



Assumption Junior School

Newsletter

February 2015

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Q. 1 I have my child in the line and on time.... *(please choose one of the following)*

every day () **most days** () **sometimes** () **rarely** () **never** ()

How would you answer that question if it were put to you? The majority of parents have their children in the class line in plenty of time each morning and these children are in their classrooms and working from the beginning of the school day. This is as it should be and I am happy to acknowledge the efforts of these parents.

However, **a worrying number of pupils are arriving late for class on a regular basis, some on a daily basis**, and I wonder if their parents are fully aware of the impact this has on their child. If you are a parent who has allowed late arrival to become the norm, can I ask you to consider the following:

- Obviously, if your child is late, s/he misses out on a part of the day's work. Do you know what learning s/he is missing? Have you decided it is not important? Have you told your child it is not important? By not having your child in the classroom on time, you have in fact given him/her the message that the lesson isn't important enough to be there on time. When you get the **School Report** this month, see if there might be a link between the **topics needing more attention** and the early morning classes that s/he misses every time you are late.
- The school day is short for the children. If you arrive 10 minutes late, it takes less than one month to clock up the equivalent of a full day missed. **With ten months in the year, your child has missed 10 Days.** Extend that across 8 years in primary school and s/he has missed the equivalent of 80 days, or approximately **3 months**. Now do the calculation if your routine is **to arrive half an hour late... Each year, your child gets 1 month less teaching than other children.** When you add in other absences, that can easily amount to a **full year lost out of 8 years in primary school.** Would you be happy if 12¹/₂ % of your child's entitlement to education was removed by the Government, for example?
- **How does the child feel about being late?** For many, it means each day begins with a rush and with **tension**. School can become associated with these negative feelings when we should be doing everything to encourage a positive experience of learning.
- Why does it happen? **Traffic? Parking? Buses?** There can be any number of reasons but the bottom line is you can be on time if others can. It simply means you start a little earlier in the morning. Like it or not, you are making a choice that negatively affects your child.

In an effort to change behaviours, beginning on Monday next, I plan to do the following....

- Have class teachers positively reinforce the punctuality of those who arrive on time
- Have class teachers record the time each child arrives after the class has entered the classroom. When the equivalent of a day has clocked up, we will report that as a day's absence to Túsla, The Child and Family Agency which is now the government agency that deals with school attendance.
- Close off access to the corridors from 09.00 and have all late arrivals come in through the main door at the office where a record will be kept of late arrivals.

Please understand that this is for the good of the children. I understand that there will be occasions when people who are normally on time will get caught up in this and I will do my best to be fair and reasonable but I cannot turn a blind eye to the completely avoidable lateness that is habitual in some cases.

Parents' Association Draw - envelopes were sent out recently. Copies are available from the Office if you need one.

School Reports and Parent Teacher Meetings

You know that Junior and Senior Infants have been doing some simple Literacy and Numeracy tests over the last few weeks. These are almost complete and class teachers are preparing **progress reports** for each pupil. We plan to send the reports home on **Monday, February 9th** *[Please note that, for all classes other than Second Class, this is the only time of year that we send home formal reports.]*

Parent - Teacher meetings will be arranged to give parents an opportunity to come in and discuss the report and their child's progress in general. Most of these meetings will be scheduled during the afternoons of **Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 16th - 18th February** but be on the lookout for a note with details of your appointment. If you haven't received this note before **Fri 13th**, you should check with your son's teacher.

Dates for **Mid - Term Break** are Thursday, February **19th** and Friday, February **20th**.

Sight and Hearing tests for all Junior Infants and for pupils in other classes as requested, will be done during the week beginning **February 23rd**.

Enrolment for Junior Infants, **Sept 2015**, and for other classes, is under way. Demand for places is very high. If you have relatives or neighbours who plan to enrol their child in the school, please check with them if they have applied.

Photographer

The photographer will visit the Junior School on **Thursday** and **Friday March 12th and 13th**. He will take individual photos of all Junior Infants, group photos of all 20 classes and any other individual pupils who request it. We usually collect sisters or brothers to be photographed as a family group.

Proofs are sent home shortly after the photos are taken and parents can then choose whether to buy copies, the sizes they want etc.