

St. Peter's Primary School



Attendance Guide Booklet

Attendance Guide Booklet:

The St. Peter's Attendance Guide Booklet* has been designed for parents, teachers and the school to provide a greater understanding of what we can all do and how we can work together to improve attendance. The guide is based on the following understandings:

- There are many different efforts in place to promote school attendance.
- There are different levels of knowledge, understanding and experience of school attendance issues in the community.
- People have differing experiences of success regarding school attendance promotion efforts.
- No one group of people (i.e. parents, teachers, the school) is responsible for levels of school attendance.
- We all can do something differently, improve and change.

The guide lays out how we can improve attendance in the following sections;

1. What Parents can do - Seven Useful Tips.
2. What Teachers can do - A Six Step Plan for encouraging improved attendance.
3. What Schools can do - Eight Steps to bring school attendance strategy to life.
4. When is a child too sick for school? Guidelines for common illnesses, symptoms and signs and what to do.

Priority Actions

A number of Priority Actions have been put in place in St. Peter's to improve attendance and pupil attainment. For more details see school DEIS Plan.

1. Set up Attendance Care Team to monitor attendance and take action to improve attendance of the school and individual pupils.
2. Develop whole school attendance strategies to improve attendance.
3. Develop guidelines for parents, teachers and the school to improve attendance.
4. Monitoring attendance patterns of school and targeted pupils.
5. Breakfast Club, After School Clubs designed to increase pupil attainment.
6. Make parents aware of poor and improved attendance.

* Source: A special thanks to the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership for use of materials.
Adapted from Ballymun School Attendance Community Action Initiative

What can parents do to improve School Attendance?

After School Everyday:

- Make sure that the homework is done as early as possible
- Keep the school uniform for school wear only

The Night Before:

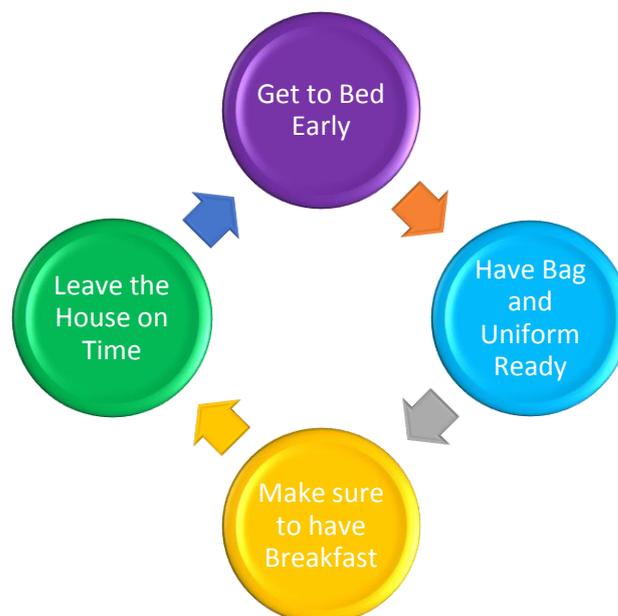
Try and have ready

- School bag
- Lunch (if making own or supplementing provided school lunch)
- Uniform – laid out ready to go beside the child's bed.
- Get your child to bed at a reasonable hour every night
- Set the alarm on your mobile phone or the alarm clock for the morning

Before School Everyday:

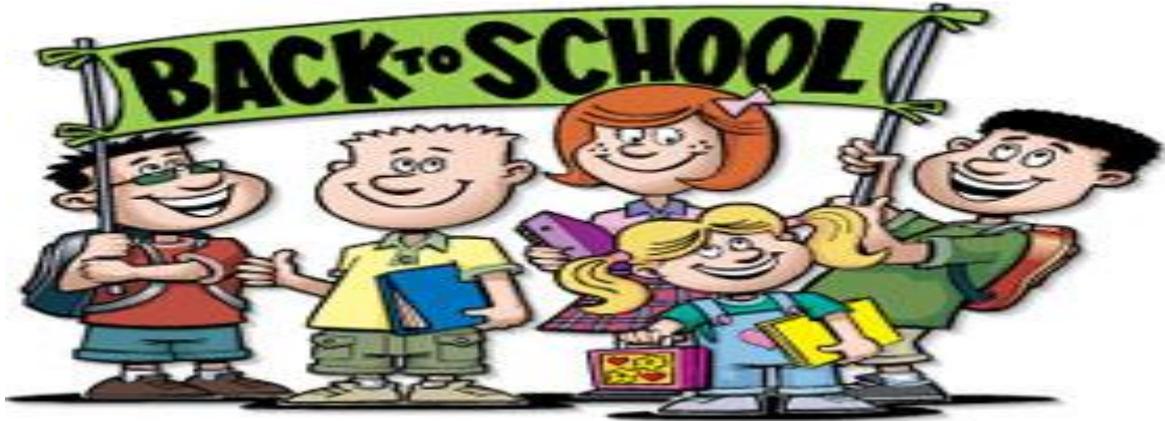
- Get up on time in the morning so that you will not be rushing
 - Don't allow your child to watch television in the morning
 - Get your child to eat some breakfast every morning or attend the Breakfast Club in St. Peter's.
 - Talk positively about school to your child.
 - If possible don't allow your child go to the shop in the morning as this delays them and they could be late.
 - Let your child know that you or somebody they know will be there to collect him/her in the afternoon or that you/somebody they know will be waiting at home when they come in
 - You know your child best. Only keep your child at home if he / she is really sick.
- (see When is a child too sick for school section of booklet)

Helpful Attendance Routine



What can teachers do to improve School Attendance?

- Welcome students every morning.
- Praise each student for their attendance effort.
- Give students a reasonable amount of homework.
- All teachers should give homework each night. No homework at weekends.
- Reward students for good attendance.
- Promote school attendance strategies (see HSCL Teacher for more details)



What can the school do to improve School Attendance?

- Give efforts to promote attendance and attendance successes a high profile within the school (See DEIS Plan)
- Establish an Attendance Care Team in the school
- Keep up to date attendance records that are reviewed regularly by the Attendance Care Team in order to respond to patterns of non-attendance as well as patterns of good or improved attendance
- Create positive systems of reward for good and improved attendance (See DEIS Plan)
- Develop a greater awareness amongst students and their parents of the long-term benefits to be gained from a good attendance record
- Ensure a consistent approach to attendance promotion throughout the school
- Involve all stakeholders in supporting high expectations for school attendance and attainment
- Monitor that stakeholder involvement from the perspective of students, parents, teaching and other staff, school management and the community at large.

When is a child too Sick for School?

There are three key reasons to keep a child home from school

1. Fever over 100.4 degrees F or 38°C
2. The child may have a contagious illness or rash
3. The child is not well enough to participate in class

- The average child has 6 to 12 illnesses per year, so sickness is a part of normal childhood. It can be difficult to balance the child's school attendance with the risk of spreading the illness to others in school.
- Fever is a symptom which usually indicates that the body is fighting an infection. A child with fever over 100.4 degrees F (38°C) needs to stay home until the fever is gone for 24 hours.
- Rashes that are itchy or scaly may be contagious and need to be checked by the nurse or doctor. If a child with a rash is ill looking, is having trouble swallowing or breathing, they need to be seen by the doctor.
- A cough need not keep a child from school unless it is interfering with sleep or ability to take part in activities.
- Coughs and runny noses can persist for up to two weeks after a cold. Children can return to school once they no longer have a fever.
- Children can attend school with a mild sore throat unless they have other symptoms as well, such as fever, vomiting or abdominal pain.
- Children with a vomiting illness (repeated vomiting) need to stay home until the vomiting stops and they are eating normally.
- Children with diarrhoea also need to stay home until stools have been normal for at least 24 hours.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the most important and effective way of preventing the spread of contagious diseases.

Guidelines for common childhood illnesses

| Illness | Symptoms and Signs | What to Do |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Fever | 100.4°F or 38°C | Stay home, must be fever free for 24 hours before returning |
| Headache | If the child can't do normal activities | Stay home |
| Vomiting | More than twice in 24 hours or if diarrhoea also | Stay home until 24 hours after last vomit |
| Diarrhoea | More than 3 stools in 24 hours | Home until 24 hours after last bout. |
| Sore throat | If not eating or fever | Return as soon as well or 24 hours after starting antibiotic if prescribed |
| Cold symptoms | Stuffed or runny nose, sneezing, mild cough | No need to stay home |
| Cough | If the cough disrupts normal activity | Return to school after doctor has cleared child of serious illness e.g. whooping cough |
| Asthma | If the child can't do normal activities. If coughing a lot. | Needs to see the doctor or asthma nurse to review treatment. |
| Conjunctivitis (red eyes) | With yellow or green pus | May return 24 hours after treatment started |
| Chicken pox | Some children have a fever, abdominal pain, sore throat, headache, or a vague sick feeling a day or 2 before the rash appears | Return when the blisters are all dry and crusted over |
| Hand foot and mouth disease | Not infectious once rash appears | No need to stay home unless drooling |
| Impetigo | Patch of red, itchy skin. Blisters develop on this area, soon forming crusty, yellow-brown sores. | May return 24 hours after starting antibiotic medicine, 48 hours after starting antibiotic cream. Sores must be covered with dressing. |
| Ringworm | Ring-shaped or oval patch of scaly red skin | Return once started on treatment. Keep area covered. |
| Head lice | Spread directly from head to head so short and tidy hair may help | They are a nuisance, not a reason to stay home. |
| Doctor or dentist visit | | Back to school afterward unless the dentist or doctor says stay home |