



ST. PETER'S SCHOOL

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



Attendance Strategy & Policy

Introductory Statement

St. Peter's School recognises that regular attendance at school is essential in order for each child to fulfil their educational potential. As our school is an SEBD setting, we endeavour to support students who struggle to come into school in so far as is practical. The support of parents is essential in relation to attendance as we understand that for some families, despite the best efforts of everybody involved, poor attendance at school is a reality.

In responding to these situations, which can be stressful for all concerned, we have outlined this Statement of Strategy to offer guidelines on addressing attendance issues and the support processes that can be used. New students attending the school will begin on a graduated attendance plan to support their transition into the school environment and gradually building their capacity to attend for the full school day, and this may be considered after a long period of absence. The progression of a graduated attendance plan, including the timing of any increase in attendance, will be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the specific needs and circumstances of each student, as individual students differ in their capacity to engage with the full school day (Appendix B).

In certain circumstances, a Reduced School Day (Appendix C) may be considered as a short-term supportive measure where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the student. An official reduced school day will only be implemented with the informed consent of parents/guardians, will be reviewed regularly, and will aim to support the student in returning to full attendance.

Rationale

In St Peter's we try to ensure that all students feel safe, welcome and encouraged. In line with our mission statement, the school aims to maximise the potential of all students. Reaching one's full potential is facilitated through active engagement in the curriculum which is facilitated by regular school attendance. Regular attendance and engagement assist the school in fulfilling its aim of giving students a wide range of learning opportunities designed to promote their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development at school and within society. It also assists students in preparing for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences presented in adult life.

The purpose of this strategy and policy is to outline our approach to monitoring, encouraging and promoting regular school attendance. Educational studies consistently show a link between regular student attendance and the successful achievement of learning outcomes. It also endeavours to ensure a consistent approach to attendance throughout the school.

Aims

- To support and encourage high rates of school attendance at all class levels.
- To raise awareness amongst parents and guardians about the importance of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that students are registered as enrolled in the school, that student's attendance is recorded daily and that attendance records are monitored regularly by the school.
- To ensure a coordinated school response to absenteeism.
- To identify students at risk of poor attendance and those at risk of underperformance at school due to attendance issues.
- To promote a positive learning environment to enable all students to avail fully of learning opportunities.
- To comply with the requirements of the relevant legislation in relation to school attendance.
- To develop supportive links between the school and families at risk of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To support students to develop self-regulation skills and to engage with school attendance in a way that reflects their individual wellbeing needs and capacity.
- To recognise and celebrate positive attendance, improvement in attendance, and punctuality across the school community.
- To encourage pupil voice and participation in promoting positive attendance and engagement with school.
- To foster a whole-school approach where staff model and encourage positive attendance habits and punctuality across the school community.

Statement of Strategy

Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools is provided under statutory instrument of Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Section 22(1) of promotes a statement of strategies and measures the school proposes to adopt for the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending that school and encouraging regular attendance at school on the part of such students.

St. Peter's School strongly recognises the importance of regular, consistent attendance. We promote regular attendance as;

- A good education gives a child the best possible start in life.

- If a child goes to school regularly, they will be better able to keep up with schoolwork and are more likely to enjoy school.
- Good attendance helps provide a foundation of responsibility and reliability throughout a student's life. The development of such skills will be prudent later in life.
- Missing out on school friendships can affect a child's ability to make and keep friendships throughout life.
- Students who attend school regularly are less likely to be drawn into antisocial behaviour.

Absenteeism

Students should only be absent from school when it is absolutely necessary e.g., due to illness, bereavement or other exceptional circumstances. In cases where attendance is a concern, the school will seek to identify the causes of the poor attendance and to provide whatever support and encouragement it can, to overcome the problem. The school also recognises that some absences are unavoidable.

Also, parents/guardians and students must be aware that certain courses in the school require a minimum attendance for certification purposes. In all cases, it is the responsibility of students to make up for work missed during absences. Students should also be aware that in certain circumstances, work missed due to absence may be such, that the criteria for certification for a course cannot be met. This is particularly relevant for our post-primary students and may impede the student's ability to sit an exam.

Attendance records will be made available to individual students, the Department of Education and other statutory authorities with the right to access to such information. Attendance may also be referred to in written references provided by the school.

Whole School Positive Attendance Strategy

- Welcoming and safe school environment
- Parental involvement
- Weekly Assembly promoting positive behaviour
- Staff members modelling punctuality
- Community links (library, park, cinema, shopping, etc.)
- Positive feedback from school staff on attendance
- Encouragement of student voice
- Clear expectations
- Whole school initiatives (Christmas Fair, Jersey Day, Spray-painting, etc.)

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- Attend school each day as agreed on enrolment.

Teachers

- Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance.
- Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy and Policy to promote attendance.
- Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.
- Agree punctuality and attendance standards with students as part of classroom rules.
- Model positive behaviours, including punctuality, preparedness and engagement with the school day.
- Highlight in SSP (Student Support Plan), can be a target.
- Ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures.
- Make contact with parent guardian after two days unexplained absence, fill out Attendance Record (Appendix A) and give to principal to continue after five days unexplained absence and no contact with parent/guardian.
- Support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling to adhere the procedures and strategies detailed in this document.

SNAs

- Support students to arrive to class on time and assisting with smooth transitions between activities and classes.
- Model positive behaviours, including punctuality, preparedness and engagement with the school day.
- Work collaboratively with teachers to encourage consistent attendance and support students experiencing attendance difficulties.

Principal

- Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance.
- Leads on the review and implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy.
- Monitor the implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy and Policy.
- Notifies TESS and the relevant EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensures support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.

Parents/Guardians

- Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 Section 17, parents are legally obliged to send their child to school.
- Under Section 18 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 parents are obliged to notify the school of the reason for the child's absence.
- Set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality.

- Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem.
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason.
- Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.
- Assistance/guidance on this can be found through the following link: https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/english_leaflet.pdf

Procedure

Should staff have a concern regarding attendance the following procedures will take place;

- After two days unexplained absence the class teacher will make a phone call home to check in and see how the student is.
- Should this attempt to make contact be unsuccessful and the student remain absent without explanation for a period of 5 concurrent school days that the issue will be referred to the Principal.
- In the interim period (three days) the teacher will continue their attempts to make contact.
- The Principal/ Deputy Principal will then request via Aladdin that the parent/guardian contact the school principal directly.
- If no contact is made and the absence continues to ten consecutive school days, the Principal will post a registered letter to confirm the previously provided contact details and inviting the parents/guardians to a meeting, and will contain a request for the parent/guardian to contact the school by a designated date (within 3 days). The sole purpose of this meeting, which may take place over Zoom/Teams to better facilitate the family, is to explore ways in which we at St. Peter's School can further support the student and family in this matter.
- If there are valid reasons provided at this point, e.g., illness, transport issues etc., the school will endeavour to alleviate the issue, to the best of our ability, in cooperation with parents/guardians.
- If the issue cannot be resolved, or the school receives no response to the letter, the matter will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)/ TESS.

Recording

- St. Peter's School record the attendance of all students every day the school is open. This includes the recording of non-attendance due to illness or any other absences.
- Attendance is recorded by teachers before 11am daily on Aladdin.
- If a student is absent with reason, the reason must be inserted into Aladdin.
- If a teacher is absent, the secretary/Deputy Principal will record the attendance in their place.
- School Attendance rates and absence reasons are recorded and reported to TUSLA in accordance with the current reporting requirements during the school year through the TUSLA online system.

Reporting

- The BOM annual report is submitted to TUSLA at the end of the academic year, detailing the overall levels of attendance during that school year.
- Where deemed necessary, the Principal will refer cases of ongoing and chronic absence to the Educational Welfare Officer/TUSLA, as regardless of the in-house procedure any student with 20 absences during the school year will be reported to the EWO and TUSLA.
- Schools report all students who have been absent 20 days or more by submitting Student Absence Reports (SAR) twice each year to TUSLA Education Support Services (TESS). In addition to this, schools report the total number of days lost through absence by submitting an Annual Attendance Report (AAR) to TESS at the end of the academic year. This is required after 20 unexplained absences.
- The Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by TUSLA to consult with the child's parents and with the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school.

This policy has been drawn up by the principal in collaboration with the staff of St. Peter's School and in consultation with the Board of Management. It will be made available to all members of the school community.

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended if necessary.

Rosemary Fahy

Eoin Ó Donnagáin

Principal St. Peter's School

Chairperson to the Board of Management

Signed:



Signed:



Date: 29th April 2026

Date: 29th April 2026

Appendix A

Attendance Record

Part A - Teacher

Student name:	
Teacher:	
Class:	

Number of days absent this school year:	
Unable to make contact with parent:	From XXXX to XXXX (5 School Days)
Referred to Principal: Yes/No	Date:

Part B – Principal

<i>Action</i>	<i>Date</i>
Meeting requested via Aladdin:	
Meeting requested via registered post:	
Referral to TESS:	

Appendix B

Graduated Attendance

Graduated attendance supports students who are newly enrolled or returning after prolonged absence. Arrangements are temporary, individualised, and designed to lead to full-time attendance. Each plan is determined on a case-by-case basis, reflecting the unique needs and capacity of the student to engage in a full school day.

Students may begin by attending selected classes or structured activities, with a gradual introduction to all aspects of the school day. The structure of the plan considers age, developmental stage, learning, social, emotional, or medical needs, previous educational experience, and consultation with parents/guardians and relevant professionals.

Progression to full attendance is guided by student engagement, emotional readiness, capacity to regulate, documented behaviours of concern, staff feedback, and ongoing communication with parents/guardians. Plans/timetables are documented in writing, reviewed regularly, and adjusted as necessary to support successful integration.

The Principal/Deputy Principal approves and oversees arrangements. Class teachers monitor engagement and provide feedback, while parents/guardians collaborate with the school to support consistency between home and school.

Appendix C

Reduced School Day

St. Peter's School may use reduced school days in limited circumstances where it is in the best interests of a student. A reduced school day occurs when a student attends for less than the full day or fewer than five days per week, by agreement with the school.

Use of reduced school days follows Circular 0047/2021 and The Use of Reduced School Days – Guidelines for Schools on Recording and Notification.

Reduced days are only considered after appropriate supports and interventions have been implemented. Where used, they form part of an agreed student support plan and include a graduated reintegration approach to support the student's return to full-time attendance.

Procedures:

- Written parental/guardian consent (or the student if aged 18+) is required and may be withdrawn at any time.
- Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) will be notified by the first day of any reduced day arrangement.
- Plans will specify start, review and end dates, supports provided, and actions to facilitate return to full attendance.
- Reduced school days are time-limited, ideally no more than six weeks, and cannot automatically carry into a new academic year.
- Reviews will occur before the end of the agreed period; extensions require further written consent and notification to TESS.
- Records of all arrangements will be maintained and made available to TESS or the Department Inspectorate if requested.
- If parental consent is not given or withdrawn and the school continues the arrangement, it is treated as a suspension, appealable under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.



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Reduced School Day Plan

This plan has been designed in line with the provisions of Circular 47/2021 and The Use of Reduced School days, Guidelines for Schools on recording and notification of the use of Reduced School days. An extension of this plan will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and only with the further written consent of parents/guardians.

Student name	
Class	
Date of meeting to discuss and agree plan	
Start date of plan	
End date of plan	

Plan for graduated regime of school attendance which increases steadily and incrementally toward full attendance - attendance times, arrangements for transport.
Details of educational supports or interventions to be provided for the student during the period of the reduced school day
Actions required to support the student's return to school and reintegration to a full-time school day
Name of contact person in the school with whom the parents/guardians may communicate with in relation to this plan

Checklist

This plan has been discussed and agreed in collaboration with the student's parents/guardians.	
The student's parents/guardians have been informed of their right to withdraw consent for this plan at any time.	
The student's parents/guardians have been informed that TESS educational welfare officer can provide assistance and advice if required.	
Parents/guardians have been provided with a copy of the Guidelines.	

By signing in the space below, parents/guardians' consent to this plan and acknowledge the content.

Parent / Guardian: _____

Principal: _____

Date of notification to:

Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) of the decision to place a student on a reduced school day no later than the first day of the commencement of each episode of a reduced school day.	
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**Notice of Withdrawal of Consent for Reduced School Day to
the Principal of St. Peter's School**

Name of student: _____

Name of parent/ Guardian: _____

I wish to withdraw my consent to a Reduced School Day with effect from: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Date: _____