

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

**Rationale**

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, parents, Board of Management and Educational Welfare Officer in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in Scoil Mochua to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school. It was updated in 2016/17.

**Rewarding of Students with Good Attendance**

As a Special School whose population may present with many medical needs, targeting good attendance is part of our school action plan. Staff will encourage good attendance but be mindful of the fact that there are many reasons that may prevent our students from attending.

Staff will focus on creating a positive school environment for children to thrive and a place the children want to be in order to encourage good attendance. Bus Drivers, Escorts, Teachers, SNAs, Nursing and Ancillary staff will work together to create this environment.

**Strategies for Improving Attendance**

The following strategies will be employed to improve attendance:

* The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child, following their interests and strengths.
* Scoil Mochua will promote development of good self-esteem and self worth in its pupils (see Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy).
* Scoil Mochua will provide support for pupils who have special educational needs in accordance with DES guidelines
* We will take into account student’s health and medical needs when planning reduced days or weeks. We will offer various supports to students who are returning after operations or illnesses or to students whose conditions make them unable to attend on a full time basis.
* Attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the principal/deputy principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil.
* The school will use regular newsletters and web texts to promote attendance and punctuality.
* The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
* The class teacher will ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained.
* The class teacher will keep a daily record of attendance in Aladdin.
* The Principal will promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
* The Principal will inform the NEWB:
  + - When a pupil has been missing for twenty or more days during the course of the school year.
    - When a pupil has been suspended from school more than once under the Code of Behaviour.
* Extra-curricular and wellbeing activities, such as choir, Walking Wednesdays, Feel Good Fridays etc will be encouraged for all pupils, specifically those at risk of non-attendance.

**Identification of Students who are at Risk of Developing School Attendance Problems**

The following strategies may be employed to identify students at risk of developing school attendance problems:

* On transfer to **Scoil Mochua**, attendance records will be sought from previous schools on pupil attendance.
* Class teachers will inform the Principal of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
* Contact with various agencies who are involved with such students.

**Establishment of Closer Contacts between the School and Home**

Closer home/school relations will be fostered through:

* Parents’ Association
* Attendance at meetings (Parent/Teacher, etc).
* Parent Courses.
* Attendance at school events (eg Concerts, shows, science fair, etc).
* Open-door policy in Principal’s office for daily communication.
* Daily communication with Bus Escorts
* Apps e.g. Aladdin Connect, SeeSaw

**Fostering Contacts**

Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in Scoil Mochua

* NEWB.
* Other schools in the vicinity.
* School Completion Programme.
* NEPS.
* Community Gardaí and JLO.
* Local interest groups

**Encouraging Full Participation of Students in the Life of the School**

In so far as is practicable, programmes will be developed with the bodies mentioned above which will encourage the full participation with students in the life of the school. Examples of these are:

* CDNT Appointments
* CDNT Consultations
* Creation of student-centred IEPs
* Summer project programmes.

**Identification of Aspects and Strategies**

The Board of Management, teachers and whole school community will be mindful at all times of:

* The identification of aspects of the operation and management of the school and of the teaching of the school curriculum that may contribute to problems relating to school attendance on the part of certain students.
* The identification of strategies for the removal of those aspects in so far as they are not necessary or expedient for the proper and effective running of the school having regard, in particular, to the educational needs of students.
* The identification of strategies that will encourage more regular attendance at school on the part of such students.
* The need to review this strategy into the future to accommodate the changing needs of the school and of its population.

**Implementation**

This policy is effective immediately.

**Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2025.

This policy will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every three years. Any staff member, board member, parent, guardian, or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The next review of this policy will occur before or during the school year 2027/2028.

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Matthew Swain Sophia Casey

Chairperson of BoM Principal/Secretary to the BoM