

Scoil Treasa Naofa

Attendance Policy

This policy contains a common attendance strategy that has been devised following collaboration between National Education Welfare Board and schools in the Dublin 8 area.

Introduction

Scoil Treasa Naofa is a co-educational primary school providing education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Scoil Treasa Naofa places great value on regular attendance and provides a range of supportive school attendance strategies within an inclusive setting to support student attendance and engagement in education. The aim of Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Policy is to help parents comply with their legal obligations under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 with regards to school attendance and to maximize the learning days available to students in the school year. Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance and punctuality identifies students at risk and allows the early implementation of intervention strategies.

Policy Mission Statement:

Scoil Treasa Naofa seeks to create a learning environment which enables the development of the child's personality, talents and abilities to their fullest potential. Regular school attendance facilitates the achievement of those aims in the school. Consequently regular school attendance and punctuality are fostered and promoted in the school.

Aims of Attendance Policy:

- To promote an ethos of regular attendance and punctuality in the school.
- To share the promotion of school attendance amongst Board of Management, Principal, teaching staff, support staff, parents and the whole school community.
- To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Educational Welfare Act.
- To identify pupils who may be at risk due to poor or irregular school attendance.
- To ensure that the school has a procedure in place to promote attendance, and to address problems relating to punctuality and attendance.

Attendance / Parental Responsibility

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 Section 17, parents are legally obliged to cause their child to attend school. Scoil Treasa Naofa therefore records the

attendance of all students everyday the school is open and this includes the recording of non- school attendance due to illness or any other absences by class teachers.

Under Section 18 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 parents are also obliged to notify the school of the reason for the child's absenteeism.

Parental strategies to help foster an appreciation of learning and school attendance:

- Parents are required to allow their child to stay in school for the duration of the whole school day. They are discouraged from collecting pupils before 1.30pm unless an unavoidable circumstance arises.
- Parents must provide a note of explanation for any early collection of pupils.
- In the case of any serious irregular absenteeism the NEWB is informed and the Principal informs the parents of this by letter.
- The school calendar is issued at the beginning of the school year. It is available on the school website and through newsletters. Parents are informed of all school closures e.g. in-service, as they occur throughout the year.
- When a child returns to school after a period of absence a written note should be given to the class teacher stating the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence.
- Should a child be absent due to illness for three days or longer, the school may request a medical certificate.
- Should a child be absent frequently due to recurring illness or a specific medical condition, parents are required to supply a medical certificate to this effect to the school.
- These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school.

Punctuality:

School is open from 8:50am to 2:30pm. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time in order that formal instruction can begin promptly. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Educational Welfare Act to report children who are persistently late to the National Educational Welfare Board or the HSE. The school stresses the importance of punctuality at enrolment, parent teacher meetings and in newsletters.

Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Strategies / procedures for dealing with school absenteeism

Scoil Treasa Naofa has now put school procedures in place for dealing with a pupil's school absenteeism where:

- a) a student has been absent for more than nine days in a school year; or
- b) where a student has regular or persistent unexplained absences; or
- c) school absences where the reason given is considered unsatisfactory.

Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Strategy to motivate and prevent School Absenteeism – School Effort Certification Strategy

- School effort award for attendance – School will be certified by the NEWB.
- Positive affirmation of school attendance at the Roll call each morning.
- Regular certificates for attendance given out at the assembly hall each month.
- Attendance Wall set up and regularly updated in the school each month.
- Regular Roll visits / classroom visits by EWO.
- Whole class and Whole school rewards re: attendance – i.e. attendance days, attendance awards, whole school approach to awards and encouragement of positive attendance
- Special jobs in school linked to positive attendance.
- Community links made with community project to support positive school attendance.
- School welcoming policy implemented daily.

Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Strategy for Pupils with Problematic absenteeism – Early Intervention Strategy

- Standardised letters to be sent by the school at 9 days absent and again at 15 days absent. See attached standard letters.
- Parent is requested by the school to attend a meeting in the school after 15 days absent.
- If no improvement in the attendance after this school meeting a referral to the NEWB / Core Target Group is considered.
- Designated attendance champion / attendance leader in each school to oversee the early intervention and sending of standardised letters.
- Positive affirmation of attendance each day in the classroom.
- Regular Roll / Classroom visits by EWO.
- Standard agenda of school attendance on all staff meetings and regular review of overall school's absenteeism with school principal & Attendance Leader.

Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Strategy for Pupils with Chronic absenteeism – Core Target Group Strategy

- Individual pupil referral form completed for each pupil with chronic absenteeism to NEWB for structured work regarding absenteeism.

- Integrated service work by the NEWB, SCP, HSCL and the School on pupils that are part of the referral list or Core Target Group of the school.
- Direct work includes – Daily monitoring on a chart system held in the principal's office, follow up by school on absent days, monthly attendance meetings, monthly NEWB monitoring letter, incentives awards that support attendance chart, regular attendance certificates, actions by NEWB on a monthly basis – Home Visits, Educational Reviews, Telephone calls, letters and interagency work.
- School Roll visits are also part of the Core Target Group – proposed to take place every six weeks / 2 months.
- Possible issue of a School Attendance Notice and court prosecution if no significant improvement made 24 weeks after initial referral received by the NEWB.

Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Strategy to include parents – Parental Communication Strategy

- Parents updated yearly of the school's School Attendance Policy
- The end of year progress reports contain a section for reporting to parents on attendance and absences.
- Clear communication regarding the work involved in each attendance strategy
- Attendance communication wall in school
- Term newsletter to parents from school to include mention of attendance
- Parental support requested towards the attendance effort certification of the school

Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Strategy for referrals / supports

- Issue preventing attendance identified and appropriate referral made e.g. EWO , Family Support etc

Evaluation / Monitoring of Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance

- Scoil Treasa Naofa has assigned an attendance leader within the school to champion regular school attendance and therefore Scoil Treasa Naofa's School Attendance Policy will be regularly reviewed with school management.
- The Board of Management will be regularly updated regarding Scoil Treasa Naofa's school attendance.
- The Educational Welfare Officer will regularly inspect the Roll books at Scoil Treasa Naofa.

This School Attendance Policy was drawn up in January 2012 in consultation with school staff, school management, HSCL, SCP and the EWO. It will be reviewed in June 2014 or before should we be requested to do so by the EWO.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 21/02/12.

Signed: Patrick Sansfield Foley, Chairperson, Board of Management.