

SCOIL AN CHROÍ RÓ NAOFA ÍOSA
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY BOOKLET

Every day counts



Your child has a right to a good education.

A good education, combined with loving care and encouragement, will give your child a great start in life. A good education means your child will be more likely to:

- *learn more;*
- *develop their skills and talents;*
- *make and keep friends;*
- *have more confidence;*
- *perform better at exams;*
- *be employed.*

*This booklet is available on our school website (www.shns.ie)
or by contacting the school office (ph: 01 8216400; email: sacredheartns@gmail.com)*

Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) operates under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, a piece of legislation that emphasises the promotion of school attendance, participation and retention. **TESS** has three strands, namely the statutory Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and the two school support services, the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and the School Completion Programme (SCP). The EWS work with children and families who have difficulties in relation to school attendance, participation, retention and below is an outline of its roles and responsibilities in partnership with schools and parent(s)/guardian(s).

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the EWS statutory service are to ensure that every child either attends school regularly or otherwise receives a minimum education; to ensure and secure every child's entitlement to education. Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) work with families and children in a child-centred way to overcome barriers to their school attendance, participation and retention, and work closely with schools, educational support services and other agencies to support school attendance and resolve attendance problems for the benefit of children and families. This is done through home visits, educational welfare conferences and collaboratively working with different agencies. The main priority of the work is around the welfare of children and young people and to ensure that concerns around attendance are addressed before attendance becomes a crisis issue.

School Leaving Age

Section 2 of the Education Welfare Act requires children resident in the state to attend school when they reach 6 years of age. Children may not leave school until they are 16 years old and have completed 3 years post primary education, whichever occurs later.

The Law

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail in their duty to ensure that their child attends school, then the EWO has the power to take legal action against the parent(s)/guardian(s) under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The Role of the School

Under Section 22 of the Education (Welfare), Act 2000 each school is obliged to have a statement of strategies to encourage regular attendance among students. The principal ensures that the strategies outlined are followed, ensuring that parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed at the earliest possible point of the school's concern regarding attendance and that the school follows the graded steps outlined in the strategy to address non-attendance.

As per the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, any named student who is aged between 6 and 16 years of age and who has not yet completed 3 years of post-primary education, whichever comes later, and who has reached a cumulative total of 20 or more days absence from school must be reported to Tusla's Educational Welfare Service in the School Attendance Report (SAR) and the Annual Attendance Report (AAR).

Where a school principal has a concern in relation to a pupil's school attendance and where the school has made all local efforts to resolve the problem and the school still remains concerned about the student's attendance, a referral can be made to EWS.

The Role of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

When a student is absent from school, it is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform the school in writing, either on Aladdin or in their child's journal, of the reason for the absence. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail in their duty to ensure that their child attends school, then the EWO has the power to take legal action against the parent(s)/guardian(s) under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The Education Welfare Act covers all children between 6 to 16 years of age. This is the compulsory school-going age. The statutory service is a national service covering all 4,000 schools, both DEIS and non-DEIS, and both Primary and Post-Primary.

Check out TESS website on www.tusla.ie/tess/

What can parent(s)/guardian(s) do to improve school attendance?

After school every day:

- make sure that the homework is completed as early as possible;
- keep the school uniform for school wear only.

The night before:

- leave school bag, lunch and uniform ready for the next morning;
- get your child to bed at a reasonable hour;
- set the alarm on your mobile phone or the alarm clock for the morning.



Before school every day:

- get up on time in the morning so that you will not be rushing;
- don't allow your child to watch television in the morning;
- get your child to eat some breakfast every morning;
- talk positively about school;
- if possible, don't allow your child to go to the shop in the morning as this delays them and they could be late for school;
- let your child know the collection/supervision arrangements for after school.



“Ready for School Routine” - Easy steps to get to school today

1. Get up on time
2. Breakfast
3. Uniform
4. Books
5. Journal
6. Bag
7. Leave home on time

What can teachers do to improve school attendance?

- Welcome children every morning.
- Praise each child for their effort.
- Give children a reasonable amount of homework.
- Don't give homework at weekends (except in exceptional circumstances).
- Acknowledge improvements in attendance and punctuality.

What can schools do to improve school attendance?

- Provide opportunities within the school to promote and celebrate high levels of attendance.
- Keep up to date attendance records that are reviewed regularly in order to respond to patterns of non-attendance as well as patterns of good or improved attendance.
- Acknowledge good and improved attendance and punctuality.
- Develop a greater awareness amongst children and their parents of the long-term benefits to be gained from good attendance and punctuality records.
- Ensure a consistent approach to attendance and punctuality promotion throughout the school.
- Involve all members of the school community in supporting high expectations for school attendance and punctuality.

What the school will do if your child is absent:

- If your child is absent from school, parent(s)/guardian(s) must provide a note of explanation for the teacher either on Aladdin or in your child's journal. If you bring your child to the doctor, please obtain a medical cert and give a copy to the class teacher for attendance records.
- If a child is absent without any communication from parent(s)/guardian(s), after the third day, the class teacher will send you a message on Aladdin asking after your child. Please respond to the teacher's message with an explanation for your child's absence and an expected date for their return to school.
- If, during the school year, your child reaches 10 days absence from school, a text will be sent alerting you to this.
- If, during the school year, your child reaches 15 days absence from school, a text will be sent alerting you to this.
- If, during the school year, your child reaches 20 days absence from school, a text will be sent alerting you to this. The school is then obliged to inform EWS of your child's attendance.
- Where the school has a concern about your child's attendance, the class teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal may contact you to discuss or invite you to attend a meeting in the school.

Late arrivals/early collections:

- If your child is late for school or is being collected early, parent(s)/guardian(s) must provide a note of explanation for the teacher either on Aladdin or in your child's journal.
- All late arrivals and early collections will be recorded on Aladdin.

When should a child return to school after illness?

- The average child has 6 to 12 illnesses per year, so sickness is a part of normal childhood. It can be difficult to balance the child's school attendance with the risk of spreading the illness to others in school. Please see the advice below from the HSE.

When should my child return to school/childcare?

HSE Building a Better Health Service | Seirbhís Sláinte Níos Fearr & Forbairt | hpsc

Chicken Pox When scabs are dry	Conjunctivitis No need to stay out*	Diarrhoea or Vomiting 48 hours after the last episode	Flu 5 days after start of illness	Glandular Fever No need to stay out*
Hand, foot & mouth No need to stay out*	Head Lice No need to stay out*	Impetigo When scabs are dry or 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Measles 4 days after rash appears	Mumps 5 days after swelling appears
Scabies After first treatment	Scarlet Fever 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Slapped Cheek No need to stay out*	Threadworms No need to stay out*	Whooping Cough 5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after start of illness

This information is based on the Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools guidance document.

*No need to stay out if child is well but school or childcare provider should be informed.