

School Attendance Strategy

Introduction

This policy document was drawn up:

- To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this Policy on Attendance.

Rationale

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
 - The Education Act, 1998
 - The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.
- To ensure all parents are aware of the necessity for regular punctual attendance at school
- To support all pupils and ensure their right to education

Aims

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- To introduce a system of rewards that encourages pupils to attend school regularly

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

There is a very strong tradition of good attendance in Scoil Lua Naofa. However, the changing fabric of society is altering attitudes to school and we are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular, punctual attendance at school. Quite simply, children cannot learn if they are not in school. The following strategies have been put in place to help foster good attendance.

Content

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

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The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the attendance section on Aladdin of each class on a daily basis. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded on Aladdin. Reports can be obtained at any stage throughout the year.

- If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin.
- A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher and put in the pupils file in the office.
- The reason for the pupils absence will be recoded on Aladdin
- Parents/guardians must also provide a reason for withdrawal if a child is collected early during the school day.
- At the end of each reporting period, Mr. Skehan transfers the appropriate recorded data to the NEWB.
- The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer
 - 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
 - where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Scoil Lua 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.

Parents of incoming second class are invited to an induction meeting in May, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained. Parents are given a copy of the leaflet "Don't let your child miss out" and the Principal reads sections from it. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from second class onwards.

The proposed calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and is confirmed in September. The calendar is drawn up in consultation with local schools as many of our pupils have siblings in that school. Where possible it is the policy of both schools to have the same calendar. 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.

Awards and certificates are presented to pupils who have good attendance during the school year. Trophies are given to those who have full attendance, medals to those who have been absent for 3 days or less and certificates to those who have been absent for 5 days or less. The principal presents these to the children at assembly, at the end of the school year.

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Communication:

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

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 (EWO) 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 EWO (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.

When a child returns to school following an absence, a written note must be sent to inform the school as to the reason for the child's absence. Absent notes are stored in the teachers file. A telephone call or verbal message is not adequate.

When a child has missed 10 days, the principal shall contact the parents in question inviting them to call to the school to discuss the matter. When a child reaches 15 days absent, the principal will inform the parents that the child has been missing from school and the matter will be further discussed.

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 during the first week following the schools' summer closure detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

Transfer to another School

When the Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere she will notify the Principal of the pupil's new school, of any problems in relation to attendance and such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate.

Success Criteria

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- An increase in annual attendance rates
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

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- Overall responsibility for reporting to BOM and Parents Council and for writing to the NEWB if needed.
- Responsibility for online reporting to the NEWB.

Class teacher

- Responsible for creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom for marking the DES roll-book daily and for keeping reasons for absence notes.

Parents

- Responsibility for insuring that the child attends regularly and punctually, for informing the school the reasons for any absences and for informing the pupil of the adverse effects of missing school.

E.W.O

- responsible for following up and supporting all pupils reported to him / her

B.O.M

- overall responsibility for funding and the awarding of trophies, medals and certificates

Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.

Ratification and Review


This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 18th January 2024.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on Date:

Signed: 

Chairperson, BoM

The policy was communicated to the Parent Association on 1/3/24

Signed: 

Review Date: