

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle

Attendance Policy

The Attendance Strategy for Scoil Mhuire na Dea Comhairle was formulated in consultation with the staff of the school and in consultation with the parents and BOM. It was reviewed in November 2021

The aims of the attendance policy in Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle are to :

- encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Act.
- identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- 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 practical, obstacles to school attendance.

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated when deemed appropriate by teacher/principal.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - The Education Welfare Board.
 - The Education Welfare Officer

Punctuality

School is open from 8.45 a.m. and all pupils and teachers are expected to be in their classrooms at the official starting time 8.50am. 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.

Guidance for Parents

In line with the Education Welfare Act 2000, every absence by a child must be explained in writing by a parent/guardian.

Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays

during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school.

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 approve of school attendance.
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
- 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 in writing, if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Pupils

Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.

Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

Pupil Absence

Written explanations are provided to the class teacher and are retained.

Children are not permitted to leave the school premises during school hours except with the consent of a parent/guardian.

Section 21 of the Education Welfare Act 2000 places an obligation on the school to notify the Education Welfare Officer of absences exceeding 20 school days or more.

All teachers keep a record of all absences on a daily basis on the Aladdin system. This system also provide Aoife Corbett with a daily count of any absent children. It is the teachers' responsibility to inform parents of 15 days absences by furnishing them with the letter in appendix 1.

Teachers provide Aoife will the relevant data concerning removal of pupils from roll book, cumulative 20 days absence, or expulsion or suspension of any pupils. They also catagorise the absences by inputting explanations for absences on the Aladdin System for the purpose of NEWB report. It is Aoife's responsibility to submit these records to the NEWB. Copies of communication to parents is kept in student's file, absence letters are scanned and kept in a file a file in their roll book.

A special trophy is awarded to pupils at the end of term who have not missed any day.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Monitor all absences and contact parents with concerns.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Contact parents in instances (where deemed appropriate by teacher/principal) where absences are not explained in writing.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

Absence of Teachers

Where a teacher is absent without substitute cover the Board of Management will make every effort to facilitate substitute cover. However if this is not possible, the Principal and class teachers will divide the class for the day. **NB Note due to Covid 19 restrictions classes at present cannot be split so SET Teacher provide cover in instances where a substitute teacher is not available.**

Substitute teachers are employed according to the regulations of the DES. Every effort is made to employ qualified teachers in substitute positions.

In the event of a course day absence the class teacher leaves work for the children to do during the day. The Principal and class teachers will divide the class for the day. **NB Note due to Covid 19 restrictions classes at present cannot be split so SET Teacher provide cover in instances where a substitute teacher is not available.**

The prior approval of the Principal/ Chairperson of the Board of Management must be granted for all absences. Teachers, SNA's and other staff members are requested to contact the principal by telephone or text message to inform of an absence as early as possible.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Principal and staff will co-ordinate the progress of the plan, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report to staff on findings.

The plan will be monitored and evaluated every May as the school year nears an end and we can reflect meaningfully on how strategies have improved attendance. The following will be consulted in appraising the Attendance Strategy

- o Teachers
- o Pupils
- o Parents
- o BOM/DES Inspectorate

Ratification and Communication

This plan has been ratified by the Board of Management on 15th Dec 2020 and parents can inspect the plan in the school office or on the school website.

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Signed: Jan Connolly
(Chairperson)

Date: 10/11/2021

Appendix 1

Dear Parents/Guardians,

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 sixth class.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD

Under the Act, 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 follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

OUR SCHOOL POLICY

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. Under the terms of the Education and Welfare Act the school must give quarterly and annual returns of attendance to the N. E.W. B.

If your child is sick or 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 for absences, you may be visited by the 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

Mary McNelis
Principal