



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Rathfeigh
Address	Edoxtown, Tara, Co.Meath-
Roll Number	17964K
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	<p>In Scoil Mhuire Naofa Rathfeigh</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We value the positive impact that high levels of attendance has on teaching and learning.2. We believe that children learn effectively when they attend school regularly. Children should also arrive to school on time and leave on time. Children, however, should not be in school if they are unwell.3. We value the impact of regular attendance on the creation of a stable learning environment.4. We will raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.5. We value the pressure on pupils and teachers when pupils miss out on classes and key parts of the curriculum.
The school's high expectations around attendance	<p>The school promotes good attendance by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensuring the children are happy in a safe and welcoming environment. Pupils who experience positive interaction, in the form of praise or being asked questions, are less likely to be absent from school on a regular basis than those who have not experienced such reaction or feel ignored.2. Developing mutual trust and respect between pupils and teachers.3. Having high expectations of pupils' attendance.4. Being vigilant so that risks of good attendance e.g. bullying are identified early.5. Involving parents/guardians and pupils to participate in reviews of the school's attendance strategy.
How attendance will be monitored	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. School begins at 9am. All children should be in

their class lines in the school hall by 9am.

2. The school attendance of pupils is recorded on a daily basis by the class teacher on the Alladin school administration software.
3. The roll call is at 10am. If a pupil is absent at the time of the roll call then he/she will be marked absent for the day. The roll may not be altered once it has been filled in.
4. When a child is absent the parent/guardian must inform the class teacher by means of an Absence Note and explain the reason for the absence. The Absence Note is in the school journal and on the school website. The class teacher files all Absence Notes. The class teacher will contact the parent/guardian if an Absence Note has not been provided for the absence. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. Parents/guardians must sign the "Sign in/Sign out" book at reception if their child arrives late to school or leaves early.
5. Collective monthly attendances and percentages are signed monthly by the Principal. The Board of Management will be informed of these percentages by the Principal.
6. Arriving late at school will be recorded on the Alladin system by the class teacher and addressed on the School Report in June. Parents/guardians will be contacted by the Principal if their child is regularly late for school.
7. A letter will be sent to parents/guardians at the end of the school year to inform them of the school's obligation to report to Tusla if their child has missed 20 days or more.
8. National Education Welfare Board forms reporting non-attendance (20 days or more) are collated by the Principal and returned to Tusla in October, December, March and at the end of the school year.

Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:

- Target setting and targets
- The whole-school approach
- Promoting good attendance
- Responding to poor attendance

Target setting and targets:

1. In 2017/18 the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance was ratified by the Board of Management on September 18th 2017.
2. The Statement of Strategy was submitted to Tusla.
3. The average daily attendance for Scoil Mhuire Naofa in the school year 2018/19 was 95.4%. We aim to increase this to 97% for the 2019/20 school year.
4. 6.8% of pupils missed 20 days or more in the 2018/19 school year. We aim to reduce this to 5% for the 2018/19 school year.
5. In 2019/20 we hope to raise awareness about attendance among management, staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

Whole-School Approach to promote good attendance:

1. At the start of the school year the Principal will outline to parents/guardians the importance of attendance and punctuality and the obligation on teachers to report non-attendance.
2. When a child has been absent for 10 days the class teacher will contact the parent/guardian to ascertain a reason for the child's absence and if further support is required.
3. There will be monthly updates on the school's attendance in the school newsletters.
4. The importance of attendance will be highlighted during school assemblies.
5. There will be positive affirmation of attendance when the roll is being taken.
6. Teachers and parents/guardians will encourage children to participate in enrichment activities (art, music, drama etc) and sporting activities. These activities can support children in their school attendance.
7. During SPHE lessons teachers will promote self-esteem and encourage attendance through areas like "Making Choices"

Responding to Poor Attendance:

	<p>Early dialogue with parents/guardians is critical to ensure that non-attendance does not persist.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents/guardians will be contacted by the class teacher on an informal basis when a child is absent regularly. 2. When a child has missed 10 days the class teacher will meet with the parent/guardian with a view to finding an explanation for the absences and thereby a solution. The Principal will be informed. 3. A letter will be sent to parents/guardians when a child has missed 20 days. Attendance targets for improved attendance should be set in collaboration with the parents and guardians and monitored with them. 4. When there is no improvement in attendance a referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services will be made by the Principal. 5. The Education Welfare Officer will meet with the parents/guardians in school and /or at home to discuss concerns re: attendance. 6. Chronic attendance issues may point to the need for support from a range of agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Tusla. 7. Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent for 20 days or more in a school year. In this situation the Principal will inform the relevant parents/guardians by letter at the end of the school year.
<p>School roles in relation to attendance</p>	<p>The Principal and class teachers are responsible for implementing this policy under the guidance of the Board of Management.</p>
<p>Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)</p>	<p>Parents:</p> <p>Parents/guardians will be informed of the following in the first newsletter of the year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school opens at 8.50am. Children should be in the school hall no later than 9am 2. School closes for Junior/Senior Infants at 1.40am and for all other classes at 2.40pm 3. The school calendar is available in hard copy form from the office and is also on the school website. 4. Parents/guardians are asked to send in the

	<p>Absence Note when their child is absent</p> <p>5. Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Section 21(9) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The principal can't give " permission" to parents/guardians for holiday absences during term time. A parent/guardian must provide a letter to the school if they are taking their child on holiday during term time.</p> <p>Contacts with other schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act, the principal of a child's current school must notify the principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school. 2. When the principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he will notify the principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance and also appropriate information in relation to the child's academic progress. 3. When pupils are transferring to secondary school the sixth class teacher will send the end-of-year school reports (Education Passports) to the relevant secondary school.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	The Statement of Strategy will be reviewed regularly at staff meetings and reviewed annually by the Board of Management.
Review process and date for review	September 2020.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	September 24 th 2019
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	September 20 th 2017

Signed _____ Date _____
Maurice Daly
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Seamus Tansley
Principal

