



Rolla: 18000w

Attendance Policy

Rationale

The rationale of the attendance policy of Scoil Mhuire Naofa is

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- To follow legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- To recognise the role of the NEWB
- To recognise and be aware of levels of disadvantage
- To appreciate changing attitudes to education.

Aims and Objectives

We at Scoil Mhuire Naofa endeavor to

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Identify pupils at risk
- Promote a positive learning environment
- Enable learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Foster an appreciation of learning
- Identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- Ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the school secretarial staff make returns to NEWB. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhair Tinreamh.

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Punctuality

School begins at 8.40 am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Amended School Day 2013/2014 – 8.40 to 2.20 (1.20 for Infants)

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| Príomhoide: | Anne Marie Moylan | Chairperson: | Maurice O'Donoghue |
| L. Príomhoide: | Val Quigley | Secretary: | Margot Hartnett |

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Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) on www.aladdinschools.ie of each class on a daily basis. Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) is updated automatically through Aladdin. It is printed and signed by principal each month and stored in the office.

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken by 10.00 am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Reason for absence is inputted into Aladdin either by class teacher, or parent through the parental app. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. Parents who collect pupils early must sign them out at the office. Late arrivals are recorded by class teacher on Aladdin.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of the NEWB particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of their child's attendance during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are contacted by the Principal.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- ensuring children are happy
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- Certificates of Attendance awarded annually

National Education Welfare Board

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days.

The NEWB is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Scoil Mhuire Naofa endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school. However, the staff remains vigilant so that 'risk' students are identified early. Risk students can be categorised as those who miss

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more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter or a note in the homework diary when this occurs. A meeting between parents, the teacher and/or the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

New entrants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction process, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

Our homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and is available on the school website. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child frequently has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide a snack and a drink.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's policy on Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity.

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'.

Section 21 of the Act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and 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. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the NEWB five times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year. This information will be communicated to the school community through the school's newsletter.

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Transfer to Another School

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools, the Resource Centre and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from *Scoil Mhuire Naofa* to another school, the schools records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
- When a child transfers into *Scoil Mhuire Naofa* confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from *Scoil Mhuire Naofa* to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parents

The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education Welfare Act 2000*. This information is disseminated by regular school circulars. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment.

Parents will receive communication from the school regarding attendance in the following circumstances:

- Letter to parents regarding a child's absence where no written explanation has been given to the school.
- Letter regarding a child's absence where the school is concerned about a child's non attendance and the concern is being passed to the NEWB.
- Letter regarding a child's absence where the school is not concerned about the pattern of absences but where the child's name is being passed to the NEWB.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
- making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance;
- discussing planned absences with the school.
- refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time

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- showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- encouraging them to participate in school activities.
- praising and encouraging their children's achievements.
- instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
- ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- notifying, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar rolla records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy was updated in Scoil Mhuire Naofa 2012.

References:

Don't let your Child Miss Out - NEWB 2004
Education Welfare Act 2000
Education Act 1998
Section 29 Education Act
Empty Desks - CDU Mary Immaculate

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Dear Parents,

I am writing to tell you a little about the Education Welfare Act, 2000 and about some of the responsibilities we now share under the Act.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD EDUCATION

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every child stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD

Under the law, 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 Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

OUR SCHOOL POLICY *[School can insert its own policy here]*

As a parent, you must let the school know if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that reasons must be given in writing. The school will notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise to concern.

If your child is sick or is absent for other good reasons, no action will be taken by the NEWB. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be visited by an Educational Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education.

Further information concerning the new service and about school attendance matters generally can be obtained from the national Lo-Call Education Helpline (Telephone 1890 36 36 66) which is staffed by an Educational Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely,
Anne Marie Moylan

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Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding <Insert name> attendance at school.

<Insert name> has been absent for __ days. The school has not received any written communication from you. You are asked to contact the school as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to discuss the matter with <name of teacher>.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary whichever comes later. When your child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for this absence every time. It is school policy that you do this in writing.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

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I am writing to you regarding <Insert name> attendance at school.

The school has written to you about this matter but has not received an explanation from you. The school is now very concerned that < Insert name> is not receiving an education and we will be writing to the National Educational Welfare Board to pass on our concern. An Educational Welfare officer may therefore be in contact with you shortly to discuss the matter further.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary education whichever comes later. When a child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for the absence every time. It is school policy to do this in writing.

If you wish to discuss < Insert name> attendance, please contact the school to arrange an appointment to meet with <name of teacher> as soon as possible.

Thank you for you co-operation in this matter.

Yours truly,

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding <Insert name> attendance at school.

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As <insert name> has now been absent for 20 days or more, the school must pass the information to the National Educational Welfare Board. An Educational Welfare Officer may therefore be in contact with you to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

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