



St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

# St. Peter Apostle Junior National School



## Attendance Policy

### Policy Summary Details

---

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
<b>Written/Reviewed:</b>	December 2023
<b>Date Ratified by BOM:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> of December 2023



# St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

## Introduction

St. Peter Apostle Junior School is a junior primary school catering for classes ranging from Junior Infants to Second class. We also have four Early Start classes, as well as three classes for children with autism spectrum order. Our staff is made up of 15 mainstream class teachers who endeavour to welcome all children, regardless of their medical and/or special educational needs. We pride ourselves on seeking to ensure that all children in our care have equality of opportunity to derive positive outcomes from their educational experience. In doing so, we endeavour to create an inclusive learning environment that caters for the diverse needs of all different types of learners. As such, we strive to align our practice to the Department of Education's philosophical standpoint that "effective provision for pupils with special education needs is situated within an inclusive whole-school framework which emphasises effective teaching and learning for all..."

## 1. Vision and mission statement

We in St. Peter Apostle Junior school believe in the potential of each child. As a staff we seek to ensure that all children in our care have equality of opportunity to derive positive outcomes from their educational experience. In doing so, we endeavour to create a safe, happy, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, where the diverse needs of all different types of learners are catered for. It is envisioned that by providing an all-inclusive approach to education that the children in our school shall reach their academic potential whilst developing the confidence and courage to be fair, kind, moral, tolerant and respectful when acting in the world.

We strive to realise vision by seeking to:

- Craft a caring, supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment in which children's social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development is catered for,
- Develop children's interests, talents and hobbies by providing a wide range of learning experiences,
- Harness the collective talents of all staff to ensure that all children, irrespective of their medical status and/or special educational needs feel cherished and thrive in in dynamic educational settings,
- Provide tailored learning experiences for children who present with special educational needs (gifted or otherwise) by meeting children where they are at and building upon their strengths,
- Collaborate with colleagues and outside agencies to ensure focused and effective supports are in place to advance the social, emotional, and cognitive development of all the children in our care,
- Build strong and collaborative relationships with parents with a view to fine tuning and augmenting the supports that children receive in both the home and school,
- Promote a culture of inclusivity by ensuring that children across the school settings integrate as appropriate during tuition time, yard breaks and school events,



# St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

- Create an environment where all have freedom and opportunity to reach their full potential.

## 2. Rationale for an attendance policy

It is a stipulation of the National Educational Welfare Board, (EWB, now part of Túsla), that at the latest, all children should start primary school the September before they turn six. It is expected therefore that all children from age six should be in school every day. We in St. Peter Apostle Junior school encourage all children (irrespective of age) enrolled in our to attend school every day. As a school we recognise and acquiesce to the EWB requirement that the names of children who are frequently absent (including those that are under six years of age) are reported to their the EWB.

### 2.1 The relationship between our Attendance policy and the school's Mission Statement

By setting out this policy, we endeavour to ensure that all children come to a school which is a happy, safe, and learning environment. Our attendance policy reflects and supports the overall aims of Mission statement by enabling us to:

- Create transparent and systematic approaches to the monitoring and reporting pupils' absenteeism
- Communicate these structures with the broader school community
- Safeguard (as much as possible) children from missing out on valuable educational experiences
- Safeguard (as much as possible) children from missing out on the social aspects of being in a school environment and thus, help them to nurture friendships and social connections with their peers
- Exercise compliancy with legislation, requiring school management report any child who misses 20 days to the EWB
- Make the school community aware that all absences are recorded and sent to the EWB three times per annum.
- In line with the Welfare Act (2000), share relevant information with relevant stakeholders (Education Welfare Board, parents) in a bid to secure the necessary resources and supports that may enhance the child's experiences in school
- Secure, to the best of our ability, positive outcomes for the child

## 3. Túsla and absenteeism

Túsla is the board responsible for ensuring that the well-being of all children in our school is being looked after. Absenteeism is one of the most common issues that the organisation deals with. The local officer is Fiona O'Shea. Schools are responsible for reporting absenteeism through a web site, [www.schoolreturns.ie](http://www.schoolreturns.ie). When a child misses 20 school days, Túsla may become involved in investigating the cause.

In recent times, due to services being cut, not all cases of children missing 20 days or more are investigated by Túsla. The school must now prove that they have put a number of steps in place before making a referral. Please see section 6 for more information.



# St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

## **4. Structures in Place**

### **4.1 Recording Attendance**

Every day in school, children's attendance should be recorded on our online roll book (Aladdin) by 10.30 am. This is an important document and, when transferred into the roll book, it can be used in legal cases. When a child is absent when the roll is called, he/she is marked absent. This roll call should take place around 10:00am but must be taken before 10:30am. Exceptions to this rule are outlined later in the policy.

When a child is absent, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the school to explain the absence. The explanation will be logged by your child's teacher on the Aladdin system. Where an explanation is not provided, the absenteeism will be marked as unexplained. Any sick certificates from your child's GP can be sent in. A copy will be made and kept in your child's file. These notes are stored in the child's file.

### **4.2 Reporting of attendance to EWB**

Every term, the school reports all absences to the EWB. In this report, every child's absence is recorded online with a reason. There are 6 criteria for absence in the report. Any absence, without a written note, will fall under the category "unexplained".

### **4.3 System for monitoring absenteeism with parents**

If a child is absent for 10 days or more, an automated text message is sent to the families of the child. After 15 days, a second text message is sent to families to inform them that they have missed 15 days. If a child has 20 or more unexplained absences, a text message is sent and an additional contact will be made with the parents.

It is our legal obligation to report any child missing 20 days or more to the EWB in the termly returns. If absenteeism persists a referral may be made to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

## **3. School Completion Programme and Home School Liaison Officer**

St. Peter Apostle JNS are part of the Collinstown Park School Programme (SCP) and have a comprehensive DEIS plan to enhance attendance in the school. We work closely with our SCP to monitor attendance issues with targeted children under the School Completion Programme. The school also has access to a Home School Liaison Officer (HSCL). The SCP will make contact with any families who fail to attend school as part of a structured plan to help the child come to school. The HSCL will also make contact with families on a regular basis. The HSCL will visit many families in order to establish links with the school and home. Both the SCP co-ordinator and HSCL have a supportive role rather than a judgemental role and both will have access to families' names, phone numbers and addresses for the purposes of their jobs.



# St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

## 4. How to explain your child's absenteeism

If your child is absent, please write a short note explaining the reasons for the absence. It is possible to contact the office and have a message sent to your child's teacher, however, we would encourage you to contact your child's teacher directly through email to explain the absenteeism. This way, you both will have a log that the absenteeism has been explained.

## 5. Punctuality

School starts at 8.50am in St. Peter Apostle JNS. We encourage all children to arrive on-time. Please note that punctuality is extremely important for your child's learning and setting up good practices for the future. When children are late for school, the time missed adds up quite quickly. For instance, if a child is 10 minutes late each day, it would be equivalent to a whole day missed over the course of a month in school.

Class teachers will monitor punctuality. If a child arrives at school after this time, the class teacher will record the number of minutes the child has missed. This information will be communicated to parents when the need arises.

### 5.1 Planned Lateness

If a child has a morning appointment, please let your child's teacher know in advance, and he/she can input the correct entry into our attendance records.

**5.2 Early Collections :** Lorraine will record these on aladdin and parents must collect from the front office

## 6. Lateness at the end of the school day

School ends at 1:30 pm for infants and 2:30 pm for other classes in St. Peter Apostle JNS. Being late to collect your child can cause undue stress for the child as well as inconvenience for the teacher. While teachers will in general act "in loco parentis", in unforeseen circumstances, continuing or excessive lateness may result in further action from the school. This may be in the form of contact with the gardaí or in some circumstances, Túsla.

## 7. Roles of different stakeholders

### 7.1 Role of the teacher

- Teachers should make themselves aware of the policy aims regarding the promotion of attendance
- Teachers should keep accurate rolls
- Teachers should record children who are late for school as detailed in the policy
- Teachers should keep written records of explanations when such are given
- Teachers should promote two-way communication through email
- Teachers should make personal connection with parents and take every opportunity to promote good attendance

### 7.2 Role of the attendance co-ordinator

- Keep accurate records of pupils' attendance
- To monitor child's attendance



## St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

- To liaise and communicate with the Education Welfare Board
- To submit the details of the children whose attendance exceeds 20 days to the EWO.
- To make informal contact with class teacher where there is a pattern of concern around a child's absences
- To liaise with the HSCL regarding families where there is continuous unexplained absenteeism
- Promote school attendance in the school

### 8. Strategies and measures proposed to foster good attendance

- Engagement with the School Attendance campaign 2023/24
- Following the guidelines on the appropriate use of the Attendance Campaign Support grant
- Set and review DEIS targets and actions for attendance
- Importance of full attendance is outlined as all reception meetings at the beginning of each school year
- Attendance weeks organised throughout the year by the HSCL
- Special prize at the graduation ceremony at the end of second class for children whose attendance has been superb throughout their time in St. Peter Apostle JNS.
- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- System for acknowledging/rewarding good or improved attendance
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Adapting the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- Prizes/certificates at end of year for children on no absences.
- Creation of a student council and the surprise drive initiative to boost attendance

### 9. Attendance -Reference point for comments in school reports

Excellent	0-3 days missed
Very good	4-9 days missed
Good	10-14 days missed
Fair	15-19 days missed
Poor	20+

**Ratified by Board of Management on**

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date:

Date: