



Roll No: 11894I

Attendance Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was devised and formulated by the school community, involving Board of Management, parents and staff of Scoil Mhuire, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Education

Ethos

Scoil Mhuire strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While respect is paid to all religious and/or value systems, Scoil Mhuire is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

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

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of this policy can be summarised as follows:

- 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 Education Welfare Services section of Tusla.
- Changing attitudes to education.

Aims and Objectives

- 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy.

Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance electronically on Aladdin. The Principal ensures returns to the Education Welfare Services section of Tusla are made through the Aladdin system.

Punctuality

Arrival time in Scoil Mhuire begins at 8:50am and classes start at 9:10am. 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 Services section of Tusla.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on a daily basis, in electronic form, using “Aladdin”, our school software package. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) on Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded on “Aladdin” and on the Primary Online database (P.O.D.), together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil’s Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion and Parents’ Names, etc.).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 10:00 am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may be altered once it has been filled in but a valid reason must be recorded. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Parents/guardians must also sign a child out if the pupil is departing early

during the school day. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded in the Sign in/Sign Out Book at the Secretary's office.

Parents/guardians are made aware annually of the requirements of the Education Welfare Services section of Tusla 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. The Principal will notify parents/guardians of pupils whose attendance is a concern.

Tusla

The Education Welfare Services section of Tusla is informed in writing when:

- A child is expelled.
- A child is suspended.
- A child has missed more than 20 days.
- A child's attendance is a concern.
- A child is removed from the school register for whatever reason.

The Education Welfare Services section of Tusla is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

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.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Scoil Mhuire endeavors 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. Staff remains vigilant so that "at risk" students are identified early. Risk students can be categorized 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 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 Services section of Tusla.

Following enrolment, school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained to parents. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually (February/March) and regular reminders are sent to parents. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents to plan family events around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

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 recognized school on each school day'.

Section 21 of the Act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Services section of Tusla 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 Services section of Tusla (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 Education Welfare Services section of Tusla four times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – at the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

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.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act:

- When a child transfers from Scoil Mhuire to another school, the school's records on attendance, behavior and academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
- When a child transfers into Scoil Mhuire confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Scoil Mhuire to a post primary school will have their records forwarded, including their Education Passport, 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/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.
 - 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, in writing, 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.

Ratification, Communication, Implementation and Review

This policy was reviewed and formally ratified by the Board of Management in January 2024

Subsequent to BOM ratification, the policy was made available on the shared teacher drive and published on the school website.

The plan will be implemented in Scoil Mhuire and will be reviewed biennially and/or as changes arise that suggest the need for review.

Signed: 

Josephine Henry, Chairperson

Date: 3/2/2024