

# Scoil Naomh Fiachra: School Attendance Policy

**Scoil Naomh Fiachra  
Clontubrid  
Roll No. 16865D**



## **Scoil Naomh Fiachra School Attendance Policy**

Scoil Naomh Fiachra has traditionally had a very high level of attendance. The Board of Management, the Teaching Staff and the Parents' Council are keen to ensure that this continues in future years by co-operating to promote a positive appreciation among parents and pupils of the benefits to be derived from education and attendance at school.

We feel that this can be achieved by:

- Creating a friendly and supportive atmosphere in school.
- Recognising the individuality of our pupils and encouraging them to be involved in school activities.
- Implementing a curriculum which is relevant, flexible and caters for the needs of individual children.
- Providing a broad range of interesting and stimulating activities within and outside the classroom.
- Ensuring that children work in an environment, which is safe, secure and conducive to learning.
- Dealing expeditiously with any issue, such as bullying, which might inhibit school attendance.
- Promoting a positive attitude within the school to good attendance.

### **Education (Welfare) Act**

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 established the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) to ensure that every child in the State attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education. The Act also imposes certain legal obligations on Parents and School Boards of Management in relation to school attendance. Tusla has replaced the N.E.W.B in recent years but carries out the same functions and role.

### **TUSLA**

- Tusla's main function is as stated above.
- Tusla also has an advisory and research role in the formulation of Government policy on school attendance and education provision.
- Tusla will deploy educational welfare officers at local level to work in close co-operation with parents, teachers, school managers to promote regular school attendance and prevent absenteeism and early school leaving.
- The Educational Welfare Officers will focus in particular on children at risk and those who are experiencing difficulties in school in order to resolve any impediments to their regular attendance at school.

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- Alternative schooling will be sought for students who have been expelled, suspended or refused admittance to a school.

### **Parents**

Under the Education Welfare Act parents have an obligation to

- Send their children to a recognised school on each school day or otherwise ensure that they are receiving an appropriate minimum education.
- Where a child is absent from school on a school day, the parents are obliged to notify the class teacher of the school of the reasons for such absence.

The policy of Scoil Naomh Fiachra is that where a pupil is absent from school parents should inform the school in writing, stating the date(s) on which the pupil was absent and giving the reason for the absence.

In the case of a prolonged absence, and where the pupil was under medical care parents should include a letter from the medical practitioner.

In Scoil Naomh Fiachra, school starts each day at 9.00 a.m. and formal lessons begin at 9.20 a.m. While we actively encourage children to be present by 9.00 a.m. a child is not considered officially late unless he/she arrives after 9.20 a.m..

Infant classes are dismissed each day at 1.40 p.m. and all other classes at 2.40 p.m..

Individual pupil attendance will be recorded each day in the electronic attendance software (Aladdin). Also, absent children are recorded on a temporary class list for use when internet is down or for fire drills. The calling of the roll will commence each day not later than 10.00 a.m. Children who arrive after 9.20 am are recorded as being late.

If the school receives written notification from parents that a pupil has an appointment with a doctor or dentist and will be late for school that pupil will be marked present, provided he/she actually arrives in school later.

Children will only be allowed to leave the school earlier than the official times if they are collected by parents/guardians or if there is a written request from parents/guardians. In such cases, where the person collecting the child is not a parent or a childminder known to the school, parents should indicate the name of the person collecting the pupil.

### **School Managers**

The Board of Management of a school is obliged to

- Establish and maintain a School Register (POD) and School Attendance Records (Leabhar tinrimh).
- Record and monitor the attendance of all students enrolled and report on student attendance in certain circumstances.
- Support students with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis.
- Prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school.
- Prepare and implement a code of behaviour, setting standards of behaviour and disciplinary procedures for the school.



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Under the Act, a school is obliged to report to TUSLA every time:

- It decides to expel a student.
- A student's name is to be removed from the school's register for whatever reason.
- A student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively.
- A student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively.
- A Principal is concerned about a student's attendance.

### Procedures

In order to fulfil our obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act the Board will implement the following procedures:

1. Make copies of this School Attendance Policy available to all parents of pupils enrolled in the school.
2. Make a copy of this policy available to parents of pupils enrolling in the school for the first time.
3. Introduce parents to the role of the TUSLA. (See Appendix I).
4. Establish and maintain a School Register (POD) and Attendance Records (Leabhar Tinrimh/ Aladdin) as required.
5. Record and monitor the attendance of every pupil enrolled in the school.
6. The total school attendance is recorded in the Leabhar Tinrimh monthly. Class attendance will be recorded each day on the school attendance software (Aladdin). Attendance for the whole school will be monitored on a monthly basis and an average percentage attendance calculated and reported to the Board of Management at board meetings.
7. The attendance figure for each pupil will be included in the annual report issued to each parent at the end of the academic year.
8. Sanctions will not be imposed on children for being late for or being absent from school.
9. Where the school has concerns about the attendance of a pupil the Principal will inform the parents of this concern by letter. (See Appendix II).
10. Make reports to the TUSLA as required.
11. Where the school has concerns about the attendance of a pupil and the concern is being passed on to gTUSLA, the Principal will inform the parents of this concern by letter. (See Appendix III).
12. Where the school does not have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, but, because of the number of absences, the school is required to make a report to TUSLA the Principal will inform the parents of this by letter. (See Appendix IV).
13. Implement a School Attendance Strategy as outlined in Appendix V
14. Appropriate agencies such as the Inspectorate of The Department of Education and Skills and officers of TUSLA have a right to inspect school attendance figures of individual pupils.
15. Implement our school's Code of Good Behaviour.

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16. Review this policy at such times as might be appropriate e.g. in the event of a change in legislation or where important issues arise in the implementation of the policy.


***This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.***

**Signed:** *Kieran Costello*  
***Chairperson of the Board of Management***



# Scoil Naomh Fiachra: School Attendance Policy

## Appendix I

<b>Scoil Naomh Fiachra Clontubrid Roll No. 16865D</b>	
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*Clontubrid,  
Freshford,  
Co. Kilkenny.  
Date*

Dear Parents,

I am writing to tell you a little about the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and about some of the responsibilities we now share under the Act.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD EDUCATION

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every child stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

### TUSLA

Under the Act, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school, whichever comes later. TUSLA was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

### OUR SCHOOL POLICY

A copy of our policy on School Attendance is attached.

As a parent, you must let the school know if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that reasons must be given in writing. The school will notify TUSLA if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise to concern.

If your child is sick or is absent for other good reasons, no action will be taken by the TUSLA. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be visited by an Educational Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education.

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Further information concerning the new service and about school attendance matters generally can be obtained from the national Lo-Call Education Helpline (Telephone 1890 36 36 66), which is staffed by an Educational Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal).

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## Appendix II

**Scoil Naomh Fiachra  
Clontubrid  
Roll No. 16865D**



*Clontubrid,  
Freshford,  
Co. Kilkenny.  
Date*

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding **<insert name>** attendance at school.

**<Insert name>** has been absent on the following days **<insert days>**. The school has not received any letter or contact from you. You are asked to contact the school as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to discuss the matter with **<name of teacher>**.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary, whichever comes later. When your child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for this absence every time. It is school policy that you do this in writing.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)



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## Appendix III

**Scoil Naomh Fiachra  
Clontubrid  
Roll No. 16865D**



*Clontubrid,  
Freshford,  
Co. Kilkenny.  
Date*

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding **<insert name>** attendance at school.

**<Insert name>** has been absent on the following days **<insert days>**. The school has written to you about this matter but has not received an explanation from you. The school is now very concerned that **<insert name>** is not receiving an education and we will be writing to TUSLA to pass on our concern. An Educational Welfare officer may therefore be in contact with you shortly to discuss the matter further.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary, whichever comes later. When your child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for this absence every time. It is school policy that you do this in writing.

If you wish to discuss **<insert name>** attendance, please contact the school to arrange an appointment to meet with **<name of teacher>** as soon as possible.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours truly,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)



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## Appendix IV

**Scoil Naomh Fiachra  
Clontubrid  
Roll No. 16865D**



*Clontubrid,  
Freshford,  
Co. Kilkenny.  
Date*

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding <insert name> attendance at school. He/She has been absent on the following days <insert days>.

Because <insert name> has been absent through illness, the school will be reporting the absence in the normal way but will not be informing TUSLA that it is concerned about your child's educational welfare.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years post primary, whichever comes later. When your child is absent, you as parent must let the school know the reason for this absence every time. It is school policy that you do this in writing.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours truly,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

## Appendix V



**An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach**  
Child and Family Agency

### Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Scoil Naomh Fiachra, Clontubrid
Address	Clontubrid Freshford Co.Kilkenny
Roll Number	16865D
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	Our vision for our school is that through cooperation with teachers parents and children, that children will develop a sense of personal responsibility and an appreciation of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance in achieving their full potential as learners and individuals.
The school's high expectations around attendance	Scoil Naomh Fiachra recognises the importance of high attendance and the positive impact it has on teaching, learning and on enabling pupils to reach their full potential. Our school promotes a culture of high expectations among all staff, students and parents around attendance.
How attendance will be monitored	Scoil Naomh Fiachra uses "Aladdin" (an electronic online system to monitor attendance records in our school. Attendance will be taken on a daily basis. If a pupil is not present by 10.00 a.m. and the school has received no notification from parents he/she will be marked absent whether or not a pupil arrives later. A pupil will be marked late if they arrive after 9.20 a.m when formal teaching commences. Through the Aladdin System our school can capture, measure and analyse school wide attendance and also track individual patterns. The principal and the class teachers share the responsibility for monitoring and analysing attendance patterns. The leabhar tinrimh is completed at the end of every month by our deputy principal.
Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to	Target Setting and targets: To monitor attendance levels and patterns.



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### attendance:

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

- ✚ To ensure an accurate and consistent approach to recording attendance.
- ✚ To reduce unnecessary absences due to family holidays
- ✚ To reduce unnecessary absenteeism.
- ✚ To clarify all matters regarding attendance for all the school community (parents, pupils and staff)

### The Whole School Approach

- ✚ School ethos, policies and practices work consistently together to support good attendance
- ✚ There is a consistent approach to attendance by staff.

### Promoting good attendance

- ✚ General awareness raising and setting high expectations e.g. discussion at parent-teacher meetings, highlight the importance of good attendance at enrolment time, positive affirmation when roll is being taken, records of attendance in student's school reports, records of attendance in a student's Education Passport to secondary school.
- ✚ Involving parents in high expectations e.g. high levels of parental involvement in all aspects of school life, involving parents in decision making.
- ✚ Providing support programmes to enhance attendance e.g. Art, music, drama, sporting activities, Green Schools initiatives, SPHE programmes.
- ✚ Reward systems e.g. attendance certificates at end of the school year. Pupils receive a gold cert for missing no school days, a silver certificate for missing 2 days or less.

### Responding to poor attendance

- ✚ Engaging in early dialogue with parents and students
- ✚ Using school led multi agency support processes.
- ✚ Referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services.
- ✚ Provide parents with the school calendar well in advance of the school year beginning so that parents know when it is appropriate to book holidays. The school calendar is sent out with booklists each year.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Providing parents with an update on their child's attendance mid-way through each school year so that if it is low they have a chance to improve it.</li> <li>✚ Letters to parents informing them that the school has made contact with Tusla once their child has missed 20 days of school or there is a concern about reasons for poor attendance.</li> </ul>
School roles in relation to attendance	<p><b>School Principal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance.</li> <li>✚ Provides opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the schools' Attendance strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Deputy Principal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Notifies Tusla's Educational Welfare Services and the relevant EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance.</li> <li>✚ Leads on the review and implementation of the school's Attendance strategy.</li> <li>✚ Furnishes pertinent attendance documentation to officers of relevant government departments</li> </ul> <p><b>Teachers.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement especially with students who may be at risk of low attendance.</li> <li>✚ Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.</li> <li>✚ To agree punctuality and attendance standards with students as part of classroom rules</li> <li>✚ Set example by their own punctuality</li> <li>✚ To ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures</li> <li>✚ Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about student absences. To support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling.</li> <li>✚ Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ To set high standards for their child in relation to</li> </ul>

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	<p>attendance and punctuality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem.</li> <li>✚ Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time.</li> <li>✚ Ensure that if their child is absent a dated written note is provided stating why their child was absent.</li> <li>✚ Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason</li> <li>✚ Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.</li> </ul>
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transitions for pupils as easy as possible.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<p>The statement of strategy will be monitored on an annual basis by principal and staff.</p> <p>Formal end of year review of the Statement of Strategy by Board of Management.</p> <p>An update on attendance will be included at all Board of Management meetings.</p>
Review process and date for review	Every 3 years or as required.
Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	5 <sup>th</sup> of October 2017
Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	29 <sup>th</sup> of September 2017