

## **Scoil Mhuire EPV / Course Days Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy aims to strike a balance between the welfare and educational needs of our pupils and the welfare and wellbeing of our teaching staff. The Board seeks to encourage continuous professional development among its teaching staff and is positively disposed to facilitating teachers in availing of EPV days arising from same, subject to the smooth and efficient running of the school.

Under Rule 58 of the Rules for National Schools, teachers are eligible to apply to their Board of Management for Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) days on foot of attending approved summer courses. The granting of such leave is at the sole discretion of the Board as employer. The fact that a teacher has completed a course or has paid for a course, does not automatically entitle the teacher to EPV Days. This should be understood by all.

As per the guidelines set out in Department of Education Circular 0035/2009, leave may be sanctioned on the basis of 3 days for attendance at a 5-day course or as approved by Department. It should be noted that no EPV entitlement arises where attendance at any specific course amounts to 3 days or less, and, in particular that 5 days EPV is the maximum which may be awarded in any school year.

Under Rule 58, EPV days are subject to the prior approval of the "Manager" i.e. Board of Management. The Board of Scoil Mhuire has empowered the School Principal and, in his absence, the Deputy Principal, to sanction EPV days. However, if referred to the Board, the Board will have the final decision.

Under normal circumstances, substitute cover is not paid by the Department for EPV Leave.

Further information in relation to number of days permitted can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/4754b2-extra-personal-vacation-days/>

### **Rationale**

- To encourage teachers to undertake professional development courses which enhance their teaching and promote a standard of excellence throughout the school
- To assist in the smooth operation of the school
- To minimize disruption to classes
- To ensure that all staff members are clear on their entitlements to days 'in lieu' of courses (EVP days)
- To ensure that no teacher has too many children from other classes in their classroom
- To mitigate the effect of teacher absences on pupils

### **Selection of Department Approved Courses**

In selecting a course, teachers are encouraged to prioritise their own professional development as educators, with due regard to and consideration for the needs of the school and of the children in their care. Particular value attaches to courses that are mutually beneficial to the teacher and the children, from the point of view of teaching, learning and wellbeing.

It should be noted that completion of multiple online courses, offered by different institutions, and attended during the same period, will not be considered by the Board as a valid basis for a teacher to apply for more than 3 EPV Days and, in such cases, a maximum number of 3 EPV Days will be sanctioned.

### **Eligibility**

All permanent and fixed-term teachers are eligible to be considered for EPV leave.

Substitute teachers on non-casual contracts (more than 40 days) are eligible to be considered for EPV leave in the same way as other teachers.

### **Operation of the Policy and Procedures**

#### **Application for EPV Days**

Requests for EPV days are made verbally, in the first instance, to the Principal. Following a discussion, the formal application for an EPV day is made via Aladdin. Approval of the application will be made by the Principal, via Aladdin. If sanctioned, the day is noted on the School Calendar which will be displayed in the Staff Room EPV Day Calendar.

All primary teachers participating in approved summer courses are, on completion of the course, provided with a certificate confirming attendance and completion of the course. A teacher claiming EPV days must present this certificate to the school principal at the beginning of the school year, as evidence of completion of an approved summer course.

Applications for EPV Days will not be considered until a teacher has submitted a certificate of attendance.

When discussing/applying for EPV Days, where possible, prior notice of at least 1 week is appreciated.

#### **Sanctioning of EPV Days**

In principle, EPV Days will be sanctioned on a 'first come, first served' basis. In the event of two or more applications for the same day, the Principal will consult with the teachers concerned. In exceptional circumstances, where it is absolutely necessary for both teachers to absent themselves on the same day, in the case of class teachers, both classes will be split. With the exception of Junior Infant teachers, teacher absences will not be covered by the SEN Team.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, no more than 1 EPV Day per class teacher will be sanctioned on any given day. To ensure the smooth running of the school, only one class will be split on any particular day.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, no more than 1 EPV Day per SEN Teacher will be sanctioned on any given day.

It is possible for EPV Days in respect of 1 class teacher and 1 SEN Teacher to be sanctioned on any given day.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, a maximum of 1 EPV Day will be sanctioned in any school week in respect of individual teachers, i.e. teachers are requested not to apply for more than 1 EPV Day in any given week or more than 2 EPV Days in any given term.

In availing of 2 EPV Days in the same term, teachers are requested to avoid applying for EPV Days that straddle the weekend, i.e. on Friday and the following Monday.

Teachers in the Junior Infants classroom(s) will have their classes covered by members of the SET Team, in rotation, during the Infant School Day. Maximum use will be made of in-class interventions such as Ready Set Go Maths to facilitate cover of Junior Infant classes.

Due to the necessity for members of the SEN Team to cover the absences of teachers of Junior Infant classes, a maximum of 3 EPV Days per year will be sanctioned in respect of each Junior Infant teacher.

A maximum of 1 EPV Day per teacher, per year will be sanctioned in respect of each of a pair of teachers sharing a post, whereby the class must be split and is without a teacher for the day. Teachers sharing a post may apply for further EPV days which, if sanctioned, must be covered by the teacher's partner teacher, i.e. post sharing teachers must arrange to cover each other's absences on 2 of 3, 3 of 4 or 4 of 5 EPV Days.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, EPV Days will not be sanctioned in the following circumstances:

- During the first 2 weeks of the school year
- During the week following Christmas and Easter
- On Planning Days/Staff Training Days, e.g. Primary Language Curriculum, Primary Curriculum Framework that have been scheduled to take place and for which advance notice has been given.
- On days when other classes are scheduled to be away on School Tours, Sports Day or attending events, advance notice having been given
- For the purposes of extending certain other forms of approved leave, i.e. Maternity Leave (including Statutory and Non-Statutory Leave) Parental Leave, Parents' Leave.

## **Preparation for EPV Leave**

### **Consultation**

Teachers taking EPV Leave should consult with the Office and with the teachers to whom they propose to send pupils, to ensure that there are no issues in the destination classroom.

### **Class Split**

Teachers must prepare a Class Split, with due consideration to the needs of their own pupils and to the teachers and pupils to whom they will be sending their pupils.

In preparing the Class Split, teachers must refer to the Class Split Guidelines, available from the Office.

A copy of the Class Split must be given in advance to the Office and to the SEN Teacher attached to the class.

Clear instructions should be given to pupils regarding what they should do and where they should go on the day that their teacher will be absent. Pupils should be clear regarding

where they are to go for the toilet and at breaktimes and The Principal/Deputy Principal will convey the class to their own classroom in the morning and supervise their distribution as per the Class Split. In the case of Senior Infants, the Principal/Deputy Principal will collect pupils from their assigned classrooms and bring them to the Halla Mór for release at 1:30 p.m.

### **Pupils' Work**

Teachers are requested to have a minimum of three day's work prepared and photocopied in their classrooms. In preparing work for children for EPV Days and other unexpected absences, teachers are requested to:

- Prioritise work that is based on use of textbooks, workbooks, library books, etc. to avoid unnecessary photocopying
- Ensure that there is sufficient work for the children to do for the entire day. For the children who tend to finish their work quickly, please compile a list of further activities for them to engage in
- Differentiate the work so that each pupil is working a level appropriate to him/her

With the exception of pupils who require assistive technology to access the curriculum, as pupils must be supervised when using internet capable devices such as iPads and Chromebooks, work should not be set that involves the use of these devices.

Work must be differentiated, as appropriate. Work given to pupils should aim to revise and reinforce work already done, so as not to place additional demands on the receiving class teacher.

In the case of Junior Classes, i.e. Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, prepared work is to be left in the teacher's classroom, ready and accessible to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

In the case of Senior Classes, i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes, prepared work is to be given to pupils by the teacher the day before his/her absence on EPV or, if necessary, is to be left in the teacher's classroom, ready and accessible to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

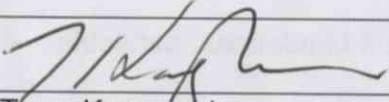
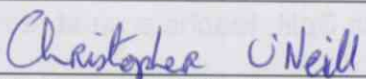
Teachers are kindly requested not to email work (to be photocopied and distributed) to the office either on the evening before or on the morning of an EPV Day.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

The policy will apply to the School Year 2023/2024, and subsequent years.

The policy will be reviewed, as necessary, with reference to the latest Department of Education guidelines.

	
Terry Kavanagh Príomhoide	Christopher O'Neill Chairperson