**Mol an Óige School Attendance Policy**

The aims of the attendance policy in Mol an Óige Steiner National School 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 Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 (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.
* 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’s attendance is recorded daily.
* Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
* Pupil’s attendance and tardiness is monitored.
* School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
* The Education Welfare Board (TUSLA).
* The Education Welfare Officer
* The Board of Management.

Mol an Óige is a participating school in the DEIS programme [(Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools: an action plan for social inclusion).](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/DEIS_action_plan_on_educational_inclusion.pdf?language=EN)

**Compliance with school ethos**

The policy complements the school ethos of education for the Head, Hands and Heart, providing an experience of learning that should be meaningful for the children responding to who they are as individuals, to the world in which they live and providing a safe, secure environment for the children.

**Mission Statement:**

Mol an Óige is a Steiner National School. We are a community of parents, children and staff. We are committed to providing a safe, secure environment for the children.

We are multidenominational school and we believe that children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds have a right to an education that respects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live in.

The children leave school having acquired a love of learning and a confidence in themselves and in their own individual abilities and aptitudes.

The experience of learning should be meaningful for the children and should respond to who they are as individual s and the world in which they live.

A thematic integrated approach is central to our work with a strong emphasis on active learning and the arts.

**Punctuality**

The school day begins at 9.20am. Children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9.20am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The Principal is obliged under The Act, to report children who are persistently late. The school will contact parents / guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late to the Education Welfare Board (TUSLA). In line with Department of Education and Skills guidelines (Circular 0033/2015) the roll will be taken at 10:30. Children arriving after 10:30 will be marked absent.

Once consistent late days are recorded, the class teacher will keep a record of tardiness. The class teacher will discuss the issue with parents, if tardiness continues the principal will then speak to the parents.

**Guidance for Parents**

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

After 3 consecutive absencesor a noticeable pattern of absences a member of staff must phone parents to seek an explanation for the absence.

After 15 or more consecutive absences a letter will be sent to parents informing them of such.

When there is no improvement in the attendance, the school should advice the parents of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the likelihood of a referral to TUSLA’s Educational Welfare Services.

Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents / guardians to the school and will be retained by the school.

In the case of absence a note of explanation should be sent to school with the child containing 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.

**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 and 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 the school in writing if their child / children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not know to the teachers.

**Pupils**

The school will endeavour to engender a responsibility in the pupils to make sure that absence notes from parents are given to their class teacher and that school correspondence to their parents is passed on 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 will:

* Promote a safe and welcoming environment
* Raise awareness among parents about challenges posed by poor attendance and lack of punctuality.
* Raise awareness about the role of National Education Welfare Board and its impact on the running of the school.
* Work with other agencies, e.g. education Welfare Officer, to support families with low attendance records.
* Have ongoing oral and written contact with parents, e.g. standard letter sent to parents when child had been absent for 15 days or more.
* Seek notes from parents to explain absences.
* Organise meetings involving all agencies involved with families consistently displaying low attendance.
* Arrange Home School Liaison Support where necessary.
* Ensure support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education guideline.
* Monitor attendance rates of pupils, by the class teacher in the first instance. The class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.

**School Principal**

The School Principal will:

* Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
* Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
* When a pupil had 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 the Principal in instances where absences are not explained in writing
* Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually
* Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil

**Record / communication**

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behavior 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.

Reviewed by Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management