

Scoil Naomh Eoin

Killenard, Portarlington, Co. Laois, R32 F782.

Tel: 057 8626217

Email: office@naomheoin.ie

www.killenardschool.weebly.com



Principal: Stephen Donovan
Deputy Principal: Anne T. Hillery

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SCOIL NAOMH EOIN, KILLENARD

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The school attendance policy was developed following initial drafting by a representative group of staff, parents and the Board of Management during the school year 2007/2008. The policy was regularly reviewed during the period 2008 to 2017. At the beginning of the school year 2017/2018 a comprehensive review was conducted to develop a school a Statement of Strategy for School Attendance which was then submitted to TUSLA. (See Appendix (i))

RATIONALE

Our school decided to review its attendance policy in 2017/2018 because:

- TUSLA required a statement of strategy for school attendance
- It was a priority area identified by staff
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act
- The school felt the need to implement further strategies to encourage students to be in attendance

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

At Scoil Naomh Eoin, we aim to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure environment where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of students are identified and addressed. The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. We believe that an effective Attendance Policy will help to foster an appreciation of learning and raise the importance of regular attendance.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The revised policy is geared towards -

- Encouraging full attendance where possible & punctuality

- Identifying students at risk
- Raising the importance of school attendance
- To comply with requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Guidelines from NEWB (National Education Welfare Board) and TUSLA.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have an input into the implementation of this policy.

Board of Management

The Board assumes overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy on Attendance. It also provides funding for the monthly best attendance stickers and annual full attendance certificates

Principal

The Principal Mr. Donovan and Ms. Áine O'Sullivan have specific responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for informing the Board of Management of the level of attendance at the school for each school year

Class Teachers

Class Teachers have responsibility for creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, for marking the DES Roll Book daily, for requesting letters of explanation for absences, for retaining these letters of explanations, for informing the Principal when a number of absences have not been explained, for sending these letters/notes of explanation to the secretary's office on the last day of the school year

School Secretary

The school secretary has responsibility for sending a text to parents if a child returns to school following an absence without a letter stating the reason for the absence. The school secretary also maintains the sign out/in folder

Parents

Parents are responsible for insuring their child/ren attend school regularly & punctually, for informing the school of the reasons for any absences & for reminding their child/ren of the adverse effects of missing school

GUIDELINES FOR DEFINING NON-ATTENDANCE

Our school defines non-attendance as not being present in school at roll call at 10.10am (Exceptions being made for absences authorised by the Board of management eg. School

tours, religious services arranged through the school, participation in sports arranged by the school, speech and language appointments etc.)

GUIDELINES FOR RECORDING NON-ATTENDANCE

Children who arrive late are signed in at reception by a parent/guardian where they are welcomed. If a child is withdrawn from school during the school day a parent/guardian must sign the student out and sign them back in if they return during school hours.

Ms. Áine O'Sullivan Post Holder makes sure that data on all students and their parents are filled into the school register. She also records the class data in the Leabhair Tinreamh. Class teachers maintain individual class attendance records in the class rolla. They also retain the written explanations for each absence for the current school year and monitor absences for which no written explanations are received. At the end of each reporting period the Principal and Ms. O'Sullivan submit the appropriate recorded data to TUSLA.

WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ATTENDANCE

Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school; however, staff remains vigilant so that students at risk are identified early. Students at risk are categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Prior to submitting a referral form to the statutory educational welfare service the school will attempt to resolve attendance issues. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians via letter or a note in homework journal when this occurs. A meeting between parents/guardians and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. A checklist is used to note the actions taken prior to referral to TUSLA (See Appendix (ii)). This checklist will accompany a referral form should a referral be made. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to TUSLA. See Appendix (iii) Referral Form

The following strategies are in operation to promote attendance-

Environment: The Board of Management strives to provide a safe, warm & welcoming environment for our students & their parents.

Early Intervention: At the induction Day for Junior Infants in June prior to starting school in Sept, the Principal informs parents of the procedures in relation to attendance and the importance of good attendance.

Lunches: If a child arrives to school without a lunch, the class teacher will inform the school secretary who will contact the parent/guardian so that a lunch can be delivered to the school. If a parent cannot be contacted the child will receive something to eat and drink from the staff room.

Assessment: If a student is absent on the day of the standardised English or Maths assessments, every effort will be made to administer the test when the student returns

Rewards: Good attendance is acknowledged at assemblies, through the awarding of Best Attendance of the Month stickers & awarding Full Attendance Certificates at the end of each school year.

Reports: The school provides an account of the total number of days absent to parents/guardians on the annual school report.

Learning Needs: The school provides a comprehensive support service to try to cater for students experiencing learning difficulties.

SPHE: The school has a full range of policies under the umbrella of SPHE to raise the self-esteem of students including the Walk Tall Programme/Circle Time/Stay safe Programme/Mindfulness / Personal Journals etc.

Anti-Bullying Policy: The school has a written anti-bullying policy and procedures in place to investigate all incidences of bullying.

STRATEGIES IN THE EVENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

Parents are made aware of the schools duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a child. When a child is absent the parent is expected to provide a written note of explanation on the day the child returns to school. A reminder text is sent to parents and a record is kept where no written explanations are received.

PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO -

- **THE REMOVAL OF A CHILD'S NAME FROM THE SCHOOL REGISTER**
 - **OR IN THE EVENT OF TRANSFER TO AND FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL**
- The child's name will only be removed from the roll where the school has been informed in writing that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the TUSLA informs the school that the child has been registered as in receipt of out-of-school education.
 - When a child transfers from our school to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer

- When a child transfers into our school from another school, confirmation of the transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought
- Records of students transferring to a post-primary school will be forwarded on request and following receipt of confirmation of enrolment

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The school communicates the requirements of schools and parents under the Education Welfare Act to all parents/guardians in September each year. Parents of new children to the school are informed on enrolment.

TUSLA - NEWB (NATIONAL EDUCATION WELFARE BOARD)

The education Welfare officer is informed if-

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days in any one school year

TUSLA is furnished with the total attendance in the school year through the annual report form.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

The success of this attendance policy is measured by -

- Improved attendance levels with fewer students being reported to TUSLA
- Specific families showing improved attendance
- Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Clearly defined procedures for recording absences and reasons for absences
- Happy, confident and well-adjusted children
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and students
- Teacher vigilance

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this revised policy on attendance will be from Nov 1st 2017

TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW

This Policy on Attendance has been prepared with reference to conditions existing on the premises of the school, at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated so as to comply with any change of conditions and statutory requirements. New procedures will be reviewed & if necessary amended at the end of each school year or upon receipt of revised guidelines from the TUSLA/DES & other agencies.

This Attendance Policy is the product of extremely careful consideration over a long period of time and in all areas of school life, by the members of a staff who hold and have always held the welfare of the children attending the school in the highest regard.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Signed: _____ **Date :** _____

DEIRDRE DOYLE - CHAIRPERSON