



‘Achievement for All’

ST JOSEPH’S BOYS’ SCHOOL

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed _____

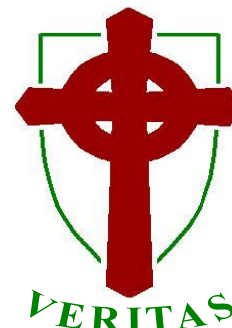
Date: _____

Agreed SMT _____
Principal

Date: _____

Agreed BOG _____

Date: _____



Pupil Attendance Policy

The school fosters the ideal of 'Achievement for All' and through its curriculum policy, aims to enhance the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school. By doing so, the school hopes to enable each pupil to contribute in a meaningful way to society and be prepared to undertake a fulfilling and rewarding role in life. This will include having the skills necessary for life long learning and the qualities to become a responsible citizen.

Principles

- 1.1 Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at St Joseph's Boys' School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum. St Joseph's Boys' School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Policy Statement

- 2.1 Attendance in school and in class should be the highest possible priority for parents, staff and students. Parents should be made aware at every opportunity that full attendance is an essential feature of good performance at school and will be asked to co-operate fully in ensuring their child's full attendance. Staff in demanding excellent attendance will convey to pupils that attendance at school and at class must be their highest priority. In this way pupils will receive good training and discipline for later life and therefore for the world of work.

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and should work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance.

The school will encourage and value high attendance rates. The school will recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the Education Welfare Officer and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining systems for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

Aims

- 3.1 To improve / maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Joseph's Boys' School.
- 3.2 To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- 3.3 To provide advice, support and guidance to parents / guardians and pupils.
- 3.4 To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service and other external agencies that can support pupils to be at school.

Role of the School

The Principal at St Joseph's Boys' School has overall responsibility for school attendance. Subject teachers and Pastoral staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his / her attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensure that it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions and at the beginning of each class session.

Staff Roles

4.1 Form Teacher

At St Joseph's Boys' School the Form Teacher is seen as the key figure in promoting regular punctual attendance. The Form Teacher should:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration; carry out registration in the prescribed manner; which will include:
- Monitor records of pupils coming into school after morning registration closes.
- Telephone parents after three days' absence if no reason has been given or if the student returns without a note (in some instances, for example, if there are already attendance concerns, the Form Teacher should telephone parents on the first day of any unexplained absence)
- Collect and record absence letters
- Monitor pupil's absence records, check and amend appropriate coding as necessary
- Contact parents when patterns of absenteeism/lateness are detected alert the Head of Year when there is a problem which has not been solved by the above procedures;
- Use the Form Teacher/parent annual interview to discuss attendance and/or punctuality issues', setting and monitoring targets as appropriate;
- Offer praise to individual students whose attendance and/or punctuality improves and highlight good attendance to parents via letter or phone call or comment in pupil's daybook.

4.2 Subject Teacher

Subject teachers should:

- Take a register at the beginning of every lesson (and ensure that the students know that a register is being taken); Update register for late arriving pupils.
- Follow up any suspected internal truancy by checking with the Form Teacher or Head of Year as appropriate;
- Provide relevant work for students, who have been detected internally truanting, to do in detention or sanction as appropriate.

4.3 Head of Year

Heads of Year are responsible for monitoring the attendance of their year group. They should:

- Monitor attendance on a regular basis, liaise regularly with Form Teacher / Subject Teacher and HOD's re: attendance, setting targets for improvement as appropriate.
- Monitor the performance of individual Form groups, following up with individual Form Teacher instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed.
- Review registers and attendance and punctuality figures on a monthly basis.
- Regularly put attendance onto the agenda of Year Team Meetings.
- Ensure that contact is made with parents of poor attenders, supporting the Form Teacher where appropriate in dealing with parents directly.
- Meet with the Education Welfare Officer as appropriate in order to discuss students who have not responded to the school's strategies and when necessary to make referrals; using EWS Referral Form and attend EPM if required.
- Follow up internal truancy with appropriate punishments.
- Promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies.
- Commendations, rewards – regularly highlight 100% attendance.
- Identify and nominate pupils to be given major attendance prizes at annual prize day.

4.4 Head of School

Heads of School are responsible for monitoring the attendance of their year groups. They should:

- Monitor attendance on a regular basis, liaise regularly with Year Heads re: attendance, setting targets for improvement as appropriate.
- Monitor the performance of individual Year groups, following up with Year Heads instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed.
- Review registers and attendance and punctuality figures on a monthly basis.
- Regularly put attendance onto the agenda of Year Team Meetings.
- Ensure that contact is made with parents of poor attenders, supporting the Year Head where appropriate in dealing with parents directly.
- Follow up internal / external truancy with appropriate sanctions.
- Promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies in liaison with Head of Year and Form Teacher.
- Commendations. Rewards – regularly highlight 100% attendance in liaison with Head of Year and Form Teacher.
- Identify and nominate pupils to be given major attendance prizes at annual prize day in liaison with Head of Year and Form Teacher.

4.5 Pastoral Vice Principal

In promoting High Standards of Attendance the Pastoral Vice Principal should:

- Oversee whole school attendance and Attendance Policy review and should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to the attention of the Principal.
- Consult with Year Heads, Heads of School and SENCO regularly.
- Attend appointed meetings with EWO and feedback to Year Heads and Heads of School as appropriate.

- When required will consult with EWO and other external agencies.
- To attend Education Planning Meetings re: Attendance problems as appropriate
- To review and monitor the guidelines of registers marked daily for full school under the Covid guidelines laid out by DE/EA/PHA
- To liaise with HOJS/HOSS and HOY to ensure registers are reviewed across the school and in keeping with DE/EA/PHA guidelines.
- To ensure that EA/DE/PHA attendance guidelines are discussed /reviewed at all Pastoral Meetings.

Parental Role

5.1 The Parent

- Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full- time basis.
- Pupils are expected to be in St Joseph's Boys' School for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of Parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded and is on your child's attendance record.
- Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it should never be deemed preferable to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. The issue should be discussed promptly with his Form Teacher or and appropriate member of the Pastoral team.
- Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. Parents are requested to contact school via telephone as early as possible on the first day of any absence and to record reasons for absence in pupils' daybook when they return to school.
- Parents are expected to request, in writing, permission for pupils to leave school for reasons such as medical or dental appointments. It is preferred that these are made after school. Parents are expected not to arrange holidays in term time.
- Parents must respond to requests for reasons for absence if pupil has been off more than three days and school has not been given reason.
- If absences are likely to be prolonged this information should be provided to the school to enable work / homework to be arranged and monitored if required.
- Parents/guardians should inform Main Office as soon as possible about any change of address or telephone number by completing the Change of Information Form provided by the office.

Pupil Roles

6.1 The Pupil

- Each pupil at St Joseph's Boys' School must attend school punctually and regularly.
- If a pupil is absent from school a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the Form Teacher on return.
- It is the pupil's responsibility to attend each class during the day punctually and regularly.
- There will be no admittance to the school after 9am with adhering to safety as laid out in our school rules of safe and DE new start guidance laid 13th August 2020

- If a pupil is to be out of class then he must present to the class teacher **and under new guidelines be brought by a member of staff to his exit point to be collected by a parent.**
- If a pupil is sick he must first report to the class teacher and seek permission to go to either his Form Teacher, Head of Year or Medical Room.
- If a pupil is late after 8.40am then he must ensure that he enters school through the **appropriate entrance, his late arrival recorded by a member of staff, his Form Teacher who who duty is to retain a register of latecomers using sims.**
- **There will be no admission to the school building after 9am. Pupils arriving after this point will be returned home and invited to start school the following day.**
- Pupils should not attempt to leave school without permission and should sign in/out at reception when leaving for approved appointments or on parental request.

Procedures

7.1 Registration

- Registration will be carried out initially by Form Teachers at 8.45am. Registers will be marked promptly at this time and will be closed at 8.55am **using the sims model to record late comers.** Should a student arrive after the start of registration but before the registers have closed he/she will be marked as late for that session and the code L used.
- Registers should be marked in accordance with the guidelines issued for registration (see 10.1-12.1). Each subject teacher will register pupils at the beginning of each class and staff are required to be diligent in marking registers. Pupils who arrive late for subject classes should also be marked late before they leave class again.

7.2 Absences

- All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised using codes provided on Lesson Monitor. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised. (Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as shopping, daytrips and birthdays etc)

7.3 Lateness

- Students who arrive at school after morning registration should report immediately to their subject teacher who can record late arrival after registration as 'L'. Record of lateness is important for health and safety reasons. Students arriving late for first afternoon class should report immediately to class and subject teacher to record lateness 'L' for that session.
- Students who arrive late between 8.45am – 9.10am will be recorded as late by a member of SMT at the side entrance.

7.4 Term -Time Holidays

The school strongly urges parents to avoid booking family holidays during term-time. Leave for such holidays will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Attendance Data

- 8.1 A range of attendance data will be collected monthly and termly in order to identify particular cohorts whose attendance causes concern. The Pastoral Vice Principal, Heads of School and Heads of year will be responsible for analysing this data and initiating remedial actions. As part of this process persistent absentees will be referred to EWS and other external agencies to deal with issues that are impinging on regular school attendance. Discussion with Parents via school meetings will also be arranged as appropriate to discuss concerns.

Communication

- 9.1 The St Joseph's Boys' School Attendance Policy will be communicated through:
- Start-up information pack at beginning of each new academic year.
 - A key point summary in pupil daybook.
 - A précis in the parents' prospectus.
 - School newsletter items as appropriate.
 - Availability on written request to the Principal. The policy may then be collected from the school office during working hours.
 - Guidance and advice in the staff handbook.
 - Letters to parents as appropriate.
 - Flow charts available for display in class.
 - School Website.
 - School assemblies or other meetings.

Attendance Procedures

- 10.1 **Registers** are one of the few legal documents from a school that will be produced in court as evidence of non attendance at school.
- All staff are asked to be very diligent in marking registers.
 - It is a legal requirement of EANI -that registers are only marked by staff.
 - **It is requested under Covid guidelines laid out by DE/EA/PHA that registers are marked daily by the whole school.**
- 10.2 **Registration**
- Registration will be carried out initially by Form Teachers at 8.45am. Registers will be marked promptly at this time and will be closed at 8.55am. Should a student arrive after the start of registration but before the registers have closed he/she will be marked as late for that session and the code L used.
 - Registers should be marked in accordance with the guidelines issued for registration. Each subject teacher will register pupils at the beginning of each class. Staff are required to be diligent in marking registers, **as a means of Safe-guarding children at school.**
- 10.3 **Absences**
- All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised using codes provided on Lesson Monitor. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the

explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised. (Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as shopping, daytrips and birthdays.)

10.4 Lateness

- Students who arrive at school after morning registration should report immediately to side entrance of school where lateness will be recorded by a member of SMT up until 9.10 am. Record of lateness is important for health and safety reasons. Students arriving late for first afternoon class should report immediately to class and subject teacher to record lateness 'L' for that session.
- After 9.10am pupils should report to reception to record their lateness coming to school.

10.5 Marking Registers

Registers should be marked by a member of staff only

- *The day is divided into 11 sessions, 7 morning sessions and 4 afternoon sessions.*
- *Please enter into your C2K Terminal under the correct date a present or absent mark.*

10.6 Change of Address

- *Please draw the attention of the Office Staff to any change of pupil address or telephone number by completing the Change of Information Form provided by the Office.*
- *The notifying of the school office is essential in order to updated all relevant files and to ensure efficient communication with parents and guardians and for use in any emergency.*

10.7 It is essential that written confirmation is obtained regarding a student going off roll. This information should include, where possible, the name and address of the new school that the student will be attending. This will allow the school to confirm starting dates. The Year Head should inform Office Staff in writing.

10.8 All communication regarding students going off roll should be forwarded to the Vice Principal / relevant Year head / Head of School.

10.9 Phone calls are entered into the computer directly in the general office or a letter/note written by parent or guardian must be produced to the Form Teacher in the Daybook

10.10 Form Teachers please date and keep all letters/notes and authorised absences in your folder. If there is any concern about pupil's attendance this should be in writing to the Year Head so that he/she may take action.

11.1 **ABSENCES FOR SHORT PERIODS WITHIN THE SCHOOL DAY**

a) For clinic or hospital appointment. At registration students must show their appointment card or a letter to their Form Teacher who will give their permission. All pupils must sign out at the general office.

b) For any other reason. Students must bring a letter signed by a parent making the request. The same procedures as above must be followed for leaving school.

c) No student may leave the school without permission whatever the reason.

- d) Subject Teachers mark a register of every class they teach as a check on absentees, reports are available to Head of Year, Head of School and Senior Staff or Form teachers.
- e) Subject staff should enquire of Form Teachers about any dubious or recurrent absences from classes. This can then instigate a lesson attendance check.
- f) Information regarding students taking holidays during term time should be noted and given to Year Head.

St Joseph's Boys' School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupil learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorized as an unauthorized absence. Only in exceptional circumstances should a family holiday be organized.

11.2 **ATTENDANCE CODES FOR LESSON MONITOR**

CODE	MEANING
/(am) \(pm)	Present
A	Artistic Endeavour
B	Bereavement
C	Suspended (Admin Staff Only)
D	No reason provided for absence
H	Other absence e.g. Truanting (unauthorised absence)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
I	Ill or medical/dental (full session)
L	Late before Registration
M	Medical/Dental (part session)
N	No reason yet provided for absence.
O	Other Exceptional circumstance
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observation

CODE	MEANING
S	Study Leave
U	Late after registration
V	Educational Visit
W	Work Experience
Z	ISU / Education Plus (Admin Staff Only)
1	Alternative education provision (organised by ELB)
2	Home/hospital tuition (organised by ELB)
3	Elective Home Education
4	Pupil Referral Unit
5	Another mainstream school (under entitlement framework – EF)
6	Training Organisation (Under EF)
7	FE College (Under EF)
8	Intensive Support Learning Unit
9	CAMHS

12.1 **Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance** (See Appendices 1&2)

- In the event of ongoing concerns for identified pupils re attendance Form Teacher will contact parent on first day of absence. Record reasons for absence.
- Absence from class without explanation should be highlighted immediately with Form Teacher for follow-up with parents if no reason has been given or pupil has absented himself from class without permission.
- Form Teacher will contact parents after 3 days of pupil absence. (A1/FT).
- If pupil's non-attendance is persistent despite calls home then the Form Teacher will issue a letter to highlight need for contact with School. (A2/FT) and highlight concern to HOY.
- After Day 5 of absence HOY will contact parent by phone/letter (A3/HOY) to ascertain reasons for absence and highlight concerns.
- After Days 6-10 situation to be monitored and parental meeting invite issued (A4/HOY)
- Those pupils < 90% on a continued 6 weekly basis will receive a letter home from FT to highlight concerns and a meeting may be requested to discuss issue and strategies to improve pupil attendance. (A2/FT).
- If pupil attendance is < 85% then a letter will be issued to highlight this a necessity to refer matter to EWS by HOY (A5/HOY).

12.2 **Education Welfare Service**

Education Authority NI (Western Region)

(EANI) through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education. If a pupil's absence causes concern or if their attendance falls below 85% they will be referred to EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

12.3 Acknowledgement of Good Attendance

Praise letters

- Good comments in daybooks from Form Teacher.
- Form teachers sends letter home for 1 term above 95%
- Year Head sends letter home for 2 terms above 95%
- Head of School sends letter home for 3 terms above 95%
- Full year above 95% letter from principal, maybe tie in with praise letters.

Reward Trips

- All pupils in each year group who have 95% attendance or above go for free breakfast in canteen at end of each term. The Head of Year will arrange this.
- Reward trips out termly in junior school, for classes with highest attendance each term in each year group, possible movie afternoon in lecture theatre, football in Bishop's Field or external trips.

Promotion

- Principal regularly highlights attendance using figures at assembly.
- Attendance promoted in newsletter each month.
- Work done in form period focusing on role of student in maintaining and improving attendance.
- Attendance focus through Prize giving. Pupils with 100% in each year group recognized.
- Principal to address attendance at year 8 mass, form teachers to again discuss attendance after mass. (Possible flyer made to highlight procedures and importance of attendance that could be given to parents at this stage). (See appendix 4)
- Highlight link between attendance and career at school careers day, and through careers and L.L.W. lessons.
- HOY assemblies - to highlight good attendance.
- Regular links with EWS to support attendance promotion in school and highlight attendance via specified talks and presentations.

Key Contacts

- 12.4 In the event of concerns about pupil attendance, parents can initially contact their child's Form Teacher or Year Head.

EWS (School's nominated Education Welfare Officer –

Mr Michael Leonard
EA Western Region
District Office
Foyle Street
DERRY
Tel: 02871-272300

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be evaluated and reviewed biannually by the Vice Principal (Pastoral) and the Pastoral team.

SMT & PRINCIPAL _____

BOG CHAIRPERSON _____

The following appendices are attached.

(Appendix 1)

Attendance Procedures – Staff

(Appendix 2)

- a) FT Letter
- b) FT Letter
- c) HOY Letter
- d) HOY Letter
- e) HOY Letter

(Appendix 3)

Good Attendance Acknowledgement.

- a) FT Letter (AR L1)
- b) HOY Letter (AR L2)
- c) HOS Letter (AR L3)
- d) Principal Letter (AR L4)

(Appendix 4)

Miss School Miss Out.

References

Circular 2015/02 – Attendance guidance and absence recording by schools.