



School Attendance Policy

Rationale

St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School bases its School Attendance Policy on the obligations arising from the Education Welfare Act 2000 and on the guidance provided in *Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools* – Tusla 2016.

This policy also takes into consideration the DES requirements for recording and reporting on school attendance as per Circular 33/2015.

While there is a very strong tradition of good attendance at school in St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School, it is important that parents/guardians are fully aware of their obligations to ensure that their children have consistent and punctual attendance at school.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance and punctuality help to create a stable learning environment for all pupils and the school hopes to promote cooperation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Foster an appreciation of learning in the school community.
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance and also an awareness of forming good patterns of attendance in early years.
- Identify pupils who are deemed to be at risk of poor attendance and reporting this to Tusla.

- Enhance the learning environment where pupils can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- Promote positive attitudes to learning.
- Ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend.
- Make parents/guardians aware of their responsibilities, in relation to attendance, under the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Comply with requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000/ Guidelines from TUSLA.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal, staff, parents/guardians, together with the Board of Management, will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Class teachers and the secretaries record individual patterns of attendance on the Aladdin Management system daily. The Principal makes the returns to the Education Welfare Services at TUSLA bi-annually. The Principal sends the annual school attendance report to TUSLA at the end of each school year.

Punctuality

Formal teaching begins at 8:50 am with school gates opening at 8:30 am. All pupils are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. A record of tardiness is communicated to parents/guardians in the pupil's end of year school report.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded daily on Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded on Aladdin, together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion and Parents' Names)

If a pupil does not attend on the day when the school is open for instruction, his absence will be recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin. The roll call is taken before 9:30 am each morning.

Any pupil not present, will be marked absent for the day. If the pupil subsequently arrives at school late, this will be noted on Aladdin.

A note explaining any absence must be submitted on Aladdin by the parents/guardians.

If a child is absent for more than twenty days in a year, that child will be reported to TUSLA during that school year. Parents/Guardians are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA, particularly in relation to the twenty days or more reporting at the Class Induction Meeting at the beginning of the school year.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer/TUSLA, where a child has been absent for twenty or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, or where a child is suspended or expelled for six days or more.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

- St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. The teaching staff collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.
- The calendar for the upcoming year is forwarded to parents annually and updates are sent at regular intervals throughout the school year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- Reward systems are in place at individual, classroom and whole school level.
- Friendship groups are set up in each class, particularly at the infants level to encourage social interaction and foster bonds.
- There are designated quiet areas in the school, such as the school library, the sensory room and the playground for pupils to regulate.
- The school building is inviting, bright, warm and colourful where pupils' work is displayed and celebrated.
- Classrooms are bright and inviting and display a print rich environment to aid pupils' learning.
- The yard has many varied activities, where pupil agency in play activities is encouraged.
- Pupils' achievement both academically and socially are celebrated each week at whole school Friday assembly.

Identification of pupils at risk of developing school attendance problems

These are categorised as follows:

- Irregular Absentee: 5 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason
- Seriously Irregular Absentee: 10 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason.
- Chronic Absentee: 11+ days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason.
- Pattern Absentee: regular absence on a particular day of the week without a valid reason (eg. Mondays, Fridays etc.) or regular lateness or early leaving on a particular day without a valid reason.
- Where a difficulty regarding attendance arises parents/guardians are reminded of the importance of attendance and punctuality and of the obligation on schools to report non-attendance. Parents/guardians are also informed of their responsibilities to explain absences, through Aladdin notifications.
- If a child's attendance is of concern (even before the child has reached twenty days absence), the class teacher/Principal will contact the parents to ascertain a reason for the child's absence and if further school support is needed. Parents/guardians are asked to supply medical certificates from their General Practitioner. A reminder is given to parents/guardians that the school is legally obliged to report absences of twenty days or more.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Working with the School and TUSLA Child and Family Agency to resolve any attendance problems.
- Making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance.
- Refraining from taking holidays during school term time.
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for their children's absence from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as possible, that children's appointments are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school immediately if they have concerns about their children's absence or other matters related to school.
- Notifying the school office in writing, if their child is to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Communication with Other Schools

- Under Section 20 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Principal of the child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school, via P.O.D (Primary Online Database) that the child is now registered in their school.
- When a child transfers to St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school via P.O.D and relevant records sought related to attendance and educational progress.

Evaluation of Success

- Improved attendance levels as measured through the attendance record and statistical returns.
- Happy, confident and well-adjusted children.
- Positive parental feedback.
- Teacher vigilance.

Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified and adopted by the Board of Management on the 11th of February 2025.

Elaine McKiernan

Chairperson of Board of Management

11/2/25

Date

Kara Sheridan

Principal

12/2/25

Date