

# Scoil Réalta na Maidine

## Attendance Strategies

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In Scoil Réalta na Maidine, we value the individuality of all our children and respect their right to access all areas of learning. We work to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfillment and their development into active and responsible adults.

### Rationale

- It is a priority area identified by staff
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000
- The school promotes and encourages regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils learning

### Aims and Objectives

In Scoil Réalta na Maidine we aim:

- To ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of early school leaving
- To promote a positive learning environment
- To promote positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourages pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines from NEWB.

### School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

### Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the principal makes returns to NEWB. It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

## **Punctuality**

School begins at 9.10 am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is required under the Education Welfare Act to report pupils who are persistently late to NEWB.

## **Communication**

- **Parental Support** - It is the policy of Scoil Réalta na Maidine to encourage and maintain open communication between home and school and to encourage parents in their role as primary educators of their children. The Principal and teachers are available, on an appointment basis, to meet parents.
- Attendance is one of the issues addressed at meetings for new parents when their child is enrolled in Scoil Réalta na Maidine.
- At the beginning of each school year, infant teachers hold a general meeting of parents and one of the issues addressed is that of the importance of regular school attendance.
- Parents are made aware of the requirements of the Education Welfare Act at pre-enrolment information meetings. Each family is given a copy of the information leaflet - Don't Let Your Child Miss Out (Leaflet for parents NEWB 2004) This leaflet outlines:
  1. The importance of regular attendance
  2. Parental obligations in relation to attendance under the Education Welfare Act
  3. Advice to parents on what they can do to help children attend school regularly

Parents are reminded regularly of the importance of good attendance (i.e. newsletters, parent/teacher meetings, etc.). An awareness of the importance of good attendance by the boys is kept to the forefront in the classroom and at assemblies.

### **Parents/guardians can promote good attendance by:**

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- Notifying the school if their children cannot attend
- Working with the school and EWO to resolve any attendance problems
- Making sure that their children understand that parents support good school attendance
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining if possible from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their child's school day and homework
- Informing the school in writing the reason for absence
- Ensuring where possible that children's appointments are scheduled outside of school time
- Contacting the school promptly if they have concerns about absence or if their son is beginning to refuse to go to school

## **School Strategies for Encouraging Attendance**

- Caring Environment – Scoil Réalta na Maidine at all times aims to ensure that children are taught in a safe, secure and caring environment where their intellectual, physical and spiritual development are catered for
- We aim to create a welcoming environment for pupils and parents. Teachers consistently try to encourage good attendance in their respective classrooms
- Special Needs – pupils needing support are identified as early as possible and the appropriate support systems put into place. We emphasize positive achievements and do all we can to enhance self-esteem
- LINK – we have the support of SCP, LINK
- Homework Support – The homework club (run by LINK) exists to support those pupils whose home circumstances dictate that there is neither the environment conducive to completing homework nor the expertise at home to help with homework. Having completed homework removes a possible excuse for avoiding attending school
- Breakfast Club - A scheme is in place to provide all children with a nutritious snack
- Prompt Action – Staff remain vigilant so that ‘at risk’ pupils are identified early
- School Calendar – The calendar for the coming year is published and circulated to parents in March each year. It is hoped that this approach enables families to plan family events and holidays around school closures

These measures enhance the school experience for those children who might otherwise be at risk of poor attendance.

## **Recording and Reporting**

A roll call is taken every day and should a child be absent, they are required to have an explanatory note from their parents. This may be recorded in the home school diary. The Education and Welfare act ‘obliges the parents of an absent child to notify the school of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence’. Notes or record of non- attendances are duly dated and are kept and put in Pupil Confidential Files at the end of each school year.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of the NEWB. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern are contacted by the Principal.

### **NEWB is informed if:**

- A pupil has been absent for 20 days
- A pupil has been suspended for 6 days or more
- A pupil has been expelled