



## **Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction**

Changing social habits and patterns necessitated the updating of the school's attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management, following initial drafting by a representative group.

### **Rationale**

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarized as follows;

- The changing fabric of society
- The influx of non-national children
- The roll of the NEWB
- Levels of disadvantage
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000

### **Aims and Objectives**

The revised policy is geared towards;

- 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

### **Compliance with School Ethos**

This policy complements the school ethos of providing a holistic Catholic education in co-operation with teachers, pupils, parents, management and the wider community 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 on the school management system and the school Principal and secretary make returns to NEWB. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Roll Books and Register.

## **Policy Content**

### **Recording**

Individual school attendance is recorded in the Leabhair Rolla of each class and the class date is recorded in the Leabhair Tinreamh. All children attending and data on parents are recorded in the school register.

A note from parents/guardians is required to cover each absence and these are dated and kept by the class teacher. Parents are made aware of the requirements of the N.E.W.B. particularly the bye law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year.

### **School Strategies**

Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school and has not been adversely affected by social changes. However, staff remain vigilant so that at-risk students are identified early. Students at risk 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.

### **Communication with other Schools**

- When a child transfers from Muire gan Smál to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
- When a child transfers into Muire gan Smál confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from Muire gan Smál to a Post Primary school will have their records forwarded (School Passport) on receipt of confirmation of enrolment

### **Communication with Parents**

The school circulated the NEWB information booklet "*Don't Let Your Child Miss Out*" to all parents in September 2006. 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.

### **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 at the end of school year.

### **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.

### **Evaluation**

The success of any Attendance policy is measured through;

- Improved attendance levels
- Happy confident well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance

**Implementation/Ratification and Review**

This policy has been in operation in Muire gan Smál since 2006. It was updated in 2008. It was reviewed again in September 2020 and should now be read in conjunction with Tusla Strategy for School Attendance.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Peter McCallig (*Chariperson B.O.M.*)

Date: March 2020

**References:**

Don't let your Child Miss Out - NEWB 2004  
Education Welfare Act 2000  
Section 29 Education Act  
"Empty Desks"- C.D.U. Mary Immaculate