reduce the number of full and partial 'avoidable' absences in the year
2. To engage the school community in a whole school strategy aimed at fostering a positive attitude to attendance and commitment and engagement in all areas of the school curriculum
3. To increase the level and means of communication regarding the importance of regular attendance in order to ensure that all members of the school community are aware of their responsibilities in this regard

This is what you can do to help:

Take responsibility for your child's attendance.

Provide feedback on the policy and strategy through the Parents Association.

Be mindful that Extra Curricular Activities (ECA) must be balanced with overall school progress.

Keep updated on the importance of attendance at every level of school contact e.g. Newsletters, text messaging, website, app, information meetings etc.

Monitor VSWare to keep updated on attendance, not just exam results.

Attend Parent Teacher (PT) meetings to discuss attendance.

Avoid taking family holidays during term time.

Comply with school absence procedures.

Encourage your child to value the entire school curriculum not just the academic as it fosters their holistic growth and development.

Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.

School time and holidays

The Department requires all post-primary schools to have **167 school days** each year, and a **28-hour school week**. This year we had 167 school days, from 26th August 2016 to 2nd June 2017. Our school week is 28 hours.

The Department sets out a **standardised school year and school holidays**. This year we took all our school holidays within the permitted time.

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**. This year we had 5 parent/teacher meetings and 3 staff meetings, all in line with the Department's regulations.

Looking after the children in our school

The Department requires schools to follow the *Child Protection Procedures* it has set down. Our board of management has agreed in writing to do this.

All teachers know about the *Procedures* and we have told all parents about them and how we follow them.

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Mr. Richard Prendiville** and our Deputy DLP is **Ms. Leila Moloney**

Enrolment and attendance

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.

We have an admissions policy and it is published.

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. Please refer to details in the current School Improvement Plan, in the Student journal, on VSWare and on our website for details on how we encourage and plan to improve attendance.

Positive behaviour for a happy school

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour, and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this.

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour.

We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school.