



## **Attendance Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

St. Joseph's Community College seeks to create an inclusive school community where values, attitudes and behaviours consistent with its Christian ethos are fostered. In partnership with parents and the wider community, it respects individual self-worth and aims to provide a safe environment in which each student may achieve his/her full potential inclusive of spiritual and academic.

## **2. Scope**

This strategy applies to all students, staff and parents/ guardians of Saint Joseph's Community College and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality. This was developed in consultation with all school partners including the Board of Management, staff, parents association and students.

## **3. Rationale**

Saint Joseph's Community College recognises the importance of attendance and punctuality as an important element in teaching and learning and it also positively contributes to the good order and operation of the school. They are also valuable characteristics for our students to develop and to adopt into adult and working life.

## **4. Objectives**

Through the implementation of this policy Saint Joseph's Community College expect to:

- Highlight the importance of attendance and punctuality amongst students and parents
- To encourage full attendance at school

## **5. Legislation**

In accordance with The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post-primary school, whichever comes later. The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) was established to support school attendance and to follow up on children who don't attend school regularly.

## **6. Communication**

Clear modes of communication are fundamental between all partners in Saint Joseph's Community College to successfully implement this policy. The predominant mode of communication between parents/ guardians and school is the school's journal. This will be used to communicate absences and lateness. The journal contains the following categories of notes, each to be suitably used to communicate an absence/ late with the school:

<b>Absence note</b>	to communicate absence(s), illness and foreseen absences
<b>Late note</b>	to communicate a student's lateness with the school/ Year Head

In unforeseen circumstances, parents/ guardians are requested to communicate with via telephone with the school's office. Further details relating to communication are explained in section 11 *Absences*.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

Saint Joseph's Community College recognises the contribution of all members of the school's community to the development and implementation of this policy.

### **7.1. Staff**

All staff play an important role in monitoring the attendance and punctuality of our students including:

1. Class teachers record attendance for the students present in their classes and record those who arrive late
2. Year Heads monitor their students overall attendance and punctuality in addition to the role of the class teacher
3. The Deputy Principal and Principal monitor the overall attendance and punctuality of all students. The Principal is obliged to report absences in excess of 20 school days to the NEWB.

The staff support students in forming best practice for attendance and punctuality and will reaffirm students for their best efforts on this matter. Persistent unexplained lateness will be addressed in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **7.2. Students**

1. That you come to school every day and arrive on time
2. That you avoid being late for class and creating disruption to your class and teacher by doing so
3. That you present an absent note to your Year Head on you return to school
4. That you present a note to your Year Head in the event that you will be signing out during the school day
5. If arriving late to school that you present yourself at the office and sign in. similarly, if you leave during the school day and return thereafter, that you sign back in at the office.
6. Not to leave the school grounds at any time without first obtaining permission from your Year Head/ Deputy Principal/ Principal and signing out at the office

### **7.3. Parents/ Guardians**

Parents/ guardians must notify the school if your child is absent, including the reason why. Explained absences are communicated to the school via the relevant slip included in the student journal. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act

2000, Section 18, the school authority is responsible for notifying the NEWB where a student is absent for more than 20 days in a school year.

## **8. Attendance**

Saint Joseph's Community College recognises the importance of good attendance and punctuality. We expect our students to attend school every day and to arrive on time. Regular or prolonged absences and poor punctuality will have a negative impact on a student's learning and impacts upon the teaching and learning of the whole class when a student arrives in late.

## **9. Procedures**

The school day begins at **9:10am**. Students are expected to prepare themselves for morning classes at the first bell (9:00am) and to be at their first class before 9:10am.

Morning break is from **11:10am – 11:25am**. Students are expected to prepare themselves for their mid-morning classes when the first bell rings and to be at their class before 11:25am.

Lunch is from **12:45pm – 1:25pm**. Students are expected to prepare for class when the first bell rings and to be at their class before 1:25pm. It is the responsibility of all students who go home or down town for lunch to ensure they return to school and prepare themselves for class as described.

## **10. Student Lockers**

Student lockers are a valuable asset for student to have access to however they must only be used at appropriate times. Students are encouraged to access their lockers at the following times:

1. Anytime in the morning prior to the commencement of the 9:10am class.
2. During morning break
3. At lunch time
4. At the end of the school day.

It is the responsibility of every student to ensure they adequately prepare themselves for the classes they have and this includes sourcing whatever materials necessary that they have stored in their lockers. The school discourages students using lockers outside of these times because:

1. Accessing lockers located on corridors and in cloakrooms leads to congestion at the change of class and to loitering in these areas
2. It delays the start of class and wastes valuable class time
3. Students going to lockers during class disrupts the lesson and impedes teaching and learning
4. It is bad practice and defeats the objectives of this policy

In exceptional circumstances a student may be granted permission by their class teacher to go to their locker. In this instance, the teacher will include a note in the student's journal and he/ she will take this with him/ her to the locker.

## **11. Lateness**

Students who arrive late to school must first go to the school's office and sign in. He/ she is expected to produce a note from their parent/ guardian explaining why they are late. He/ she will then be recorded as *late* in the school's attendance system and the student will proceed to class. In the event the school's office is unattended, the student will go to the Deputy Principal/ Principal who will record his/ her lateness.

*Saint Joseph's Community College views lateness as an undesirable trait because:*

1. Arriving late to school doesn't provide adequate time to prepare for class
2. Arriving late into class disrupts the teaching and learning taking place
3. Valuable class time is lost and it also creates challenges for the student in trying to compensate for lost time
4. Repeated lateness is bad practice and defeats the objectives of this policy

## **12. Absences**

In the event of absences occurring, the following sections detail the appropriate procedure that the relevant members of the school's community will adopt in dealing with each case.

### **12.1. Absence due to illness or other reason**

A student must present an absence note to his/ her Year Head on their return to school. The student may hand this directly to his/ her Year Head or place the note in the letterbox located across from the secretary's office. The school requests notes because:

1. All absences must be explained
2. The school is required to report absences in excess of 20 school days to the NEWB

### **12.2. Foreseen absences**

When a parent/ guardian becomes aware that their son/ daughter will be absent on a given day or part thereof e.g. medical appointment, the school requests to be informed of this in advance of the absence. This is to be communicated via the absent notes section in the school journal to the Year Head as described above.

### **12.3. When a student is to leave during the school day**

If a student needs to leave school during the school day e.g. foreseen absence, the following procedure applies:

1. The student will place an absence note, signed by his/ her parent/ guardian into the letterbox across from the secretary's office before the commencement of the 9:10am class.
2. The foreseen absence details will be updated on the students attendance file and a text will be issued to his/ her parent/ guardian to inform them a note is presented for their child to sign out.
3. The student will proceed to the secretary's office at the time specified on the note and sign out.

*We adopt this procedure because:*

1. We are responsible for all students entrusted into our care
2. We need to accurately record all absences during the day.
3. A student cannot be allowed to leave the school premises without explanation from his/ her parent(s)/ guardian(s)

### **12.4. Illness during the school day**

If a student becomes ill during the school day:

1. If in class, the student will inform his/ her teacher.
2. The student will then go to the secretary's office where a phone call will be made to his/ her parent/ guardian.
3. The parent/ guardian will be informed their child is ill and will be requested to collect their child from the school's office.
4. The student will remain at the office until the parent/ guardian arrives.
5. The student and will sign out, accompanied by their parent/ guardians signature.

In all instances the school will communicate with the parent/ guardian via the school's office.

### **12.5. When a parent requests to collect their son/ daughter from school due to unforeseen reasons**

1. The parent/ guardian will make contact with the school's office and the necessary arrangements will be made.
2. The student will be informed and requested to come to the office to sign out.
3. The student will be collected at the office by his/ her parent/ guardian.
4. The student will present a note to his/ her Year head on their return to school, signed by his/ her parent/ guardian who made the request.

The school requests that parents/ guardians communicate directly with the school's office and not with their child.

### **13. Attendance incentives**

Saint Joseph's Community College will recognise students' who achieve full attendance in the school year by any of the following means:

- 13.1. Presenting students with a certificate of full attendance at an awards ceremony.
- 13.2. Letter issued by the school to the student, acknowledging their full attendance.

### **14. Attendance, punctuality and the Code of Behaviour**

Saint Joseph's Community College's Code of Behaviour recognises the importance of attending class every day and being on time for class. It also recognises that truancy is a serious transgression of the school's rules. Class teachers can impose sanctions for lateness consistent with this Code.

### **15. Monitoring**

The Principal will liaise with the Deputy Principal and Year Heads in monitoring the implementation of this policy.

### **16. Implementation**

The date from which the Policy will apply is 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016, which is the date of adoption by the Board of Management, Saint Joseph's Community College.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Clodagh Geraghty*  
**Chairperson of BOM**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*John Bones*  
**Secretary of BOM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_