



**CÉIM EILE,
TEMPLEMORE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION**

ATTENDANCE POLICY





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Attendance Policy

Céim Eile Attendance Policy

This Attendance Policy has been drawn up in accordance with the key provisions from the Education Act (1998) and the subsequent Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 which relate to school attendance. Céim Eile is part of Tipperary Education and Training Board's education service. It also has a College Board of Management and together with the Tipperary Education and Training Board, has final responsibility for the management of Céim Eile under the terms of the Vocational Education Act 1930 and all subsequent amending legislation. This policy aims to give clear understanding of the criteria and process required which is in accordance with our equality policy, the NEWB Guidelines and the Operator Guidelines for the Youthreach Programme, April 2015.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to monitoring, encouraging and promoting regular centre attendance. It is also to ensure that learner's attendance is recorded for transparency and health and safety, and to comply with our signing-in and signing-out policy.

Policy

Educational studies show that those who do not succeed in education have a significantly greater prospect of living in poverty and generally have much poorer life chances. Céim Eile recognises that regular attendance is important for the learner's own progress. In cases where attendance is unsatisfactory, Céim Eile will seek to identify the causes of the poor attendance and to provide whatever support and encouragement it can to overcome the problem. Céim Eile also recognises that some absences are unavoidable, and will endeavour to be understanding in such cases. Where regular unauthorised absences occur, and where adequate warnings have been given and disregarded, the college reserves the right to refuse to allow the learner to continue to attend the centre, subject to the right to appeal.

In all cases, it is the responsibility of learners to make up for work missed during absences. Learners should also be aware that in certain circumstances, work missed due to absence may be subject to time constraints.

Learners must attend the centre regularly because:

- ✓ A good education gives a learner the best possible start in life.
- ✓ Employers want people who are reliable. Learners who think it is acceptable to miss out on centre days may also think it is acceptable to stay off work.
- ✓ Learners who attend the centre regularly are less likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour and/or become involved in crime.



Application of Policy

Learners are expected to attend the centre 209 days per year. They must sign-in and sign-out of the centre on a daily basis. This applies to all learners on the programme, regardless of their age. See Sign-in and Sign-out policy for more details.

There are different types of absences. These are as follows:

1. Authorised absence
2. Unauthorised absence
3. Other absences

1. Authorised absence

These are absences that are unavoidable and include the following:

- ✓ Jury service
- ✓ Certified sick leave (limited to 7 days) **See Appendix 1 – Sick leave**
 - In cases of certified sick leave, a doctor's certificate should be provided to the centre not later than three days after the period of absence began. Otherwise, the absence will be deemed unauthorised.
- ✓ Uncertified Sick leave (limited to 3 days) **See Appendix 1 – Sick leave**
 - Explanatory letters from learners must be given (Template from coordinator – **See appendix 4 – Uncertified sick leave form**).
- ✓ Absence on compassionate grounds, e.g., death or illness of an immediate family member, i.e. parent/sibling. **See Appendix 2 - Bereavement leave**
 - Leave on compassionate grounds or other exceptional family circumstances must be negotiated and agreed with the coordinator.

*In all cases of absences, the coordinator or the centre should be notified as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances, alternative attendance arrangements can be agreed by the coordinator, learner and parent/guardian in the best interest of the learner.

2. Unauthorised absence

These are absences that are unapproved and/or are avoidable, and include the following:

- ✓ Not making contact with the coordinator or the centre when out of centre
- ✓ Not signing-in or signing-out when present in the centre
 - If you do not sign-in or sign-out you will not receive your allowance for that day.



- ✓ Not turning up for class
 - If you are present in the college but do not attend class you will not receive your allowance for that time missed. Each class tutor will also take a class roll. If you are not in class the coordinator will be notified and the necessary deductions will be made from your allowance.

- ✓ Late arrival without notification or permission
 - Learners can only sign-in from the time they arrived in the centre. Arrivals after 10:00am will need to sign in in the office. Allowance is only payable for hours of attendance, sick certs or other certified absences.
 - Learners arriving late to class without permission is not acceptable and again tutors will notify the coordinator and the necessary deductions will be made from your allowance.

- ✓ Leaving the centre without permission
 - The Coordinator must be notified if a learner decides to leave the centre early regardless of their age. Learners should not leave the centre without permission or absent themselves from any activity during centre hours. A learner who leaves the Centre without permission will automatically be suspended pending a meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s) regardless of age.

- ✓ Not turning up to the centre without good reason and failing to follow the policy for reporting in sick

*In all cases there is no obligation to pay allowance, although uncertified sick pay may be due but only in the event of the learner making contact with the centre within three days. In addition, the learner faces the risk of disciplinary action. **See Appendix 3 – Disciplinary action**

3. Other absences

- ✓ Maternity Leave
 - Learners are not entitled to a training allowance while on maternity leave. A place at the centre will be kept should learners wish to return to the programme following maternity leave.

- ✓ Appointment days
 - Learners who require to attend appointments to (i) meet with social workers, other health or social care personnel or members of the Garda Síochána or (ii) attend court, should notify the centre coordinator. Letters with proof of such appointments must be filed and available for inspection.



- ✓ Leaving the Centre at lunchtime
 - Learners are allowed to go to the shop at morning break but must return straight to canteen. Lunch begins at 1.30pm and finishes at 2.10pm. Learners can leave the centre during this time but must return to the canteen before 2:05pm. Learners under 18 years of age need parental consent to leave the centre at any time. At enrolment parents/guardians will give/not give permission for learners to leave the centre at lunch time. See Signing-in and Signing-out policy for more details.

Course Attendance

LCA

- ✓ An attendance record of 90% is expected and required from all learners. This attendance is mandatory for the Leaving Certificate Applied and is subject to inspection from the Department of Education.
- ✓ Examinations missed due to absence
 - All examinations are scheduled by the Department of Education and Skills and unless alternative arrangements can be made with the Department, no exceptions can be made.
- ✓ Key Assignments / Project or Task deadlines missed due to absence
 - In cases of unauthorised absences, no extension of deadlines will be granted. In cases of authorised absences, the centre may exercise its discretion to agree to an extension of deadlines should this be possible within the rules for the certification being sought.

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- ✓ Continuous Assessment or portfolio elements missed due to absence
 - In cases of unauthorised absences, no extension of deadlines will be granted. In cases of authorised absences, the centre may exercise its discretion to agree to an extension of deadlines should this be possible within the rules for the certification being sought.

Classwork missed due to absence

It is the policy of the college that work missed by a learner during absence will not be covered again when the learner returns, as this is detrimental to the progress of learners who were in attendance. Consequently, it is the learner's responsibility to identify work and class notes missed during absence, and to catch up on the work outside of class time. In cases of authorised absences, Céim Eile staff will try to provide reasonable assistance in this regard.



Work experience

In cases of absence while on work experience, both the centre and the workplace should be notified early in the morning of the first day's absence.

Encouraging attendance

Céim Eile monitors the attendance of learners in line with the ninety percent requirements of the Leaving Certificate Applied. In cases where learners are absent, the coordinator, assistant coordinator, or designated member of staff, will meet with the learner to identify the reasons, and will find ways of dealing with any problem that may occur. If the problem is one where the centre can provide assistance, such assistance will be made available (examples might be learning support, counselling, careers guidance, online learning, distance learning, etc).

To promote and encourage attendance, Céim Eile has introduced an attendance award which is given annually at the Tipperary Youthreach Awards Ceremony.

Strategies for promoting good college attendance

1. Raising Awareness of Attendance

- ✓ The centre recognises the importance of raising awareness about the importance of attendance.
- ✓ The Coordinator addresses the importance of good attendance at the initial meeting with learners and parents/guardians.
- ✓ Attendance is discussed at Board of Management, Staff and parent-teacher meetings.
- ✓ Class tutors provide positive affirmation of attendance continuously.
- ✓ Parents receive an update of their child's attendance each term
- ✓ Record of attendance are provided on all learner reports.

2. Involving Parents in Setting High Expectations for Attendance

The centre recognises that parental involvement is of paramount importance to learner's well-being and success in college generally and in particular their attendance at college. Parental involvement is fostered by;

- ✓ Regular communication between parents and the centre
- ✓ Parental involvement in college life e.g. attendance at graduations, college events, parent-coordinator and parent-teacher meetings.
- ✓ Opportunities for parents to carry out annual evaluations of the centre



In addition to this;

- ✓ The calendar for the coming year is published annually in June and a copy is given to all parents with the end of year reports at re-admission interview. Parents are encouraged to plan holidays and family events around centre closures.
- ✓ The centre highlights to parents how missed days can have a negative effect on the learner's achievement and thus cause stress.

3. Providing Support Programmes to Enhance Attendance

The centre endeavours to provide support programmes to promote attendance;

- ✓ Enrichment and sporting activities are provided. These activities are both co-curricular and extra-curricular.
- ✓ Learners are given opportunities to participate in decision making and to assume leadership roles in the centre e.g. the student Council, the Green Colleges Committee and NALA.
- ✓ Individual and group programmes to support learners in their social, emotional and personal development are delivered, where appropriate e.g. during summer programmes

4. Building Linkages with other Colleges, Youth Organisations and Local Organisations

The centre fosters links with other schools in the area, youth organisations and any local organisations whose work could encourage participation and attendance;

- ✓ Working with Youthwork Ireland on out of centre programmes and activities
- ✓ The centre promotes community links through talks, open days, celebrations and active retirement groups.

Disclosure

Attendance records will be made available to:

- ✓ Individual learners, (at various times throughout the year i.e. progress meetings, parent/teacher/coordinator meetings, interim and end of year reports, etc.)
- ✓ the Department of Education and Skills
- ✓ Tipperary ETB and
- ✓ Other statutory authorities with the right to access to such information on receipt of a valid request for such information.
- ✓ others in appropriate cases and with the written request of the learner/former learner concerned (unless he/she is a minor where, his/her parents/guardians consent is required)



Implementation

Overall responsibility for policy implementation rests with the Coordinator or other person for the time being in charge of the centre. All members, staff and learners have an obligation to adhere to, and facilitate the implementation of this policy. The Coordinator shall inform all staff of the policy and their role in the implementation and monitoring of the policy. To assist the centre in implementing this policy, the learner and parents/guardians are informed of the policy and asked to sign an agreement form on entry to the programme. All new and prospective staff and employees shall be given a copy of the policy on recruitment/induction by the person in charge.

Policy Infringements

Infringements by learners will be dealt with by the Coordinator. This is a step by step process. See **Appendix 3 – Disciplinary action**. If a learner is asked to leave the programme he/she will be given the opportunity to re-apply for a place on the programme for the next academic year and will be placed on a waiting list for interview.

Appeals Procedure

Youthreach is a vocational education & training programme & participants are paid a training allowance. Section 29 of the Education Act does not apply to centres providing the programme. However, the appeal procedures as set out by Tipperary ETB are as follows;

- ✓ A learner who has reached the age of 18, or the parent/guardian/National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a learner under 18 years, may appeal a decision using the following process:
 1. Firstly, the appeal should be made in writing within ten working days of receiving written notice. This appeal should be made to;
Chairperson of the Board of Management
Ceim Eile Youthreach Centre,
Templemore College of Further Education,
Templemore.
Co. Tipperary.
 - This letter of appeal should include:
 - 1.1 Grounds for the appeal
 - 1.2 Documentation to support the case
 - The Adult Education Officer will respond to the appeal within ten working days.



2. If the appellant remains unhappy with the outcome at ETB level, he/she may appeal to the AEO of Tipperary ETB. This appeal should be made in writing within ten working days of receiving written notice from the Board of Management. This appeal should be made to;
 - Adult Education Officer of Tipperary ETB
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Martyrs Road
 - Nenagh
 - Co. Tipperary
- The Adult Education Officer will respond to the appeal within ten working days.

Note* in all cases, the final responsibility rests with the CE of the ETB.



Appendices

Appendix 1 – Sick Leave

✓ **Illness/Absence**

We do not expect you to attend the centre if you are ill. However, if you do feel unwell you must contact or have your parent/guardian contact the centre before 10.00am.

✓ **Sick leave**

Learners are required to submit a certificate from their doctor in respect of all illness-related absences of 3 or more days, unless the Coordinator is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, details of which he will record.

✓ **Certified Sick Leave**

Learners are entitled to claim up to seven full days certified sick leave during each academic year (only 2 days in any one week). This may be claimed in respect of full or half days. For any certified absences in excess of this a deduction of training allowance will be made.

✓ **Uncertified Sick leave**

Learners are entitled to claim up to 3 full day's uncertified sick leave during each academic year. This may be claimed in respect of full or half days. Explanatory letters from learners must be given (Template from coordinator – **See appendix 4 – Uncertified sick leave form**). For any illness related absence in excess of this a deduction of training allowance should be made.

Appendix 2 - Bereavement leave

- ✓ Learners are entitled to up to 3 days bereavement leave following the death of an immediate relative. One day may be taken for funerals of other relatives/friends at the discretion of the coordinator. Further leave may also be granted at the discretion of the coordinator where this is deemed necessary. Records will be kept of all such absences.



Appendix 3 - Disciplinary action

- ✓ Learners absent for 20 (unauthorised) days consecutively or sporadically in any one year will be deemed to have left Céim Eile or may have their place terminated. However, in this process, the following steps will be put in place:
 - After 5 days, the learner will receive a phone call (or text) reminding them that they have been absent for 5 days.
 - Payment should cease from the first day of an unapproved absence.
 - Those who return after 5 days must meet with the Coordinator before returning to class.
 - After 10 days, the learner will receive a written (or text) notice explaining that they have been absent for 10 days and warning them of the consequences and that they might lose their place on the programme. **See Appendix 5 – Letter to learner on absence**
 - Those who return after 10 days must meet with the Coordinator before returning to class.
 - Those who have missed 10 consecutive (unapproved) days may have their place forfeited, as per Youthreach Operator Guidelines 2015.
 - After 15 days, the learner will receive a written (or text) notice that they have been absent for 15 days, and will be asked to meet with the coordinator or his designate with a view to seeking ways to address the issue.
 - Where a learner has missed a significant amount of time (i.e. 20 + days), authorised or unauthorised, which will result him/her being unable to participate effectively on the course or if the learner exceeds the ten percent absenteeism then they have deemed themselves ineligible to complete the Leaving Certificate Applied, then, they will receive a written letter stating that they cannot continue on the programme. If s/he wishes to appeal this decision, they may do so by following the procedures as set out under the ‘Appeals Procedure’

*Please note: If the unapproved absences continue into a second week, in the absence of contact from the participant or arrangements being made to return to the course with assurance of future attendance, the participant will be informed that his/her place has been forfeited. The Department of Social Protection will be notified accordingly if the participant is aged 18 and over. In all cases the learner can re-apply for a place on the programme for the next academic year and will be placed on a waiting list for interview.



Appendix 4 - Uncertified sick leave form

CÉIM EILE, TEMPLEMORE COLLEGE

Uncertified Sick leave

As per the Youthreach Guidelines, 2015: Learners are entitled to claim up to 3 full day's uncertified sick leave during each academic year. This may be claimed in respect of full or half days. Explanatory letters from learners must be filed and available for inspection. For any illness related absence in excess of this (after 3 days) a commensurate deduction of training allowance should be made.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS AND TICK BOXES AS NECESSARY

Form with fields for Surname, Forename(s), Date, Parents/Guardian Name(s), Phone, and Signature.

Reason(s) for absence: [Blank lines for text entry]

Date of absence: [Date boxes] to: [Date boxes]

FOR OFFICIAL USE section containing Received by, Date, Total uncertified Sick leave, Signed By, Trainee, Co-ordinator, Grounds for acceptance/rejection, and final Signed by/Date fields.



Appendix 5 – Letter to learner on absence



Address:.....

Co. Tipperary

Date:.....

RE:.....

Dear,

Further to the phone call made on about missing 3 unauthorised college days, I would like to now inform you that you have missed 10 unauthorised college days. As per our attendance policy, I am required to inform you. I would like to request that you make contact with the centre or I, the coordinator as soon as is practicable. If this unauthorised absence continues without consultation or explanation, your place on the Céim Eile programme may be taken from you given to someone else. As per the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and the National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB) Guidelines, along with the Youthreach Guidelines, 2015, I am requested to contact the Department of Social Protection and National Education and Welfare Board if you have an unauthorised absence of 20 or more days in any one academic year.

I hope to hear from you soon in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

David Young

Youthreach Coordinator

Céim Eile, Templemore College

0876535207



Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

Submitted to Staff:	
Submitted to Board of Management:	
Submitted to ETB Board:	