



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

At staff meeting in May 2010 it was decided to put a focus on ways of promoting school attendance from September 2010. It was decided to present certificates to pupils who have not missed a day from 1st September to October mid-term and another certificate to be given on the 100th day in school. A number of children would be tracked on a daily basis and parents would be phoned if the child was not in school. This was supported by the school completion co-ordinator and Eamon Regan from the Education Welfare board.

This policy is a school-wide policy for implementation by all staff, students, parents and Board of Management at Scoil Mhuire. The achievement of this depends on mutual co-operation and team work between children, parents, teachers and management. Presentation schools promote the development of a community of faith inspired by Gospel values. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in the school policies and structures, including this policy. This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement.

In order to enable each child to realise his/her full potential we seek:

- To create a caring and co-operative environment where tolerance and respect are nurtured.
- To build confidence and encourage a good work ethic.
- To promote trust-worthiness.
- To develop socially well-adjusted and independent individuals.
- To recognise and meet the individual needs of each child.

Rationale

At Scoil Mhuire we believe education is the foundation upon which a child's development for later life is built. Parents are the primary educators and as such are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children receive the education they have a right to and deserve. Scoil Mhuire aims to support and enhance this education.

Attendance at school and full participation in school life is therefore extremely important. Research has shown that poor attendance and poor participation are directly linked to low educational achievement and early school leaving.

Scoil Mhuire wants to work in partnership with parents to ensure that the environment is created where children want and look forward to coming to school and participating fully in the life of the school. The school wants to create conditions where children see that it is in their own interest to come to school regularly.

Goals of the Policy

- To assist in developing a school environment where all pupils feel welcome in the school and where their educational and personal needs are met within the resources provided to the school
- To implement the monitoring and recording aspects of the school's attendance strategy
- To highlight the importance of regular attendance
- To encourage regular attendance and participation in school life
- To encourage good communication between parents and the school
- To establish procedures for the monitoring of attendance and non-attendance
- To establish procedures for attendance record-keeping for the school, pupils, parents and National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)
- To develop partnerships between the school and other relevant agencies and services, such as NEWB
- To support pupils and parent where there are attendance problems

Expectation of all pupils

The school and parents have certain obligations under the Education Welfare Act 2000 regarding attendance and participation. Scoil Mhuire expects all pupils registered in the school to attend all classes every day. If your child is absent then the school will require an explanation in writing from you, the parent/guardian.

Legal responsibility of parents/guardians

It is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school every day and if he/she is absent that you explain to the school why he/she has been absent.

If your child is absent for a total of 20 days or more during the school year, the school is obliged in law to report this to the NEWB. This report must be made irrespective of the reasons your child is absent. If the school is very concerned about the pattern of your child's absences, then the school is also obliged to inform the NEWB. The school will always inform you if a report is being made to the NEWB.

School Calendar

Please check the school calendar for the opening and closing times of the school and the school holidays. The calendar also contains information about parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings. From February 2011 all staff meeting and staff in service will be after school. In advance of parent-teacher meetings and other change to the school calendar you will receive a letter or be notified by text a parent.

Medical Appointments, etc.

If your child has your permission to leave the school early for medical appointments, please ensure that you have given him/her a note. In order to leave the school, a parent/guardian will need to sign out at the secretary's office. The parent/guardian is then given a card to take to the class teacher and the child then has permission to leave the school. The Code of Behaviour indicates the procedures which will be followed if your child leaves the school premises without permission.

Holidays

Please do not take your child out of school for holidays. It is very difficult for any child to catch up with what he/she has missed when out of school for an extended holiday. There are, of course, exceptional circumstances where parents may have to take their child out of school during term time. You should be always aware of the potential risk to your child's education and therefore these situations should be kept to an absolute minimum. Please note that a report will have to be made to the NEWB if the total absences over the year is in excess of 20 days OR if the school is concerned.

Contacting the school

Please contact the school as soon as you can to inform us that your child is absent for longer than 2 consecutive days. This can be done by phone to the secretary's office at 01 4592986.

If your child has been absent please ensure you have completed the letter of absence in your child's journal / absence slips.

If you need assistance in ensuring that your child attends school please contact the school immediately and we will be able to support you. Alternatively, you may contact the Educational Welfare Officer, Eamon O'Regan (tel. 01 ...) or the NEWB National Helpline 1890 363666.

Recording of Non-Attendance

The class teacher will record your child's attendance or non-attendance at school at roll call each day. These records are then passed on to the school secretary. If your child arrives after roll call a written explanation is required from you. If your child is late without permission from you, this will be recorded and dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.

Reminder Letters

We would advise regular contact with the school to keep us up to date. If the school is aware of the reasons for absence, and is satisfied with these reasons, there will be less difficulty for all concerned.

Our primary concern is your child's educational welfare.

School Reports

School reports will contain the number of days your child has attended to date.

Attendance Certificates

Certificates of attendance, showing each child's attendance up to mid term at the end of October and again on the child's 100th day in school.

Communication

Our school attendance policy will only work if there is good communication between the school, yourself and your child. Please feel free at any time to contact the school if there are any matters of concern. All matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality.

Implementation

This policy is implemented by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire in a spirit of partnership through consultation with the school partners within the available resources of the school. The Board of Management, in consultation with the school partners, will, after one year, review this policy.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____