



## **Attendance Strategy for Scoil Mhuire, Navan**

### **Introduction**

This policy document was drawn up by school Principal, HSCL and SCP to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils. It also forms one of the major strategies of our DEIS Plan.

### **Rationale**

The policy was drawn up to comply with the legislation such as The Education Act, 1998 and The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The school's ethos is to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

### **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Scoil Mhuire Primary School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and the school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.

### **Aims**

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular and punctual school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

## **Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance**

Whole school attendance and non-attendance is monitored and tracked through Aladdin School's online software. All class teachers, HSCL Coordinator, School Completion, secretary, Principal & Deputy Principal have access to this system. Parents can also access Aladdin Connect where they can record the reasons for absence for their child.

### **Attendance Monitor**

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 10a.m. on Aladdin. Punctuality issues will also be recorded at this time. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Parents/ guardians of pupils who are absent are required to contact the school. In practice this is best done by written note so that the reason for the child's absence may be recorded for the purposes of the Education Welfare Act and that this can be done immediately. The school can also be notified through Aladdin connect. A parent/ Guardian may also provide GP certs. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child has to depart early during the school day. Parents / Guardians may also phone or come in person. Parents / Guardians are also requested to sign the "early- out book" located at the office.

### **At Risk Pupils**

The School Attendance is monitored from September to June on a daily, weekly and termly basis by the HSCL Coordinator in conjunction with class teachers, SCP and the Principal. Each September a letter is sent home by the Principal where a student has missed over 20 days in the previous school year. This sends a clear message to the parents that attendance is a very important aspect in Education and that their child's attendance is being monitored closely. The HSCL monitors attendance fortnightly and when a child reaches 10 days of absenteeism a letter is sent informing the parents of such. At 20 days absenteeism they are once again informed by letter regarding their child's attendance and that they will be referred to the EWO. It is also the responsibility of HSCL Coordinator to follow up on home visits of children whose attendance is a cause for concern. The school informs the Education Welfare Officer where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled.

## Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

### HSCL

The Programme is based on the ethos that the parent is the primary educator of their child and so must be a primary focus in tackling educational disadvantage. H.S.C.L works hard with the S.C.P project worker to promote attendance.

H.S.C.L endeavours to improve attendance, participation and retention as follows

- Weekly Certificates at assembly for 1 child from each class (Junior Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class) who had 100% attendance all week. At the end of the month the winners are displayed on a notice board in the Junior School specifically for attendance. Each Class teacher to be supplied with a plastic folder with certificate templates & winner recording sheet.
- Certificates to be given at the end of term 1,2 and 3 for excellent attendance (0 days missed), Good attendance (0-3 days missed) and special recognition is made by HSCL for those with improved attendance (for those on the attendance monitoring list who have improved by a minimum of 50%)
- Homework Club (attendance monitored weekly by N.S.C)
- Home visits to target families by H.S.C.L to promote school activities and encourage parental involvement.
- Evaluation of attendance by principal at the end of Term 1 & Term 3
- Morning classes and courses (Recreational and Academic) for parents to encourage involvement in school life.
- Fun and interesting activities (World Book Day/ Sports Day/Theatre Day) promoted throughout school as incentives for attendance.
- N.S.C Project Worker to engage with at risk children both individually and in group settings. This will involve initiatives to promote attendance on a regular basis.
- Importance of good school attendance promoted at all parent evenings and whole school assemblies.
- Attendance letters to notify parents of absences above ten and twenty days in accordance with NEWB guidelines.
- Introduce a sign in book at office for late pupils to monitor punctuality and identify perpetual offenders.
- Whole school attendance monitored and tracked through Aladdin Schools online software.
- The importance of Punctuality is also recognised at Scoil Mhuire and a Punctuality week is held every year to reward the children's efforts in getting to school on time. Punctuality is also mentioned at weekly Assembly and on school newsletters regularly.

## **1. School Completion Programme**

School Completion Programme provides a Project Worker to conduct Key Work Sessions with targeted children in the school. The SCP Project Worker works closely alongside with the schools HSCL.

School Completion Programme endeavour to improve Retention, Participation and Attendance as outlined below (subject to funding):

- Establish and maintain positive relationships with targeted children.
- Develop and deliver personal development programmes
- Help children express themselves through various mediums of art, drama, play, relaxation, sensory play and music.
- Liaise with parents /guardians and all personnel involved with welfare of the child in conjunction with HSCL
- Provide a homework club for the targeted children Monday- Thursday.
- Involve the school in the Garda Youth Diversion Programme which can help to divert young people away from any involvement in crime.
- Set up a group in Term 2 each year for a Friday 45min session for 6-8 children who have the poorest attendance from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Classes from Term 1
- Establish individual programmes with young people at risk of dropping out of school e.g. gardening, art etc.
- Involve the children in cookery, independent life skills programme.
- Work in conjunction with the school to help improve literacy support at Senior Infant level.
- Take social skills groupings with targeted children.
- Work closely with other agencies in order to support families and children.
- Monitor and track attendance of targeted children
- Organise courses in conjunction with our HSCL teacher such as Parents Plus/Parent to Parent programme.
- Organise a transition programme for transfer to secondary school.

- Provide Brunch/Lunch provision as part of the School Meals funded programme, particularly targeting at risk young people.
- Provide holiday supports for our targeted young people to help them remain connected to the school environment and to SCP.

### **Transition Programme SCP:**

SCP endeavour to ensure that there is 100% transfer from Primary to Post Primary through the following interventions:

- Ensure 6<sup>th</sup> Class students attend all enrolment nights, complete relevant application forms and submit to post primary schools prior to the closing date.
- SCP to engage with parents and young people to ensure that offers of school places for 1<sup>st</sup> Year are accepted and that the relevant enrolment fees are paid as well as paper work followed up.
- SCP will formulate a list of the students and second level school they have been registered in.
- SCP delivers the Transition Programme to all transferring 6<sup>th</sup> Class students in Scoil Mhuire
- In July any student transferring to Beaufort Community College are offered a place in the Transition Summer Camp for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Years.
- In September, SCP will liaise with all Post Primary Schools to ensure that each 6<sup>th</sup> Class student has transferred to the school stated on the registered list. (This includes the Post Primary Schools outside of DEIS). Should this not be the case a follow up will take place through the EWO.

### **Whole school strategies and DEIS Initiatives**

#### **DEIS Attendance Strategy**

1. The roll is called every day at 10 a.m and children are encouraged to be on time.
2. We adhere to the NEWB attendance policy where absences of over 20 days are reported.
3. Student of the Week and the Attendance Award are announced at Friday's Assembly rewarding good attendance, behaviour, presentation etc.

**Literacy:** We offer courses and encourage parents to become involved in school events in order to develop parental self-esteem and confidence. We hope that by doing so they will then pass this on to their children.

**Parent Support:** Through HSCL we encourage our parents to become more involved in their children's education and we promote the importance of good attendance at every available opportunity. By providing certificates for good we keep them informed as to where their children are at in terms of their attendance.

**Early intervention:** By starting the new school year noting the previous year's attendance and providing those at risk children with school letters when their attendance is beginning to become a cause for concern we endeavour to respond to early warning signals and therefore intervene at the first stage of attendance issue.

**School reports:** As part of each child's annual school report their attendance for the year is noted. The Principal may comment on this area of the report also.

### **Communication with Parents, Agencies and Students re: Attendance**

**EWO/TUSLA:** Refer in writing at 20 days

**Parents:** Parents are informed about the importance of good attendance at all school meetings such as Infant Induction Day, Parent-Teacher Meetings. The NEWB information booklet "Don't Let Your Child Miss Out" is circulated to all new Junior Infant Parents as part of their information pack given out on the induction day. It is also distributed to all new parents who enrol in the school as part of their enrolment pack. This information is also disseminated in regular school newsletters and on the school's website. Each September a letter is sent home by the Principal where a student has missed over 20 days in the previous school year. When a child reaches 10 days of absenteeism a letter is sent informing the parents of such and that they will then be placed on the school's attendance monitoring list. At 20 days absenteeism the parents are once again informed by letter and they are also then informed that they will be referred to the EWO. The HSCL Coordinator will communicate with target families in relation to attendance issues.

### **Students:**

Full and improved Attendance is acknowledged and rewarded by the Principal at Assembly each Friday. Attendance Ceremonies take place at the end Term 1 and Term 3. Those children who have greatly improved or excellent attendance records are rewarded with a certificate and their photographs are put on the school's website.

### **Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance**

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'. Section 21 of

the act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the EWB two times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

### **Transfer to Another School**

As under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), upon the transfer of a pupil the Principal notifies the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

### **Outcomes:**

The outcomes will be measured in the following way:

- An increase percentage from baseline attendance figures.
- School, Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian are aware of their legal obligation to encourage positive school attendance.

### **Roles and Responsibilities and Implementation**

The Principal and staff will implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management. This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management.

This policy on Attendance was reviewed by the Board of Management and Staff and it was ratified by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Signed: Michael Lynch

Chairperson, BOM

Review Date: February 2024