



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

General Principles:

The aims of the attendance policy in Scoil Nioclás Naofa are to :

- (1) encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- (2) share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- (3) inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Act.
- (4) identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- (5) ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- (6) develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- (7) Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance,

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - The Education Welfare Board.
 - The Education Welfare Officer
 - The Board of Management

Punctuality

School is open from 9.20 a.m. when the assembly bell rings. Children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9.30 a.m.. 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 Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board. (See Child Protection Policy)

Guidance for Parents

Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, each teacher keeps a plastic pouch folder in the roll book marked “Correspondence”. Communications from parents will be stored in the folder, including the detachable notes of absence from the homework diary. All correspondence must be on a separate page or sheet of paper. All absences will be recorded in the Roll Book, Absenteeism Record Sheet, and if necessary on the NEWB website.

If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school.

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 and approve of 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, or by personally speaking to the teacher concerned,) the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Pupils

Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.

Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

Teacher Absences:

All staff must notify the principal as soon as is practicable, if they are unable to attend school. Substitute cover is provided as per DES regulations. The Principal and Deputy Principal will ensure that, on EPV days when the absence is not covered by substitution, the children have been given work to do by their Class Teacher and are then sent to other classrooms to be supervised by other mainstream teachers.

Teachers who wish to leave school for urgent personal reasons must obtain the consent of the Principal or in his absence the Deputy Principal. Any teacher who wishes to absent himself/herself at lunchtime on a regular basis, must apply in writing to the Board of Management, the body responsible for pupil welfare and safety.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of

Education & Science guidelines.

- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- A special reward system i.e. a Certificate of 100% Attendance is presented to individual pupils in June.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- The Principal will, beginning in the School Year 2012-2013, send a letter to all parents whose children have been absent for 15 days, as a way of alerting them to the seriousness of their child's attendance record. (Policy updated to include this item in May 2012 and ratified by the Board of Management at that time – see BOM Minutes)
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences in an "Attendance Grid".
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer and enrolment in another Primary School.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school and recorded in the appropriate record file e.g. Pupil Register.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

Ratified by Board of Management on March 6th, 2012.

Reviewed and update in May 2012.

Signed:

Albert Comer, Chairman, BOM.