



Scoil Náisiúnta Phadraig Naofa,
Avoca,
Co. Wicklow
Roll No 18198A

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Changing social habits and patterns necessitated the updating of the schools attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management of Scoil N. Phádraig Naofa. Avoca, Co. Wicklow.

The BoM and staff at Scoil N. Phadraig Naofa aims to teach the skills that are needed to develop each child's intellect. Its aims are also to imbue the children with appropriate spiritual, moral, and cultural values; and to develop their awareness and understanding of their environment at a local, national and global level. The school seeks to promote the physical and emotional well-being of all pupils, and to develop their expressive, artistic, and creative abilities to each pupil's full capacity.

The teachers will work in a spirit of partnership with the parents and the clergy for the good of the children, and they aim to make the school a happy and effective place for learning. In order to fulfill our mission statement we recognize the integral role that regular and punctual attendance plays in meeting these targets.

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised 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 NEWB
- Levels of disadvantage
- Changing attitudes to education.

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 ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

In line with current education policy and legislation, this school is committed to a policy of full attendance, where each child is both expected and encouraged to be present in school at all times possible

The school employs a number of strategies to support the implementation of such a policy.

The staff of the school endeavour to make the school a welcoming and happy place to be. There are fun activities on a regular basis. These are organised by sixth class and this fosters a student interest in participation and attendance

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers/Secretary record individual patterns of attendance in the Electronic Roll Book supplied by Aladdin, a school software company. The school secretarial staff and Deputy Principal make returns to NEWB. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for 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 9.20 am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Electronic Roll Book) of each class on a daily basis. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Electronic Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Attendance Report Section of the Aladdin system. Other information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations) is also recorded in Aladdin and the Pupil online Data System.

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 9.40 a.m. each morning. Allowances are made for pupils who have morning medical appointments but are returning to school later. However, notification of this sequence of events needs to be given to the class teacher/ office prior to the event in order to avoid being marked absent on the day. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A note from parents/guardians is required to

explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher in the absence folder. These notes will be placed in the specific page relating to the pupil. Notes that are sent by email are placed in the on-line absence folder. Teachers must email notes sent by Class Dojo to the office. These notes are collected and filed in the main office periodically by the secretary. Late arrivals are recorded on the Aladdin.

In the case where children are collected earlier than dismissal time, the adult collecting must sign the 'Early Departures Sheet' and record the reason for the early departure.

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.

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.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Scoil N. Phádraig Naofa ,Avoca 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 phone call from the principal. 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.

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 closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Avoca awards trophies to pupils who have full attendance during the school year. Certificates are awarded to children who miss one or two days in a whole school year. These certificates are awarded at a school assembly and the pictures and accompanying names are published on the school website.

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

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Principal) will monitor the attendance records of the children using the following actions; Consulting the Electronic Roll Books to monitor absences, lack of punctuality.

Where a pattern of poor attendance is noted by the Deputy Principal, she brings it to the attention of the Principal, who then telephones the parent to establish the reason for the absence or tardiness. The principal then speaks to the parents regarding the school's expectation in relation to attendance.

The Deputy Principal issues a letter after 10 absences informing the parents of this number, and our obligations.

After 15 days the Deputy Principal sends another letter, followed up by a call from the Principal to come in and discuss this matter.

After 21 day, a third letter is sent and if appropriate Tusla are informed of these absences in the appropriate manner.

Sign out sheets are posted in all classrooms and offices. All staff are expected to ask the parents to fill these in explaining why they are requesting early release for the child.

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 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 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 absence are recorded and reported to the EWB five times during the 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.

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.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and there is ongoing 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 N. Phádraig Naofa, Avoca* 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 N. Phádraig Naofa, Avoca* confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from *Scoil N. Phádraig Naofa, Avoca* to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parents

The school also 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 Electronic Rolls, records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy has been in operation in *Scoil N. Phádraig Naofa, Avoca* and will be updated in 2024 or beforehand if required.

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

This policy was ratified at the Board of Management meeting of 28/9/2021

Signed

Valerie Twomey (Chairperson) Mary Cahill (Principal)

Valerie Twomey

Mary Cahill

COVID 19- ADDENDUM.

Due to the prevalence of the Covid 19 virus in the country, the Board of Management has decided to suspend the awarding of trophies for full attendance and certificates for one or two days missed. The majority of children are diligent and do their utmost to come to school even when they may feel a little unwell. As our Covid 19 protocol suggests they are requested to stay at home should they show any symptoms, in the interests of public health in general. We realize that during cold and flu season that this would apply to most children and as such the Board does not want to pressurize children to make a choice which could be detrimental to the health of the majority and to offer a prize which is highly likely to be unattainable in the present climate.

This addendum was updated and ratified by the BoM at the meeting of the 28/9/21

Valerie Twomey

Mary Cahill

Date
