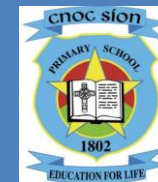


2016 - 2019

# Mount Sion Primary School Action Plan



## DEIS Attendance Policy



MOUNT SION PRIMARY SCHOOL

2016 - 2019

## ATTENDANCE

### Target(s)

- To ensure that all pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- To ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- To ensure that attendance is recorded in the Leabhar Tinreamh and in the Clár Leabhar
- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation (Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000)
- That children will only be absent when they are sick or have a legitimate reason for not being able to attend school
- That parents/guardians will understand the educational and social benefits of good regular attendance of their sons at school
- That the attendance of all pupils will be maximised to the fullest extent possible
- That it will be understood throughout this document that 'Attendance' includes daily attendance of pupils at school and school events, pupils arriving punctually to school and remaining in school until the assigned finishing time. Regular early withdrawal of pupils by parents/guardians will be regarded as presenting poor attendance attitudes.
- That a regular and consistent attendance monitoring system will be put in place
- That all absences will be reported by parents/guardians either in writing (email acceptable), by phone call, by verbally informing the Class Teacher, HSCL Teacher, Principal or Secretary
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- That attendance concerns are dealt with in a supportive manner
- That patterns of poor attendance are broken and patterns of good attendance established with pupils who present with attendance concerns
- That all pupils, parents and all staff will be aware of good attendance practices
- That punctuality and regular and flippant early withdrawal (daytime basis) from school will be addressed under this action plan
- That as with attendance, parents will understand the educational and social benefits of good punctuality practices and will desist from taking their sons out of school early.
- To comply with Attendance reporting procedures to TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency.

	Action(s)	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.</li> <li>• Text and Facebook alerts are also issued to remind parents/guardians of school closures</li> <li>• A new Lunch Club providing every pupil with a free lunch will be introduced throughout the whole school.</li> <li>• Breakfast Club will continue to be open to all pupils and will open from 8:30am to 8:50am.</li> <li>• A new emphasis on Attendance will be prioritised. The following strategies will be utilised to promote good attendance habits.</li> <li>• <b>The emphasis in year 1 will be on attendance.</b></li> <li>• A merit/reward system will be put</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with Cumulative Attendance Merit system</li> <li>• Introduce reward based on whole class attendance. For example, teacher will reward class with whole class event such as watching a movie, playing extra PE, extra play-time, a field trip etc (to be confirmed)</li> <li>• <i>Decision to be made on number of whole class present days, 5 to 10?</i></li> <li>• Items marked * in year 1 to continue across years 2 &amp; 3</li> <li>• Regular reminder to Parents/Guardians about the importance of attendance</li> <li>• Emphasise the vital importance of the formal Parent teacher meetings. It is hoped to achieve initial attendance of parents at a rate of 90% and follow up attendance to 100%.</li> <li>• Cumulative attendance records monitored by School Secretary, Principal, HSCL Teacher and SCP Staff on a weekly/fortnightly basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue actions from 2016/17 and 2017/18</li> <li>• Introduce reward system for Punctuality</li> <li>• This Punctuality reward system will be similar in application to the Cumulative Attendance awards introduced in year 1</li> <li>• <i>Same as attendance awards (to be decided)</i></li> <li>• Attendance statistics to be related at each Assembly</li> <li>• Introduce Class with Best Attendance</li> <li>• Achieve attendance of parents at a rate of 95% and follow up attendance to 100%.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

		<p>in place as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following 20 cumulative days attendance a pupil will receive a merit. Junior Infants to 1<sup>st</sup> Class Sticker only, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Sticker and Homework Voucher</li> <li>• A 'Visual Merit' will be placed for display on a graphic showing ascending steps</li> <li>• The merit remains on display throughout the year</li> <li>• Merits will be achieved on the accumulation of 40, 60, 80, (intervals of 20) through to 180 giving nine merits and the tenth merit will be achieved on full attendance for the year 183 days (or whatever the total is for a given year)</li> <li>• Freddos will be given on 40, 80, 120, Rolos on 160 175 and 183</li> <li>• The cumulative attendance figures will be monitored by the Principal using Aladdin and will be relayed to teachers for implementation of awards</li> <li>• End of year Certificates will be presented to pupils acknowledging their attendance achievement for the year.</li> <li>• Pupils with full attendance for the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following up on findings from the 'Parental Attitudes to Attendance Survey 2016' an Information Booklet for Parents/Guardians to be drawn up to further explain the impact of poor attendance and poor punctuality on educational progress.</li> <li>• To focus more specifically on reducing the number of pupils who miss more than 20 days during the school year.</li> <li>• Amend the Anti-Bullying Policy to address the issue of non-attendance of a pupil who feels he is being bullied. This arises from one of the findings of the 'Parental Attitudes to Attendance Survey 2016'.</li> <li>• <b>Analysis of pupils missing more than 20 days for 2015/16 shows that 46% of boys missing more than 20 days are of non-Irish Ethnicity. Over 2017/18 and 18/19 a specific 'Booklet' for non-Irish Ethnic families needs to be developed to promote good attendance habits.</b></li> </ul>	
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		<p>year will receive a certificate from the Mayor of Waterford City</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils who miss only one school day will also be awarded with Certificate from the Mayor and (TUSLA/NEWB).</li><li>• Pupils who miss between 2 and 5 days to be acknowledged and awarded certificates from school</li><li>• Monthly Attendance Awards meetings for Infants will be held at the end of September, October, November, January, March, April (Depending on when Easter falls), May, June</li><li>• Monthly Attendance Awards - - Class/Individual rewards given for – Brilliant Manners / Rising Star etc*</li><li>• End of year whole school awards ceremony (3 children per class selected for 3 individual awards)*</li><li>• All pupils Junior Infants to 4<sup>th</sup> to be facilitated to attend weekly Irish Dancing lessons*</li><li>• All pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class to be facilitated to attend swimming lessons*</li><li>• All pupils to be facilitated to attend weekly Hurling coaching*</li></ul>		
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|--|---|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classes from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> will receive 6 Kickboxing lessons</li><li>• Assembly*</li><li>• Weekly monitoring of punctuality and attendance of all pupils by Principal and HSCL teacher.</li><li>• Punctuality patterns will be reviewed in June 2017 with a view to setting targets for 2017/18 and 2018/19</li><li>• * <b>Please see follow-on procedure in event of alerted attendance concerns (P. 8)</b></li></ul> |  |  |
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**Monitoring**

- 1) School gates open each morning at 8:30am from when supervision is provided. Classes begin at 9:00am. Daily attendance is taken by class teachers via the Aladdin database system at 9:40am. Once the roll is completed it may not be changed. The daily attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Leabhar Tinreamh, each child is registered in the Clár Leabhar.
- 2) Principal will monitor attendance patterns and identify pupils presenting with attendance concerns.
- 3) Principal will meet with HSCL teacher each week to discuss and review attendance concerns.
- 4) Cooperation with SCP na Siúire – Mount Sion Primary School works with the School Completion Programme. This programme aims to minimise the risks of irregular or non-attendance and to maximise the opportunities provided to all pupils. Activities are provided both in school and after school by SCP personnel and teaching staff to encourage children at risk of poor attendance to come to school.  
Monthly meetings will be held between Eleanor Browne SCP na Siúire and Paula Coady School secretary to monitor the attendance patterns of pupils who present with attendance concerns and as being identified by SCP as attendance concerns. Any such arising concerns will be communicated to the Principal, the HSCL Teacher and the SCP Coordinator.  
Where a pupil has presented with Attendance Concerns in the previous year a pro-active approach will be taken by the HSCL Teacher and the SCP Coordinator. This will take the form of a restorative meeting the parents early in September to provide support to parents around getting their child to develop good attendance habits.
- 5) When a parent wishes to remove their child early from school they must
  - 1) Call to the Secretary's Office and complete a White Sign-Out Form
  - 2) The Secretary/Principal/Deputy Principal will complete a Yellow Permission Slip and give it to the Parent
  - 3) The Parent will present this Slip to the Class Teacher and take their child. If the child returns to school before 2:40pm the Parent must return to the Secretary's office to fill in the return-time on the Sign-Out Form.
  - 4) Only those who are 18 years or older may sign a child out of school.
- 6) The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.
- 7) A letter is issued from the Principal to inform parents when their child has missed 15 days. A further letter is issued to inform parents when their child has missed 20 days and that a report has been issued to the EWO.
- 8) The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is expelled or suspended for 6 days or more.
- 8) Transfer to another School requires the Principal of the reception school to inform the previous school of enrolment. Transfer must also be completed on the Pupil Online Database (POD).

**Follow-up  
Procedure  
for pupils  
presenting  
with  
Attendance  
concerns**

- 1) Following weekly meeting between Principal and HSCL Teacher, the HSCL teacher will meet with relevant class teacher the following week.
- 2) If no satisfactory absence note/email/verbal report is received this will be noted on child's attendance record.
- 3) Following **three** such notifications on a pupil's record the Class teacher, in consultation with the Principal and HSCL Teacher, will contact the parents/guardians to advise them of the schools' concerns. A phone call may be made and an information note will be given to the parents/guardians. **(Such a note is to be devised).**
- 4) A Follow-Up / Monitoring of Unexplained Absences will be recorded on Recording Template by Class Teacher, tick box format
- 5) If following such advice a further non-explained absence occurs the Principal will discuss the issue with the parents/guardians. The SCP Coordinator and our HSCL Teacher may become involved at this stage in a restorative manner.
- 6) Every avenue will be explored to help improve the child's attendance and to address any issues which may be contributing to attendance concerns/difficulties.
- 7) If following such a discussion/meeting further non-explained absences occur the case will be referred to TUSLA via the EWO Ms. Stephanie Allen.
- 8) TUSLA will then become involved and our EWO Ms. Stephanie Allen may meet with the parents/guardians of the child and determine a course of action.
- 9) In the event that actions determined to assist the child improve his attendance fail then the EWO will have recourse to actions laid down in legislation.
- 10) Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'.

Section 21 of the act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.





**Mount Sion Primary School**  
**Parental Attitudes to Attendance Survey April 2016**  
**DEIS Planning 2016 – 2019**

**Parental involvement in promoting good Attendance Habits**

As part of the process of developing the Attendance component of Mount Sion Primary School's DEIS Plan for 2016-2019 it was decided to conduct a survey of Parental attitudes to Attendance. This survey will inform approaches, emphases, decisions and initiatives of any new Attendance Policy. It is important to note that the term 'Attendance' incorporates the core idea of 'Punctuality'.

A total of 265 surveys were issued to all families in the school, with one survey being given to each family. 216 completed surveys were returned, representing 81.5% of all families. Reliable findings are usually based on a return of 60%. The margin of error is set at 3% and the accuracy level of the responses is 95%. ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com))

The full findings of the survey are attached to this DEIS Attendance Action Plan. For the purpose of guidance towards the positive contribution that the Parents/Guardians of Mount Sion Primary School make to forming good attendance habits the following points are highlighted:

*Note: For ease of reading the terms 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' are combined to read as 'Agree', likewise with the terms 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree'.*

- 1) 99.5% of our parents believe that a good education will help their child get ahead in life
- 2) 99% of our parents disagreed with the statement that *'If my child does not want to study now it is OK as he can always study when he is older.'*
- 3) 99% of our parents believe *'In general my child's teachers do a great job.'*
- 4) 100% of our parents agree that *'It is the parents' responsibility to make sure their children go to school.'*
- 5) 91% of our parents agree that they *'would be happy for the school to have a reward system for attendance.'*
- 6) 90% of our parents agree that they *'would be happy for the school to have a reward system for punctuality.'*
- 7) 95% of our parents agree that *'Regular school attendance is just as important for Primary school pupils as for*

**Ways to  
promote  
good  
attendance  
habits**

*Secondary school pupils'*

- 8) 89% of our parents do not 'allow my child to take time off school because of problems at school'.
- 9) 92% of our parents do not think it is acceptable that 'A child misses school because he doesn't like an activity that is on that day.'
- 10) 95% of our parents do not think it is acceptable that 'A parent takes their child shopping during school time.'
- 11) 97% of our parents do not think it is acceptable that 'A parent keeps their child out of school because a member of the family can't get up in the morning.'
- 12) 90% of our parents do not think it is acceptable that 'A parent keeps their child out of school because the school has a half-day that day.'

**Further to the above Parents/Guardians can promote good attendance habits by:**

- refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason, this can be done by initially phone but must be presented in written or email form for record purposes.
- working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems
- making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance
- discussing planned absences with the school.
- 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.
- instilling in their children a positive image of their school Mount Sion.
- encouraging a pride in being a Mount Sion pupil
- 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.

**Evaluation**

An Attendance report will be prepared by the Principal using Aladdin Software and will be examined for each assembly, at the end of each term and at the end of each year. A full attendance report will be presented to the Board of Management each year. Parents' surveys will be used to illicit Parents' opinions and will inform reporting. The Parents' Council will provide feedback on the Attendance Plan at Parent Council Meetings.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the TUSLA/NEWB five times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year. This information will be communicated to the school community through the school's newsletter.

**Attendance Report for 2015-2016 School Year**

The following are statistics outlining key elements of Attendance for the school year 2015/16. Figures are derived from our data base programme AladdinSchools.ie.

- 1 Overall attendance for 2015-2016 was **92.3%**. This compares with National Attendance figures of 94.6% (2013/14, last year of reported figures).
- 2 The attendance rate of 92.3% for 2015/16 compared to the previous three years is as follows:

2015/16	92.3%
2014/15	92.7%
2013/14	91.6%
2012/13	86%

Table 2.1

Room	Class	Attendance
2	Junior/Senior Infants	88.4%
3	Junior Infants	91.4%
7	Senior Infants	90.4%
8	1 <sup>st</sup>	91%
10	2 <sup>nd</sup>	92.4%
11	2 <sup>nd</sup>	93.5%
19	3 <sup>rd</sup>	91.4%
20	3 <sup>rd</sup>	92.4%
21	4 <sup>th</sup>	94.5%
22	5 <sup>th</sup>	94.1%
13	6 <sup>th</sup>	94.9%
14	6 <sup>th</sup>	92.7%

Table 3.1 Attendance for 2015/16

- 4 The number of children who have missed 20 days or more (TUSLA - NEWB notification level) during 2015-2016 was 65. This represents 21.2% of the school population. This compares with the National level of 10.4% (13/14 year).

**A breakdown of the numbers of pupils missing 20 days or more shows a disparity between the Junior Classes and Senior Classes, with pupils at the Junior end almost twice as likely to miss more than 20 days.**

Pupils missing > 20 days 2015/16	
Junior Classes	43
Senior Classes	22

Table 5.2

5 The following table 6.1 shows positive attendance rates:

Attendance	No of pupils
100% attendance	21
Missed 1 day	14
Missed 2 to 5 days	49
Missed 6 to 10 days	54
Total 10 days absence or less	138 (45%)

### Attendance 2009 – 2015

**2008/09** 90.6% overall attendance rate

**2009/10** 92.2% overall attendance rate: The total no. of days lost through student absence up to and including the 30<sup>th</sup> June was 4939 days. This represents an attendance of 92.2%.

**2010/11** 90% overall attendance rate. A total of 5859 days were lost through absence this year. This represents an absence rate of 10% over the year compared to 7.8% last year. The number of pupils who were absent for 20 days or more was 64, which is a reduction of just over 8% on last year.

**2011/12** 86% overall attendance rate

	<p><b>2012/13</b> The overall attendance is 86% however this includes 24 boys who are still on roll and are not attending Mount Sion. Their total absences skew our attendance figures, their total absence account for 7% of total absence so it is possible that our attendance figures are around 93%.</p> <p><b>2013/14</b> Average attendance for the year is 91.6% 31 (10.3%) boys have 100% attendance, 115 (38.4%) boys have attendance at between 95% and 99%. 43 boys missed between 20 and 50 days, with 30 of those missing between 20 and 30 days. 20 days is the notification cut-off point for reporting to the NEWB. 12 of the 43 boys missed an extended number of days due to either holidays in their parent’s home country or returning late to school in September.</p> <p><b>2014/15</b> The attendance figures for all pupils for the 2014/15 year are 92.7% and figures for target pupils under DEIS initiatives are 89.48%. Average attendance for Infant classes was 90.23%, for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes 92.82%, for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes 94.25% and for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes 93.86% 52% of all pupils had an attendance rate of between 90 and 97%, 25% at 98 - 100%, 18% at 75 – 89% and 4% at 50-74%. 21 pupils had full attendance.</p> <p>Average attendance from 2008 – 2015 = 89.87%</p> <p>Average attendance, when 11/12 and 12/13 (both 86% due to non-attendeess contributing to absence figures) are omitted, is 91.42%.</p>
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	Year	Overall Attendance	100% attendance *	94% – 99% attendance * Missed between 1 and 10 days	Missed more than 20 days *
	15/16	92.3%	21	123	65 (22%)
	14/15	92.7%	21	126	53 (18%)
	13/14	91.6%	31	133	43 (14.5%)
	12/13	86%	29	128	71 (21%)

\*No. of pupils

Target											
16/17				17/18				18/19			
Overall	100%	94% - 99%	Missing = />20 days	Overall	100%	94% - 99%	Missing = />20 days	Overall	100%	94% - 99%	Missing = />20 days
93.5%	30	130	50								

**Targets to be agreed and targets for 17/18 and 18/19 to be set as programme progresses.**