



LIOSMÓR MOCHUDA NATIONAL SCHOOL
Big Trees from Small Acorns Grow

Attendance Strategies

Policy Statement

In Liosmór Mochuda, 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.

Liosmór Mochuda decided to review its attendance strategies because:

- It is a priority area identified by staff.
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000.
- The school needs to encourage pupils to be in attendance.

Aims

The aims of the attendance policy in Liosmór Mochuda are to:

- encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Act.
- identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance,

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - The Education Welfare Board.
 - The Education Welfare Officer
 - The Board of Management

In Liosmór Mochuda we aim:

- To foster an appreciation of learning.
- To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of early school leaving.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

- 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.

Strategies to encourage good attendance:

- Caring Environment – Liosmór Mochuda, 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 try 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 emphasise positive achievements and do all we can to enhance self-esteem.
- Rewards - A system is used to reward attendance - Certificates are issued for perfect and improved attendance at the end of the school year

Communication:

- Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.
- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.
- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.
- Parental Support - It is the policy of Liosmór Mochuda 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 with new parents when their child is enrolled in Liosmór Mochuda.
- It is also covered in the information pack given to all parents of Junior Infant children.
- 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 children is kept to the forefront in the classroom and at assemblies.
- Parents are made aware of the requirements of the Education Welfare Act. Each family is made aware 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.

School Records:

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 appropriate note. 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 need to be kept.

- When a child has accumulated 10 days of absence school management will send a letter to the parent, which may request a meeting with the teacher
 - When a child has missed 20 days, the absence is reported to the Education Welfare Board as required by the Education Welfare Act. If the absenteeism persists, the school requests active intervention from the N.E.W.B.
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Ratified by Board of Management on _____
(Date)

Signed _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Appendix:

Punctuality

School is open from 9:10 a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9:20 a.m.. 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 obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Guidance for Parents

Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, such communications should not be in the homework diary, but on a separate page or sheet of paper. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child’s name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child’s absence is not received by the school.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
- Making sure their children understand that parents support approve of school attendance;
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework.
- Encouraging them to participate in school activities.
- Praising and encouraging their children’s achievements.
- Instilling in their children, a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children’s appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- Notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Pupils:

- Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance:

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- A special reward system will be introduced for promoting good attendance at school.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.

- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.