

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 September 2023 and ratified by BOM in October 2023.

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 or school organised events/teacher led activities.

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 Aladdin. Parents are informed of absences of 15 days or more by email. Letter in appendix 1.

Teachers provide Aoife Corbett will the relevant data concerning removal of pupils from roll, cumulative 20 days absence, or expulsion or suspension of any pupils. They also categorise the absences on Aladdin and record communication from Parents on same which is then used 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 or on Aladdin. Written absence notes are kept on file either electronically or in the Student's file.

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 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 email, 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, SET and class teachers will divide the class for the day or if classes are too large to divide, SET teachers will take the class for the day.

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 or if classes are too large to divide, SET teachers will take the class for the day.

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 2nd October 2023 and parents can inspect the plan in the school office or on the school website.

Signed: Royce Fealty 2.10.23
(Chairperson)

Date: _____
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

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle

Headford

Co. Galway

H91 FD71

093- 35377

Date:

Dear Parents,

As you are aware in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act, schools are now obliged to report to the National Educational Welfare Board any children who are absent from school for 20 or more days in a school year.

To help you to avoid, if possible, being in this position, I wish to bring to your attention that your child _____ has, at this stage accumulated (_____) absences. (Days present: _____ Days absent: _____)

We realise that in general there are good reasons for these absences e.g. illness, family difficulties, etc. However, it is quite easy to accumulate absences and this note is only intended to keep you aware of the current situation.

Yours sincerely,

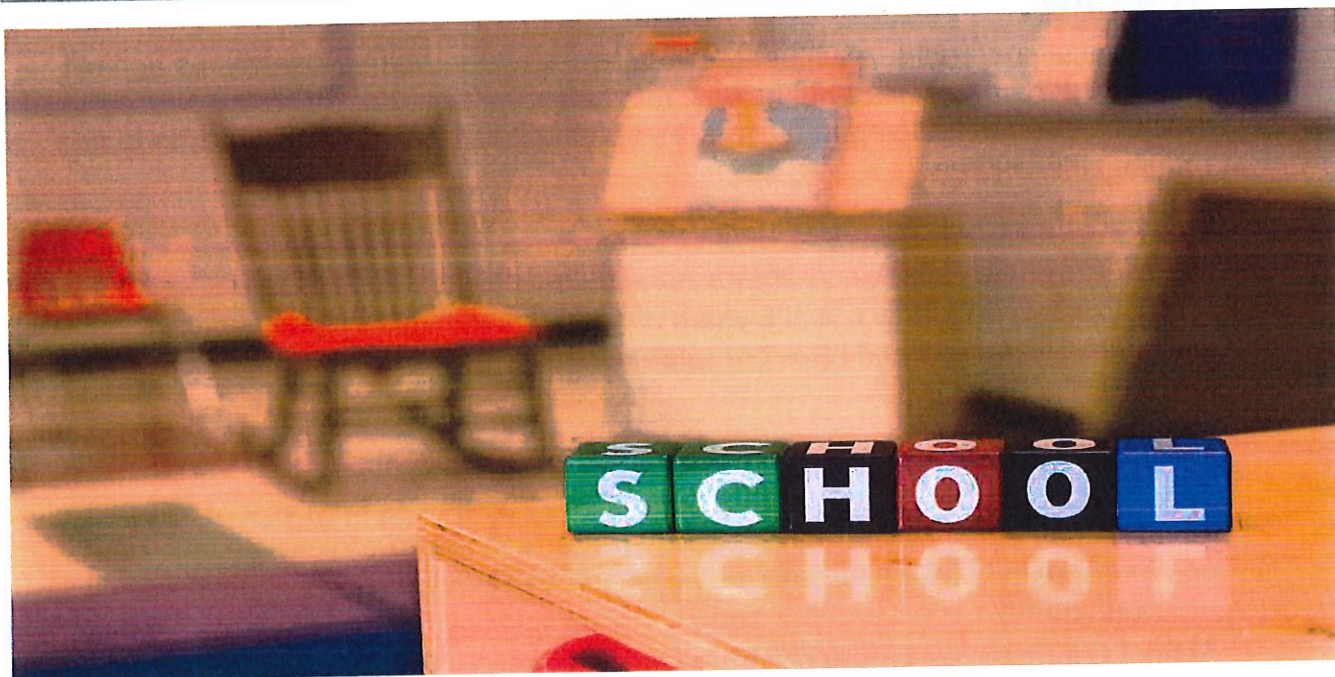
Mary McNelis (Principal)

Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

STRATEGY BOOKLET

Everyday Counts!



TUSLA –

Legal Framework / Role

What Parents can do

Useful Tips

What Teachers can do

Plan to encourage

Improved attendance

What Schools can do

Support Attendance strategy

When is a child too Sick for School?

Guidelines for common illnesses

Symptoms and signs, what to do.

This booklet is available to download from our school website. headfordgirlsns.com

Tel: 09335377 email: headfordgirlsns@gmail.com

Attendance Matters

Most pupils go to school every day and enjoy it. Some children do experience difficulties in attending school for a variety of reasons. Sometimes parents are aware of this. Sometimes they aren't. The Education Welfare Service of TUSLA work under the Education Welfare Act 2000 to ensure children between the ages of 6 & 16 attend school on a regular basis or are otherwise in receipt of a minimum standard of Education. It also is responsible for the maintenance of the national register of children who are being "home educated" and the assessment of the education provided.

The Law

The Education Welfare Act 2000 allows the TUSLA to bring prosecutions against parents who are "failing or neglecting" to cause their children to attend a recognised school. Upon conviction parents may be fined up to €1000 each or face up to one month imprisonment.

School Leaving Age

Section 2 of the Education Welfare Act requires children resident in the state to attend school when they reach 6 years of age. Children may **NOT** leave school until they are 16 years old and have **completed** 3 years post primary education whichever occurs later.

Our Work

The EWS of TUSLA aims to reduce unnecessary absences from school by offering support and help to parents, pupils and schools. The key to achieving this is good communication between the school, home and EWS so that any problems can be resolved quickly.

School Principals are legally obliged to maintain a register of pupils attending his or her school. High levels of school absenteeism must be reported by the Principal to their EWO. Upon receipt of this referral the EWO begins a process of intervention aimed at finding a resolution to the issues preventing the child from attending school.

The EWO will work with a range of local and national services to assist the child, family and school. These include the HSE social work department, National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education, School Completion Programme, Home School & Community Liaison Officers, Family Support Services, GRET, ISPC, Child and Mental Health Services, Child Psychology etc.

The EWS not only work with children who present with school attendance issues but also work with students whose behaviour in school has led to extended periods of suspension or permanent exclusion from school. We also assist families whose children have not been able to secure a place in a school for their children to attend.

Local Contact Details

EWS:

Unit 19, Sandyfort Business Centre, Grealishtown, Bohermore, Galway.

091 385302

www.tusla.ie

What can Parents do to improve School Attendance?*

The night before:

Try and have ready

- School bag
- Lunch
- Uniform
- 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 every day :

- 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
- Talk positively about school
- If possible don't allow your child go to the shop in the morning as this delays them and they could be late for school
- Let your child know that you will be there to collect him / her in the afternoon or that you 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 pages of this booklet for guidelines *When is a child too sick for school*)



"Ready for School Routine" - Easy steps to get to school today

1. Get up on time

2. Breakfast

3. Uniform

4. Books

5. Journal

6. Bag

7. Leave home on time

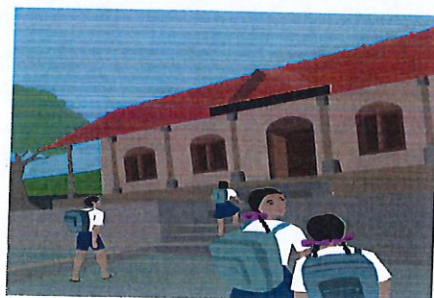
What can **Teachers** do to improve School Attendance?

- ◆ Welcome students every morning
- ◆ Praise each student for their effort
- ◆ Give students a reasonable amount of homework
- ◆ No homework at weekends (at primary school)
- ◆ Reward students for good attendance

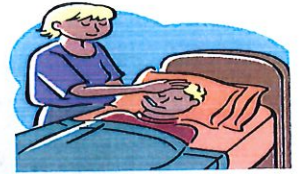


What can **Schools** do to improve School Attendance?**

- ◆ Give efforts to promote attendance and attendance successes a high profile within the school
- ◆ Keep up to date attendance records that are reviewed regularly 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
- ◆ 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 the 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 two 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 at home.

Produced by Dr Tara Conlon, Ballymun Family Practice, first floor Civic Centre September 2009.

TRACKER FOR YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL YEAR _____

Please keep this for future reference should your child's attendance be called into question at a later date.

CHILD NAME: _____ CLASS: _____

DAY / DATE	No. of days missed	Reason for absence	Medical cert or note given to school?
Example: Mon & Tues 8 th & 9 th Nov	2	High Temp	Note given to class teacher 10 th Nov

To date _____ your child has missed _____ days from school.

