



**Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa  
Two Mile Borris  
Co Tipperary**

## **Attendance Policy and Strategy Statement**

### **Introductory statement:**

This policy was formulated during a school planning day on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and involved all teachers. A review was carried out on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009. This policy was reviewed on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and further reviewed in May 2017.

### **Rationale:**

Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa drew up an attendance strategy statement with regard to-

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of the NEWB
- Levels of disadvantage
- Changing attitudes to education

**Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:** Refer to school ethos.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

The revised policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Identifying pupils at risk
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Fostering an appreciation of learning
- Identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- Identifying and removing, 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 of 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 9.20am. 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 Educational Welfare Board.

## **Defining and recording non-attendance**

- A parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend "a national school or other suitable school" on each day that the school is open for instruction.
- The school communicates with parents through written notes, the school year calendar and the Newsletter to inform them of the attendance requirements. When a child has been absent he/she must bring a pink form to school on his/her return to explain the reason for the absence. These forms are kept in the office to record absences of each child and to deem whether it is necessary to report to E. W. B. or not.
- We communicate the non-attendance of pupils and the effects that has on pupil learning verbally to parents.
- In the event of part of day absences the parent is required under the Education Welfare Act 2000 to notify the school by signing the pupil out at the front office in the *Sign In/Out* book or Pink Absentee form available in the office.

## **Recording and Reporting Attendance**

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically of each class on a daily basis. Class attendance is recorded daily in the Salespulse at [www.success.ie/schools](http://www.success.ie/schools).

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 at 10.00am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A note from parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. These notes are dated and kept in a central location (administration office). Late arrivals and early departures are recorded electronically by the class teacher. This is currently via Salespulse.

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 the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent / Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.

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
- rewarding good attendance with certificates

**Parents:** The school communicates with parents through notes, the school year calendar and the Newsletter to inform them of the attendance requirements. When a child has been absent he/she must bring a pink form to school on his/her return to explain the reason for the absence. These forms are kept in the office to record absences of each child and deem whether it is necessary to report to E. W. B.

**Support:** Our school adequately caters for the learning needs of pupils at risk through differentiation in the classroom and support provided by the learning support teacher.

Scoil Mochaomhóg 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 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 and 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 home work throughout the school

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closure, 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 has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide a sandwich and a drink.

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

### **Communication with other schools/ other providers**

There is a transfer form available for children who transfer to another school. Assessments and reports are available on request to the principal of the other school. These assessments are also made available to post primary schools. Special needs issues are communicated to the local health board and the EWO.

### **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.

### **Strategies in the event of non-attendance**

Section 17 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, states that 'a 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 one 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 absences are recorded and reported to the EWB in December and June of each 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.

- Parents are made aware of their statutory duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to causing their children to attend school on enrolment of the child.
- Parents are made aware of the consequences of non-attendance of their child in relation to the Education Welfare Act and the duty of the school to report non-attendance.
- Parents have to state on the absentee form the reason for non-attendance.
- If a parent has a literacy problem, communication may be made by phone.
- If a parent refuses to explain the reason for the absence it will be recorded as "reason unknown".
- If a pupil's absentee level is approaching 20 days we communicate this information to the parent/guardian.
- We communicate the non-attendance of a pupil which exceeds 20 days to the EWO by phone.
- Approaches can be made to the HSE where pupils have difficulty attending school.

### **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 education 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 on-going communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools 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 Mochaomhóg 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 Mochaomhóg Naofa confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa to post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

## **Annual Report**

Attendance returns are made to the Education Welfare Board in December and June online. This report is based on the (pink) absentee forms provided by the school. This form has different categories which are used to define absenteeism as suggested by the Welfare Board.

## **Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed on a two year basis.

## **Ratification and Communication**

A provision will be made for the circulation of the ratified statement. The statement will be provided to all new applicants on enrolment.

## **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