

**CNOC MUIRE SECONDARY SCHOOL, GRANARD, CO LONGFORD**

**POLICY ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

**1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Board of Management of Cnoc Mhuire recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning. It believes that children should attend school regularly and punctually because school is where they learn and school is where they are safe.

The Board of Management is, therefore, committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. It aims to do this by:

- a) promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance;
- b) reducing all forms of unexplained absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism (a child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 20 or more days)

The Board of Management is obliged under the Education Act to make four written reports to the National Educational Welfare Board during the school year regarding school absences.

**2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Cnoc Mhuire has a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourages parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children.

It is a legal requirement that schools will:

- a) be open for 167 sessions each school year;
- b) maintain attendance registers;
- c) accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness;
- d) clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised;
- e) submit absence returns, as required, to TUSLA
- f) liaise with the TUSLA regarding absence issues and meet with relevant families;
- g) inform TUSLA of students who are suspended from school for six days or more.

*The following procedures are used by the school:*

- a) parents are given attendance information through letters, 'phone calls, text, student reports;
- b) Year Heads keep records of absence and punctuality for each student in their year. Year Heads also alert the Attendance Officer, Ms McBrien, if a student in their year has 5 unexplained absences – this

will be communicated to parents. Ms McBrien is also alerted when there are 10 or more explained absences. When 15 absences are recorded, a letter is sent home to parents;

- c) Class Teachers meet their class each morning at assembly and take and record the roll;
- d) The Guidance/Pastoral Care team are alerted of students at risk;
- e) Post-registration truancy is monitored through the taking of class registers and spot checks. Parents are promptly informed of any post registration truancy

The school aims to create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance by rewarding students who have achieved 100% attendance and punctuality with a School Certificate.

*Full Attendance and Punctuality Certificates* can only be awarded to students who attend each day on time. Taking regular half days (6 or more) for explained or unexplained reasons precludes a student from receiving full attendance.

The school imposes sanctions for lateness and truancy as laid down in the School Code of Behaviour.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENTS**

- Students are expected to be in school before 9.00 a.m. and remain for all classes. Junior level students are not permitted to leave the school grounds at lunchtime.
- Students are responsible for bringing in notes of explanation regarding punctuality and attendance and for giving them to their Class Teacher or Year Head.
- Students must attend assembly on time.
- Students who have a medical/dental appointment during the course of the school day, must bring a signed note from their school journal requesting permission to leave school early. Notes requesting permission should be left in the box at the office hatch before 9.00 a.m. An authorised absence note will then be ready for collection at the morning break, 11.02 a.m.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered regularly, on time, dressed in the school uniform and in a fit condition to learn. (Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their children stay at school once they have registered).

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- a) take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
- b) attend parents' evenings and other school events;
- c) ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
- d) be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
- e) ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- f) ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness
- g) always notify the school as soon as possible – preferably on the first morning – of any absence;
- h) confirm this in writing when the child returns to school;
- i) avoid booking family holidays during the school term;
- j) talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend;
- k) avoid collecting their child unexpectedly from school as this causes significant disruption to teaching and learning

*Absence Letter 1*

*(for 5 days' Unexplained Absence)*

Dear Parent,

It has come to my attention that \_\_\_\_\_ has missed five school days and has not brought in a note to explain his/her absence. We believe that children should attend school regularly and punctually because school is where they learn and achieve.

Please send notes of explanation for the days your son/daughter was absent and ensure that they attend school regularly in the future.

Yours sincerely,

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Pauline McBrien  
Principal

*Date:*

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It has come to my attention that \_\_\_\_\_ has missed fifteen school days.

I recognise that you have sent notes explaining these absences, but, I must inform you that, should this pattern continue, the school is legally obliged to report these absences to TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency.

Please contact the school if we can be of any assistance on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

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**Pauline McBrien**  
**Principal**