

St. Joseph's Grammar School

Scoil Ghramadaí Naomh Iósaef



Attendance Policy and Procedures (Student Copy)

2015 – 2016

To be ratified by BOG September 2015

Context

St Joseph's Grammar School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. Full attendance is vital to:

- Ensure success in all aspects of school life, including public examinations
- Ensure that each student is within the care of the school
- Secure a positive reference which will assist in gaining a place in further education and / or employment

It is a legal requirement that registered students of compulsory school age attend regularly and punctually. An explanation for every absence is required. If such explanation is not forthcoming from the student's parent/guardian, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence is an absence without permission from a Head of Year or member of Senior Management and includes all unexplained or unjustified absence. Minding the house, looking after family members, shopping or going on a holiday in term time will not normally be acceptable reasons for absence.

Role of the School

Our school will:

- Encourage 100% attendance
- Give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Establish strong home school links to be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance
- Investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve problems as quickly as possible.

Every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the students its importance for their education. This requires all teaching staff to attend regularly, arrive on time for lessons, be well prepared and maximize the use of class time.

Role of Parents

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend school and arrive in good time for class each morning.

- A student should only be absent for an unavoidable reason which would usually mean ill-health or family bereavement.
- Except in exceptional circumstances, medical and dental appointments etc. should not be made during school hours. Parents should provide a note along with an appointment card for their child to show to their Form Teacher. Pupils will be issued with a Permission Slip (Appendix 1) by the Form Teacher to present at the school office when signing out in the Early Leavers Book.
- If a student is unfit to attend, parents should contact the school office before 9.30a.m on the first day of absence (an absence note will not be required if explanation for absence is given).
- If parents/guardians do not contact the school office to provide reason for absence they should provide a written, signed note on return of their son/daughter to school. This should be in the form of a letter to the Form Teacher or via an absence note in the Student Planner (Appendix 1b).

- The practice of parents withdrawing students during term time to go on holidays is very strongly discouraged.

Please Note:

For child protection reasons, pupils in Years 8-12 should not be signed out by anyone other than a parent/guardian. Where this is not possible, written permission from parents /guardians should be presented to office staff, indicating the reason for leaving school early and the name, address and relationship of the person collecting the pupil. Proof of identity may be required.

Role of students

- To value education and attend all classes required by his/her timetable.
- To be punctual for school. Students must be in by 8.50a.m at the latest, to ensure that they are in their registration rooms/year assembly by 8.55a.m. Students who arrive **after this time** must report to reception in the school office, where the time and reason for lateness will be recorded in the **Latecomers Book. They then proceed immediately to class.** Any student who is late for a valid reason must provide the Form Teacher with a note from a parent/guardian.
A student who is late **without a valid reason, three times** in any given term will be required to do after school detention.
- Morning Registration closes at 10.35 a.m. Students who arrive after this time should report to reception as above but will be marked absent for the morning session.
- Students must remain on the school premises at all times throughout the school day. The exceptions to this rule are as follows:
 - In the case of an unavoidable medical or dental appointment [note required from parent/appointment card], a student, having first obtained the permission of his/her Form Teacher and been issued with a permission slip (Appendix 1), must sign The Early Leavers Book at the school office, and sign back in on his/her return. This is to ensure that, as is our legal obligation, we have an up-to-date and accurate record at all times of those who are (and are not) on the school premises.
- The student should bring a note from his/her parent to the Form Teacher on the day of return from any period of absence if the parent has not contacted the school by telephone to provide reason for absence (Appendix 1b).
- It is the student's responsibility to catch up on any work missed.
- If a student truants from class/school he/she should also catch up on any work missed. The student will be sanctioned in line with the school discipline policy. **An unexplained absence shall be treated as truancy.**
- Students in Years 8-12 whose attendance falls between **95% and 85%** will be interviewed by Form Teacher/Year Head.
- Students in Years 8-12 whose attendance falls below **85%** will be interviewed by Mrs McGleenan and if absence persists will be referred to the EWS. Parents/Guardians will be informed of student referral.

Post 16 students whose attendance rates fall below 90% will be interviewed by the Head of Sixth Form.

Students eligible for E.M.A payment will not receive their payment unless they have full attendance in all classes except in exceptional circumstances e.g. family bereavement, family wedding, and attendance at interviews.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy and the procedures outlined within will be the subject of ongoing review within the Form Teacher and Year Head meetings. The Heads of Year and Form Teachers will review termly the targets for improvement and the success of the strategies for profiling high attendance. Feedback will also be encouraged from students and parents. Parents are invited to share their observations with either the Form Teacher, Year Head, Vice Principal or Principal.