



Scoil Uí Mhuirí
Post Primary School

Attendance Policy

Rationale

- To ensure that students benefit fully from the range of opportunities available to them in Scoil Uí Mhuirí
- To ensure that Scoil Uí Mhuirí fulfils its legal obligations as set out in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and other relevant acts
- To ensure that all students, their parents/guardians and staff are aware of their responsibilities to ensure high levels of attendance
- To maintain accurate records of school attendance by students
- To encourage best practice regards regular and punctual attendance by all students
- To discourage lateness, absenteeism and unwarranted withdrawal of students during the school day or the school term
- To create an awareness among the student body that a good school attendance record enhances opportunities in the area of training and employment

Goals

- To develop a sense of personal responsibility in students regarding their attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that parents/guardians appreciate the significant impact they have on their son/daughter's attendance record

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

The legislation governing school attendance, participation and retention in Ireland is the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Under this act, the minimum school leaving age is 16 years or the completion of three years of post - primary education. Parents/Guardians are required to ensure that their children attend a recognised school from the age of 6 to 16 years.

Under sections 20 and 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, recognised schools are required to:

- Establish and maintain a school register and school attendance records
- Monitor the attendance of all students enrolled
- Report on student attendance in certain circumstances

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The various strands of the NEWB, the School Completion Programme (SCP), the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) work together collaboratively to secure better educational outcomes for children and young people.

Scoil Uí Mhuirí Community Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

- To inform parents/guardians regarding the official opening and closing times of Scoil Uí Mhuirí. In Scoil Uí Mhuirí school starts with morning assembly for all year groups at 8.50am and finishes at 15.35pm each day. Any student arriving after 8.50am is late for school.
- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that adequate systems are in place to record attendances and absences of students
- To monitor attendance records regularly
- To carry out regular spot checks on attendance and liaise with parents/guardians regarding non attendance at class/school
- To liaise with the NEWB Education Welfare Officer (NEWB) regarding concerns about particular students' attendance and absenteeism
- To submit reports to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) as required by the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- To inform students and their parents/guardians of procedures for the notification of absences and withdrawal of students from the school
- To liaise with all members of the Scoil Uí Mhuirí community in developing, implementing and reviewing methods of rewarding students for regular attendance

Deputy Principal

- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To carry out regular spot checks on attendance and liaise with parents/guardians regarding non attendance at class/school
- To monitor and investigate unauthorised absences of students from school or from classes as reported by staff members
- To investigate concerns from parents/guardians regarding student unauthorised absences from school or from classes
- To liaise with all members of the Scoil Uí Mhuirí community in developing, implementing and reviewing methods of rewarding students for regular attendance

HSCL Officer

- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality and liaise with students/families where support may be needed in encouraging regular attendance

Guidance Counsellor

- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality and liaise with students/families where support may be needed in encouraging regular attendance

SCP

- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment and liaise with students/families where support may be needed in encouraging regular attendance
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance records regularly
- To liaise with the NEWB Education Welfare Officer (NEWB) regarding concerns about particular students' attendance and absenteeism
- To facilitate regular 'Attendance Review Meetings' with management, staff, parents/guardians and students
- To inform students and their parents/guardians of procedures for the notification of absences and withdrawal of students from the school

Year Heads

- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To monitor student attendance on a daily basis
- To seek and file written explanations for student absences from parents/guardians
- To note trends in absence records of individual students e.g. Monday or Friday absences and to bring this to the attention of SCP personnel at the school and to bring to the attention of the parents/guardians of the students concerned
- To contact parents/guardians where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and to notify the Deputy Principal
- To contact parents where there is a pattern of lateness emerging

Assistant Year Heads

- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To monitor student attendance on a daily basis
- To seek and file written explanations for student absences from parents/guardians
- To note trends in absence records of individual students e.g. Monday or Friday absences and to bring this to the attention of SCP personnel at the school and to bring to the attention of the parents/guardians of the students concerned
- To liaise with the Year Head where unauthorised absences occur or are suspected and to notify the Deputy Principal

Tutors

- To emphasise the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality

Teachers

- To remind students and their parents/guardians of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To carry out a roll call at the beginning of every class and to ensure its accuracy
- To provide a welcoming and stimulating environment that promotes high quality teaching and learning
- To utilise a variety of teaching and learning methodologies to ensure students are motivated and engaged in their learning
- To carry out a spot check on attendance as required by school management from time to time
- To discuss students' attendance records with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings
- To report to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal any concerns regarding unauthorised absences from school and/or class
- To advise all students of the importance of 'catching up' on work missed during their absence and to put in place systems for distribution of any relevant notes/handouts regarding same

Administration Staff

- To compile a list of those students absent each morning and post on the Staff Room noticeboard each morning
- To maintain a 'Sign In/Late Book' in reception
- To maintain a 'Sign Out/Permission to Leave Book' in reception
- To request that students produce a note, signed by their Year Head/Assistant Year Head giving permission to the student to leave school
- To ensure that when a student is leaving school, a parent/guardian accompanies the student to reception to officially 'Sign Out' of the building

Parents/Guardians

- To remind their son/daughter of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that their son/daughter arrives on time to school
- To notify the school in writing of the reason for all student absences. This notice should be provided prior to the absence where possible or otherwise immediately afterwards
- Where possible to make medical and dental appointments for their son/daughter outside school time
- To provide the school with up to date contact telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers so that the school may contact parents/guardians or other authorised persons if necessary

- To adhere to the procedures as set out in this policy for the withdrawal of students from the school during the day. Should a parent/guardian need to withdraw their son/daughter during the school day they must report to the main office along with their son/daughter to sign the 'Permission to Leave School/Sign Out' book
- To acknowledge and where necessary reply to all communications from the school in relation to attendance issues
- To attend, when necessary, attendance meetings in the school regarding their son/daughter's record of attendance

Students

- Students must attend school regularly and they must be aware of and understand the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- Students must arrive to school on time and report to morning assembly at 8.50am
- Students should attend classes on time

Signing In and Out of School – Procedures for Students

- Students who are late to school and/or are returning to school after an appointment outside school must report to the main office and sign the 'Sign In' book. This book is checked by school management and the Year Heads at regular intervals during the day.
- Scoil Uí Mhuirí students must not leave the school during the school day without permission.
- ***Student Appointments outside School during School Time*** Should a student have an appointment/reason for leaving school, they should present to their Yearhead with a note signed by their parent/guardian at morning assembly. This note will be signed by the Yearhead. When the student is leaving school, they must present the note at the school office and sign the 'Permission to Leave School/Sign Out' book. Their parent/guardian must report to the main office to collect the student before they sign the 'Permission to Leave School/Sign Out' book. Upon the student's return to school they should sign the 'Sign In' book in the main office. These books are checked by school management and the Year Heads at regular intervals during the day.
- ***Student Unexpected Illness during the School Day*** Should a student become ill during the school day he/she should liaise with their Year Head. If the Year Head is unavailable, the student should present to the main office in the school and request to speak with the Deputy Principal or Principal. If it is necessary for the student to go home because of their illness, a call will be made from the school, by school personnel to the Parent/Guardians of the student. Should they not be contactable, the person named on the enrolment form as the 'Emergency Contact Person' will receive a call from the school explaining the situation. In all cases the student must wait in the school until the appointed person arrives to collect him/her. The student must then sign out in the 'Permission to Leave School' book before he/she leaves the school premises. **Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones during the school day to ring home if they feel ill. Calls home must be made from the school by school personnel or by the student under the supervision of school personnel only.**

Student Council

- To remind the student body of the importance of regular attendance and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To engage in surveys to determine what systems can be put in place to ensure that students enjoy coming to school and therefore report higher attendance rates
- To advise school management regarding students concerns
- To discuss proposals with school management regarding creative and innovative ways to improve attendance by all students in Scoil Uí Mhuirí

Parents Association

- To remind their members of the importance of regular attendance at school and the negative impact of frequent absences on student progress, achievement and attainment
- To actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- To liaise with school management regarding the development, implementation and review of initiatives aimed at rewarding students for regular attendance

Family Holidays during Term Time

Scoil Uí Mhuirí Parents/Guardians are strongly discouraged from allowing their children to take holidays during school time due to the negative impact on student progress, achievement and attainment.

Reporting of School Attendance

Schools are obliged by law to report on school attendance since the inception of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. This obligation exists to protect children's educational welfare. Poor school attendance needs to be responded to early; otherwise, as research has shown, it can lead to poorer exam results, early school leaving, and poorer opportunities in life for children.

Submitting a return to the NEWB

There are four student absence reports and one annual attendance report submitted each year, by the school to the NEWB. Scoil Uí Mhuirí, like all other schools, in Ireland must submit a return on those students with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e. students falling within the following criteria:

- A student who has been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more
- A student whose name is to be removed from the school register for any reason
- A student who has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days
- A student who has been expelled from a school
- A student whom the principal has concerns about his/her attendance

Rewarding Regular Attendance

- Students who attend regularly will be rewarded through various initiatives including the Student of the Month Awards and the Annual Awards Ceremony
- Management and staff at Scoil Uí Mhuirí will continue to liaise closely with the Board of Management, the Student Council, the Parents Association and external business and community organisations to develop, implement and review methods of rewarding students for regular attendance. This will include initiatives designed to creating an awareness of the importance of regular attendance regarding achievement, attainment and progression
- Scoil Uí Mhuirí will liaise with the NEWB in implementing any NEWB approaches for rewarding attendance including NEWB Certificates of Attendance
- Scoil Uí Mhuirí will actively research best practice approaches to encouraging and rewarding regular attendance

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Board of Management of Scoil Uí Mhuirí