

# *Statement of Strategy for Pupil Attendance.*



*Scoil Mhuire  
Clifden*

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**RATIONALE:**

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, parents, Board of Management and Educational Welfare Officer in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in **Scoil Mhuire** to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school. It was updated in 2017/2018.

**REWARDING OF STUDENTS WITH GOOD ATTENDANCE:**

As a Rural DEIS school , targeting good attendance is part of our school action plan. Students with good attendance may be rewarded in the following ways:

- ✓ Presenting certificates to pupils who have full attendance at the end of each term.
- ✓ Presenting certificates to pupils who have almost full attendance at the end of each term and who have produced notes of absence for time missed.
- ✓ Education Welfare officer- Paul McCavera speaks at assembly

**STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE:**

The following strategies will be employed to improve attendance:

- ✓ The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- ✓ Scoil Mhuire will promote development of good self-esteem and self worth in its pupils (see Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy).
- ✓ Support for pupils who have special educational needs in accordance with DES guidelines.
- ✓ 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 pupil.
- ✓ The school will use regular newsletters and web texts to promote attendance and punctuality.
- ✓ Where concerns arise, the class teacher or secretary monitoring attendance brings the concern to the attention of the principal.
- ✓ The principal and class teacher assess each case individually at this point and a home visit may be deemed necessary.
- ✓ The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.

- ✓ The class teacher will ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained. A standard note is used for this purpose.
- ✓ The class teacher will keep a daily record of attendance in Aladdin.
- ✓ Attendance figures are monitored daily by the secretary on Aladdin..
- ✓ The secretary will also bring details of continued absences and patterns of absences to the attention of the class teachers and the Principal as necessary.
- ✓ The Principal will promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
- ✓ Attendance will be featured as part of monthly school assemblies.
- ✓ The Principal will inform the NEWB:
  - When a pupil has been missing for twenty or more days during the course of the school year.
  - When a pupil has been suspended from school more than once under the Code of Behaviour.
  
- ✓ The School Completion Programme operates to target pupils who are considered to be at risk of early school leaving.
- ✓ Evidence of non-attendance is a factor in including pupils in the various activities; football, art, history club, model car club, movie club ...etc.
- ✓ Extra-curricular activities, such as hurling, Gaelic football, soccer and choir will be encouraged for all pupils, specifically those at risk of non-attendance.

**IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK OF DEVELOPING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS:**

The following strategies may be employed to identify students at risk of developing school attendance problems:

- ✓ On transfer to Scoil Mhuire, attendance records will be sought from previous schools on pupil attendance.
- ✓ Class teachers will inform the Principal of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- ✓ Contact with various agencies who are involved with such students.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSER CONTACTS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND HOME:**

Closer home/school relations will be fostered through:

- ✓ Attendance at meetings (Parent/Teacher, etc).
- ✓ Parent and child groups.
- ✓ Parent Courses.
- ✓ Attendance at Merit Awards.
- ✓ Attendance at Sports Day.
- ✓ Attendance at school events (eg Concerts, Masses, etc).
- ✓ Involvement in Paired Reading, Maths for Fun, etc.
- ✓ Regular newsletters to families.
- ✓ Open-door policy in Principal's office for daily communication.
- ✓ Availability of teachers on yard at assembly time every morning.

**FOSTERING CONTACTS:**

Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in Scoil Mhuire:

- ✓ NEWB.
- ✓ Other schools in the vicinity.
- ✓ School Completion Programme.
- ✓ NEPS.
- ✓ St Clifden parish
- ✓ Meitheal meetings
- ✓ Local GAA clubs, soccer clubs, etc.
- ✓ Community Gardaí and JLO.
- ✓ Local interest groups such as the Vincent de Paul.
- ✓ Galway County Council community services.
- ✓ Scoil Mhuire Local Youth Project: In-school and after school activities.

**ENCOURAGING FULL PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL:**

In so far as is practicable, programmes will be developed with the bodies mentioned above which will encourage the full participation with students in the life of the school. Examples of these are:

- ✓ Attendance incentive scheme.
- ✓ Counselling (Rainbows, behavioural, bereavement, etc).
- ✓ Gaelic Games and soccer.
- ✓ Summer project programmes.

**IDENTIFICATION OF ASPECTS AND STRATEGIES:**

The Board of Management, teachers and whole school community will be mindful at all times of:

- ✓ The identification of aspects of the operation and management of the school and of the teaching of the school curriculum that may contribute to problems relating to school attendance on the part of certain students.
- ✓ The identification of strategies for the removal of those aspects in so far as they are not necessary or expedient for the proper and effective running of the school having regard, in particular, to the educational needs of students.
- ✓ The identification of strategies that will encourage more regular attendance at school on the part of such students.
- ✓ The need to review this strategy into the future to accommodate the changing needs of the school and of its population.

**REVIEW**

The policy is due for review in 2021/22

.....  
Principal.

# SCOIL MHUIRE NS CLIFDEN

## School Attendance Strategy Booklet

*Everyday Counts!*



**TUSLA – Legal Framework / Role**

**What Parents can do:** *Seven Useful Tips*

**What Teachers can do:** *A six step plan for encouraging improved attendance*

**What Schools can do:** *Eight steps to bring your school attendance strategy to life*

**When is a child too Sick for School?** *Guidelines for common illnesses, symptoms and signs, what to do.*

***This booklet is available to download from our school website:***

***[www.scoilmhuireclifden.ie](http://www.scoilmhuireclifden.ie)***

***Tel: 090-21353***

***email: [principalscoilmhuire@gmail.com](mailto:principalscoilmhuire@gmail.com)***

## **Attendance Matters**

Most pupils go to school every day and enjoy it. Some children do experience difficulties in attending school for a variety of reasons. Sometimes parents are aware of this. Sometimes they aren't. The Education Welfare Service of TUSLA work under the Education Welfare Act 2000 to ensure children between the ages of 6 & 16 attend school on a regular basis or are otherwise in receipt of a minimum standard of Education. It also is responsible for the maintenance of the national register of children who are being "home educated" and the assessment of the education provided.

## **The Law**

The Education Welfare Act 2000 allows the TUSLA to bring prosecutions against parents who are "failing or neglecting" to cause their children to attend a recognised school. Upon conviction parents may be fined up to €1000 each or face up to one month imprisonment.

## **School Leaving Age**

Section 2 of the Education Welfare Act requires children resident in the state to attend school when they reach 6 years of age. Children may **NOT** leave school until they are 16 years old and have **completed** 3 years post primary education whichever occurs later.

## **Our Work**

The EWS of TUSLA aims to reduce unnecessary absences from school by offering support and help to parents, pupils and schools. The key to achieving this is good communication between the school, home and EWS so that any problems can be resolved quickly.

School Principals are legally obliged to maintain a register of pupils attending his or her school. High levels of school absenteeism must be reported by the Principal to their EWO. Upon receipt of this referral the EWO begins a process of intervention aimed at finding a resolution to the issues preventing the child from attending school.

The EWO will work with a range of local and national services to assist the child, family and school. These include the HSE social work department, National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education, School Completion Programme, Home School & Community Liaison Officers, Family Support Services, GRETB, ISPCC, Child and Mental Health Services, Child Psychology etc.

The EWS not only work with children who present with school attendance issues but also work with students whose behaviour in school has led to extended periods of suspension or permanent exclusion from school. We also assist families whose children have not been able to secure a place in a school for their children to attend.

## **Local Contact Details**

**EWS: Unit 19, Sandyfort Business Centre, Grealishtown, Bohermore, Galway.**

**091 385302**

[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)



# What can Parents do to improve School Attendance?\*

## After school every day:

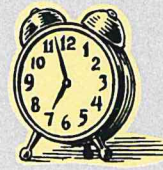
- Make sure that the homework is done as early as possible
- Keep the school uniform for school wear only



## The night before:

Try and have ready

- School bag
- Lunch
- Uniform
- Get your child to bed at a reasonable hour every night
- Set the alarm on your mobile phone or the alarm clock for the morning



## Before school every day:

- Get up on time in the morning so that you will not be rushing
- Don't allow your child to watch television in the morning
- Get your child to eat some breakfast every morning
- Talk positively about school
- If possible don't allow your child to go to the shop in the morning as this could delay them and they could be late for school
- Let your child know that you will be there to collect him / her in the afternoon or that you will be waiting at home when they come in
- You know your child best. Only keep your child at home if he/she is really sick.



(see pages of this booklet for guidelines *When is a child too sick for school*)

## “Ready for School Routine”

Easy steps to get to school today

1. Get up on time
2. Breakfast
3. Uniform
4. Books
5. Journal
6. Bag
7. Leave home on time

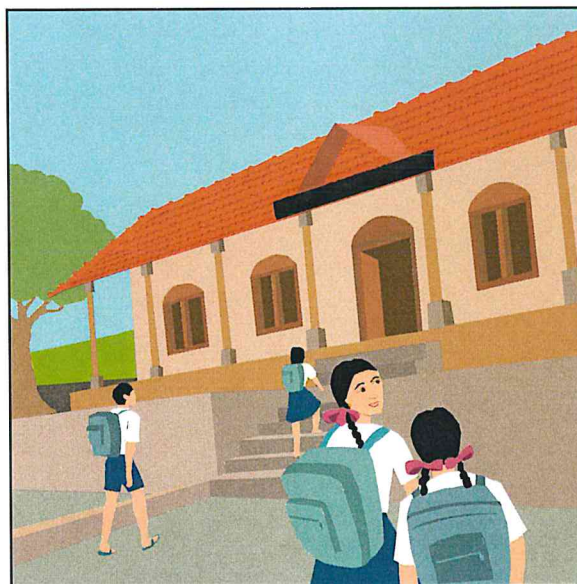
## What can Teachers do to improve School Attendance?

- ◆ Welcome students every morning
- ◆ Praise each student for their effort
- ◆ Give students a reasonable amount of homework
- ◆ All teachers should give homework each night
- ◆ No homework at weekends
- ◆ Reward students for good attendance



## What can Schools do to improve School Attendance?

- ◆ Give efforts to promote attendance and attendance successes a high profile within the school
- ◆ Establish an Attendance Care Team in the school
- ◆ Keep up to date attendance records that are reviewed regularly by the Attendance Care Team in order to respond to patterns of non-attendance as well as patterns of good or improved attendance
- ◆ Create positive systems of reward for good and improved attendance
- ◆ Develop a greater awareness amongst students and their parents of the long-term benefits to be gained from a good attendance record
- ◆ Ensure a consistent approach to attendance promotion throughout the school
- ◆ Involve all stakeholders in supporting high expectations for school attendance and attainment
- ◆ Monitor that stakeholder involvement from the perspective of students, parents, teaching and other staff, school management and the community at large.



# When is a child Too Sick For School?



**There are three key reasons to keep a child home from school**

- 1. Fever over 100.4 degrees F or 38°C**
- 2. The child may have a contagious illness or rash.**
- 3. The child is not well enough to participate in class.**

- The average child has 6 to 12 illnesses per year, so sickness is a part of normal childhood. It can be difficult to balance the child's school attendance with the risk of spreading the illness to others in school.
- Fever is a symptom which usually indicates that the body is fighting an infection. A child with fever over 100.4 degrees F (38°C) needs to stay home until the fever is gone for 24 hours.
- Rashes that are itchy or scaly may be contagious and need to be checked by the nurse or doctor. If a child with a rash is ill looking, is having trouble swallowing or breathing, they need to be seen by the doctor.
- A cough need not keep a child from school unless it is interfering with sleep or ability to take part in activities.
- Coughs and runny noses can persist for up to two weeks after a cold. Children can return to school once they no longer have a fever.
- Children can attend school with a mild sore throat unless they have other symptoms as well, such as fever, vomiting or abdominal pain.
- Children with a vomiting illness (repeated vomiting) need to stay home until the vomiting stops and they are eating normally.
- Children with diarrhoea also need to stay home until stools have been normal for at least 24 hours.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the most important and effective way of preventing the spread of contagious diseases.

# Guidelines for common childhood illnesses

Illness	Symptoms and Signs	What to do
<b>Fever</b>	100.4°F or 38°C	Stay home, must be fever free for 24 hours before returning
<b>Headache</b>	If the child can't do normal activities	Stay home
<b>Vomiting</b>	More than twice in 24 hours or if diarrhoea also	Stay home until 24 hours after last vomit
<b>Diarrhoea</b>	More than 3 stools in 24 hours	Stay home until 24 hours after last bout
<b>Sore Throat</b>	If not eating or fever	Return as soon as well or 24 hours after starting antibiotic if prescribed
<b>Cold Symptoms</b>	Stuffed or runny nose, sneezing, mild cough	No need to stay home
<b>Cough</b>	If the cough disrupts normal activity	Return to school after the doctor has cleared child of serious illness e.g. shopping cough
<b>Asthma</b>	If the child can't do normal activities. If coughing a lot.	Needs to see the doctor or asthma nurse to review treatment.
<b>Conjunctivitis (Red Eyes)</b>	With yellow or green pus	May return 24 hours after treatment started
<b>Chicken Pox</b>	Some children have a fever, abdominal pain, sore throat, headache, or a vague sick feeling a day or two before the rash appears	Return when the blisters are all dry and crusted over
<b>Hand, foot and mouth disease</b>	Not infectious once rash appears	No need to stay home unless drooling
<b>Impetigo</b>	Patch of red, itchy skin. Blisters develop on this area, soon forming crusty, yellow-brown sores	May return 24 hours after starting antibiotic medicine, 48 hours after starting antibiotic cream. Sores must be covered with dressing.
<b>Ringworm</b>	Ring Shaped or oval patch of scaly red skin	Return once started on treatment. Keep area covered.
<b>Head Lice</b>	Spread directly from head to head so short and tidy hair may help	They are a nuisance, not a reason to stay home.
<b>Doctor or dentist visit</b>		Back to school afterward unless the dentist or doctor says stay at home.

## TRACKER FOR YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SCHOOL YEAR 2022/2023

Please keep this for future reference should your child's attendance be called into question at a later date.

CHILD NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

DAY/DATE	No. of days missed	Reason for Absence	Medical Cert or Note given to school
Example: Mon & Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	2	High Temp	Note given to class teacher on 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2010

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## TRACKER FOR YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SCHOOL YEAR 2023/2024

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