



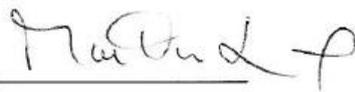
**St. Peter's College
Attendance, Punctuality and Participation Policy**

Our School crest known as the 'Trinity Knot', replicates a simple Celtic design representing for us the concept of continuity, permanence and our Gaelic heritage.

Dóchas represents hope in the future of our school

Dúchas represents faithfulness to our collective heritage and culture

Díocas represents diligence and commitment

Signed: 

***Maeve Gallagher
Chairperson, BOM***

Signed: 

***Maureen Murray
Secretary to the BOM***

Policy Approved Date: 10/10/16

Review Date: Sept/Oct 2017

Mission Statement

St. Peter's mission is to serve all of the young people in our community.

The aim of St. Peter's College is to promote academic excellence in a supportive and caring environment.

High attendance rates, good time keeping and participation of all students in the school community facilitate excellent learning and teaching (Diocas) in St Peter's College. Students develop their talents and abilities and can pursue academic excellence when attending all classes and learning in a constructive way.

Introduction

A meaningful education provides every student with the best possible start in life and it helps them to mature and develop into conscientious young adults. The purpose of this policy on attendance, punctuality and participation is to encourage regular school attendance, full participation in the education system and gives students good preparation for the responsibilities of third level and employment. Moreover it endeavours to promote self-discipline, commitment and responsibility.

Expectations

St. Peter's College has high expectations with regard to attendance and punctuality as poor attendance and punctuality by some students negatively impacts the teaching and learning of all students through the disruption caused by students arriving late and hinders the progression of the class through the curriculum. St Peter's College is aware of its responsibilities to those students who experience difficulties and through encouragement and support will assist those students to reach their full potential.

Scope

This Attendance, Punctuality and Participation Strategy applies to all of the stakeholders at St. Peter's College. Our philosophy of teamwork underpins our approach. Students, parents and staff contribute to the strategy by working together to maximise attendance and participation.

Board of Management

The Board of Management of St Peter's College recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning. It believes that children should attend school regularly and punctually because school is where they learn and school is where they are safe.

The Board of Management is, therefore, committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. It aims to do this by:

- a) promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance;
- b) reducing all forms of unexplained absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism (a child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 20 or more days in a school year).

The Board of Management is obliged under the Education Act to make four written reports to the National Educational Welfare Board during the school year regarding school absences.

Goals

This policy aims to reduce absenteeism and to motivate students to take an active part in their education. Parents, students and staff are expected to co-operate in the successful implementation of this strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

St. Peter's College has a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourages parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children.

The roles and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers and the board of management are explained fully in the Strategy for Attendance and Participation.

It is a legal requirement that schools will:

- a) be open for 167 sessions each school year;
- b) maintain attendance registers;
- c) accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness;
- d) clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised;
- e) submit, termly, absence returns to the National Educational Welfare Board;
- f) liaise with the National Educational Welfare Officer regarding absence issues and meet with relevant families;
- g) inform the National Educational Welfare Board of students who are suspended from school for six days or more.

The following is a summary of the procedures that are used by the school:

- a) Parents are given attendance information through letters, telephone calls, text, student reports;
- b) Ceannairi keep records of absence and punctuality for each student in their year.
- c) The Senior Attendance Ceannaire/ Deputy Principal alerts fifth and sixth year Ceannairi if a student in their year has any unexplained absences – this will be communicated to parents.
- d) The Ceannairi communicate with parents when 10 absences are recorded - a letter is sent home to parents;
- e) Registers are taken every morning at assembly.
- f) The Guidance/Pastoral Care team are alerted of students at risk;
- g) Post-registration truancy is monitored through the taking of class registers and spot checks. Parents are promptly informed of any post registration truancy

The school aims to create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance by rewarding students who have achieved 100% attendance and punctuality with a School Full Attendance Award.

Full Attendance and Punctuality Awards can only be awarded to students who attend each day on time.

Taking regular half days (6 or more) for explained or unexplained reasons precludes a student from receiving full attendance.

The school imposes sanctions for lateness and truancy as laid down in the School Attendance Strategy.

The school attendance strategy explains in detail the range of actions and interventions the school uses to manage attendance, punctuality and participation.

Monitoring Procedures

Management (Principal, Deputy Principal, B.O.M., Ceannairi) will monitor the implementation of this policy.

Success Criteria

- Improved attendance over a sustained period.
- Reduced disruption to class.
- Fewer numbers (especially Senior Cycle) detained for lateness
- Deputy Principal to provide statistics on lates and absences regularly.

Review Procedure

Principal (per term) in consultation with Ceannairi and staff.

Deputy Principal (per term).

The Principal will report to the B.O.M. (per term) with regard to Attendance and Participation.

All records regarding attendance will be kept in the school for 7 years (legal record).

School Attendance Statistics are gathered, analysed and recorded

St Peter's College School Attendance Strategy

1. Goals
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. How attendance is monitored
4. Participation
5. Target setting and targets
6. Strategies to achieve targets
7. Legislation

1. Goals

This policy aims to reduce absenteeism and to motivate students to take an active part in their education. Parents, students and staff are expected to co-operate in the successful implementation of this strategy.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

St. Peter's College has a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourages parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children.

2.1 Responsibilities of Students

- Students are expected to be in school before 08:45 and remain for all classes. Junior level students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day.
- Students are responsible for bringing in notes of explanation regarding punctuality and attendance and for giving them to their Class Teacher, tutor or Ceannaire. Senior Students **must have a note of explanation for presentation to the Attendance Monitor** at assembly on their return to school or they will be placed on detention the following day.
- Students must attend assembly on time. If they are unavoidably late, they must sign in at the student office, stating the reason for the lateness. The assembly register is the fire register and therefore must be kept as accurate as possible. Failure to sign in at the office to update this register will result in a student receiving two detentions.
- Students who have a medical/dental appointment during the course of the school day, must have a note in their diary requesting permission to leave school early. They must sign out at the student office. If the student returns to school following the appointment they must sign back into school **at the student office with the appointment slip.**
- **All registered students are expected to comply with this policy.**

2.2 Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 parents must inform the school if their children will be absent from school on a school day and the reason for the absence, for example, illness. In St Peter's College the written

explanation must be in the diary. The NEWB strongly advises against taking children out of school to go on holiday during term-time.

Parents and guardians have a legal obligation to ensure that their child attends a school or otherwise receives an education. If the NEWB considers that a parent is failing in his or her obligation, it must send the parent a School Attendance Notice warning that legal action would follow if the child did not attend school regularly. Before doing this, it must make reasonable efforts to consult with the parents and the child. If the parent fails to comply, he or she may be prosecuted. If convicted, the parent may be fined €634.87 and/or imprisoned for a month and fined €253.95 for each subsequent day that he or she fails to send the child to school. If the parent claims that suitable alternative education is being provided, he or she must prove this. It will be a defence for the parents to show that they have made all reasonable efforts to send the child to school - in such cases, the Health Service Executive (HSE) must be informed.

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- **Ensure that all contact details are up to date**
- Take an active interest in their child's school life and work
- **Check the school diary regularly**
- Attend parents' evenings and other school events;
- Ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time
- Be aware of letters from school which their child brings home
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day, dressed in school uniform and fit to learn.
- **Make all appointments for their children outside of class time where possible**
- Ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness
- Always notify the school as soon as possible – preferably on the first morning – of any absence;
- Confirm this in writing in the absence section of the school diary when the child returns to school;
- Avoid booking family holidays during the school term – **exams will not be rescheduled if they are missed due to holidays**
- Talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend;
- Avoid collecting their child unexpectedly from school as this causes significant disruption to teaching and learning

2.3 Responsibilities of Ceannaire, Tutor & Teachers, Ceannaire and his/her team:

- **To ensure that the attendance system is operating effectively and efficiently.**
- **Liaising with Principal, Deputy Principals and the College care structures.**
- **To give particular attention to children whose families are experiencing difficulties**
- **Communication (telephone call/letter/ note in Diary) with parents.**
- **Early identification of “at risk” students**
- **Reasoning with the students and advice on how to improve**
- **Contacting parents when their child has reached 15 days of cumulative absences reminding them of the twenty day rule**
- **Notifying the Principal or Deputy Principals to contact the Education Welfare Officer:**
 - **Once a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively**
 - **When a student has been suspended for 6 consecutive days**
- **To encourage students to aim for full attendance**
- **Liaising with the Principal/Deputy Principals in preparing the annual report for the NEWB and ensuring that student absence reports are submitted 5 times a year on designated dates**

- **Rewarding good attendance through certification at the end of the year Awards Ceremony**
- **To monitor student attendance and liaise with tutors to improve attendance where necessary**

Tutor

- **To call home on the third consecutive day of a student's absence**

Teachers

- To take all assembly and class registers carefully
- To mark students doing extra-curricular work or sport appropriately
- To ensure that students who arrive late to class at 08:55 or 13:45 sign in at the student office.
- To ask for notes of explanation following absences from class and to inform tutors if notes are not presented to explain absence from class
- To regularly remind students about the importance of full and punctual attendance for effective learning to occur in the classroom.
- **Notes must be given to all students who are given jobs or allowed to leave class**

2.4 Responsibilities of Management

- To regularly monitor attendance and participation
- To coordinate the identification of students who may need assistance to fully participate or attend school regularly
- **To support students who are have poor attendance or participation**
- To report to the board of management with regard to attendance levels and set targets for attendance and participation

2.5 Responsibilities of Board of Management

- To prepare a school attendance strategy
- To review the attendance and participation report

3. How attendance is monitored

3.1 Procedure – Daily morning registration

Students are required to attend assembly each day at 08:45 sharp where a **fire-register** is taken.

Eportal registers are taken for all periods by the class teacher. (To be implemented in 2017)

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their name is marked in every **register – if they are present at assembly but fail to be marked on the register they will receive a detention.**

A student who is late for assembly, 08:55 or 13:45 register must sign in with their diary at the student office.

Fifth and Sixth Year Students who go directly to class having missed assembly without signing in at the office will automatically have a double detention (whether they have a note or not)

The student will receive a late stamp and a record will be taken of whether or not the student had a valid note of explanation

A note of an appointment of a medical nature or important family business will be accepted as valid. Discretion may be allowed with regard to traffic conditions, the weather and other unforeseen circumstances.

Students who have no valid note will be placed on lunchtime detention the following day. It will begin at 13:10 and end at 13:35. A detention stamp will be put in the diary. Junior cycle students will be given a detention for two lates in a half term. Senior cycle students will be on detention for one late.

Students with an exemption from Assembly authorised by the Deputy Principal, must sign in at the Student Office at 8.45AM.

Students on detention will be assigned a worksheet to complete during the allocated time.

3.2 Procedure - Registration following absence for Junior students and Transition Year Students

In the event of an absence the student must present a written note of explanation in their diary on her/ his return to the Tutor and the individual Subject Teacher (when requested)

The note must be in the absence section at the back of the diary.

3.3 Procedure – Registration following absence for Senior Students

Senior cycle students must have their note of explanation in their diary at the first assembly following their absence.

The note must be in the absence section at the back of the diary.

Failure to have this note at assembly will result in student being placed on detention the following day. If a note is presented at the student office at 10:50 the following day the student will be removed from the detention list. Otherwise the student will have lunchtime detention until the note is presented at the student office.

3.4 Procedure – Registration for students attending appointments during the school day

Students who wish to leave the school early for an appointment (e.g. Doctor, Dentist etc.) must present a note of explanation in their diary at the student office.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they receive a sign out stamp and that they sign the sign out register

If the student returns to school following the appointment they must sign back in at the student office and receive a sign in stamp.

3.5 Procedure – Registration for students who leave school due to illness during the school day

In the event of a student becoming ill while at school, parent/guardian's permission must be received before they sign out through the office. He/She must remain at reception until contact is made with the student's parents/guardians.

3.6 Procedure – Registration for students who miss registration or class registers due to extra-curricular activities

Students who are participating in extra-curricular activities must sign out in the extra-curricular register at the student office and sign back in on their return.

It is also the responsibility of students to notify the teacher **beforehand** that they will be absent from class due to sporting or other extra-curricular activities, so they may be registered correctly on eportal.

4. Participation

4.1 Participation helps to develop friendships and enhances the experience of school. St Peter's College actively encourages every student to participate in school life.

- Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate to the best of their ability
- The approach to teaching and learning (AFL) encourages student participation during classes
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are undertaken
- Activities take place during lunch time as well as after school
- Emphasis is placed on participation instead of winning
- SNA's help to integrate special needs students during lunch time
- Participation is recognised, praised, publicised and rewarded

4.2 Full attendance and participation in timetabled PE classes is required. Students who are unable to participate fully in PE classes due to medical circumstances may be asked to furnish their PE teacher with a parental note/medical note in the diary. Refer to P.E. Policy

4.3 It is the responsibility of students who are absent from class/school for any reason to find out details of work missed. This applies also to students who miss class due to sporting or other extra-curricular activities.

5. Target setting and targets

The board of management, senior school management, MAC, SALT, SWT, and the Ceannairi will set targets with regard to attendance, punctuality and participation.

Students are consulted on the attendance and punctuality rules through their participation on the Management Advisory Committee and further through consultation with the Students' Council

Specified Targets

Attendance = 85% attendance for all students in the school

Punctuality = 95% of students attend assembly each day

Participation = no student drops out of school prior to leaving certificate exams

(To be reviewed by September 2017 by BOM)

6. Strategies to achieve targets

- Building a warm, caring, respectful and compassionate atmosphere in which every person feels accepted and valued.
- The provision of an excellent extra-curricular activity package which has something for everyone and encourages the participation of all students.
- A modern meaningful curriculum, which is inclusive of all students.
- Breakfast Club
- Well-structured pastoral care system.
- Transition Year Programme.
- Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.
- A comprehensive roll attendance system.
- Homework club
- Supervised evening study/ Saturday study
- The rewarding of students who have full attendance record – 98% on ePortal

- The promotion of involvement by students in extra-curricular activities and other areas of college life
- The maintenance of close links between the college management and the Student Council and the Parent Association
- The identification of students who are at risk of dropping out at an early stage
- The establishment of closer contacts between the school and the families concerned
- The co-ordination with the NEWB aimed at promoting and encouraging attendance

7. Legislation

The Education Welfare Act 2000

The main provisions of the Education Welfare Act are as follows:

- 1) Schools are required to establish and maintain a school register, showing attendance or non-attendance for each student.
- 2) Every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years of education in post primary, whichever comes later.
- 3) The act established a National Educational Welfare Board. The NEWB has appointed Education Welfare Officers to work with schools to encourage school attendance.
- 4) The act stipulates that the school is obliged to report to the NEWB every time:
 - It decides to expel a student
 - A student has been absent for 20 days or more cumulatively
 - A student's attendance causes concern for the school
 - A student's name is removed from the school register
 - A student has been suspended for six days consecutively
- 5) Schools must prepare a student absence report. This information must be submitted five times a year in summary format for all students.
- 6) Absences must be categorised under six headings:
 - A. Illness
 - B. Family Business
 - C. Appointment
 - D. Other (Religion, Holiday etc.)
 - E. Unexplained
 - F. Suspended
 - G. Transfer to another school

