

# Keynote Speakers

## Professor Dolf van Veen

**Professor Dolf van Veen** is Director of the National Centre on Education and Youth Care, The Netherlands (NL) and special professor at the University of Nottingham (UK) as well as InHolland University, Centre on Urban Education and Youth Policy (Amsterdam). His work focuses on policy strategies and innovative programmes serving vulnerable children and youth and their families and schools. He is (co-) author and editor of over 30 books on multi-service schools, services integration, school attendance and drop out, counselling and student support services, urban education and youth policy, and time out/rebound programmes. He is currently director of the Dutch National Programme on learning and behaviour support teams, serving 9,000 schools.

## Professor Doug Willms

**Professor Doug Willms** is Professor of Education and Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick, Canada. He is widely known for his research on vulnerable children and the design of education monitoring systems. In work with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) he chaired a major project on 'Student Engagement at School; A Sense of Belonging and Participation' for PISA 2000 (Programme for International Student Assessment). Since the PISA 2000 report he has been involved in the development of a practical evaluation tool for schools to help increase student engagement.

## Professor John Dwyfor Davies

**Professor John Dwyfor Davies** is Professor of Education at the University of the West of England, Bristol. His qualitative research work considers the practical issues of attendance and non-attendance. It also addresses the issue of why certain students, who apparently will gain little from school, in terms of certification, continue to attend school. He argues that ignoring the reasons why such students actually attend school is a major oversight in current research.

## John Lee

**John Lee** is Reader in Education at the Faculty of Education, University of the West of England. He has worked extensively in the field of special educational needs in collaboration with Professor John Dwyfor Davies. He directed the Bristol non-attendance project which forms a key part of the research presentation to be given at this conference. He is published in both book form and academic journals; his most recent book on classroom discourse is in press.

National Educational  
Welfare Board

An Bord Náisiúnta  
Leasa Oideachais



**NEWB**

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD  
AN BORD NÁISIÚNTA LEASA OIDEACHAIS

# School Attendance and Participation: What Works and Why?

**NEWB Conference 2008**



# School Attendance and Participation: What Works and Why?

Tuesday, 26 February 2008

## The National Educational Welfare Board will host a national conference on school attendance and participation.

This conference is the first step in the development of guidelines on school attendance strategies, as set out in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

### Where and When

Venue: The Law Society, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7  
Date: Tuesday, 26 February 2008  
Time: 9:00am (registration)  
9:30am – 4:30pm (conference)

### Conference Details

Most children have a positive attitude towards school. They make good friends. They play sports and get involved in school activities. They enjoy learning and, as they get older, see its relevance to their future.

But this is not the case for all children. For many complex reasons some may begin to skip classes, then full days. Unfortunately, over time, some can disappear from the classroom.

The spotlight in this first NEWB conference will be on providing an in-depth understanding of the problem of absenteeism and exploring what schools can do to address it.

International and national experts will outline research evidence on why children become disengaged and miss school. They will also look at what makes children stay in school. Importantly, practitioners will outline whole school and individual school attendance strategies that have been proven to work.

The conference will be of interest to educators, researchers and policy makers.

### Book your place by 15 February 2008

You can book your place in any of the following ways:

- Register now on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)
- Return the enclosed postcard.
- Phone +353 (0)1 873 8600 with your details.

**Numbers will be limited so early booking is recommended.**



# Programme

**9:00am Registration** Tea and coffee

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**9:30am – 10:15am Opening Session: The Irish context**

**Making every school day count**

Eddie Ward, CEO, NEWB

**Attendance and students' school experience in Ireland**

Selina McCoy, Research Officer (Higher), Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)

**Conversations in 10 schools: Qualitative research on school attendance**

Emmet O'Briain, Associate Director, Ipsos MORI

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**10:15am – 11:30am Plenary 1: Why do children miss school and what makes them stay?  
An international perspective**

**Chair:** Prof. Claire W. Lyons, Head, Department of Learning, Society, Religious Education, TED (Targeting Educational Disadvantage) Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

**Attendance as an aspect of engagement**

Prof. Doug Willms, Professor of Education, University of New Brunswick, Canada

**To attend or not to attend: Why some children attend school and others don't?**

Prof. John Dwyfor Davies, School of Professional and Learning Studies, University of the West of England  
John Lee, Reader in Education, Faculty of Education, University of the West of England

**Questions**

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**11.30am – 12:00pm Break**

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**12:00pm – 1:00pm Plenary 2: Strategies to address poor attendance and participation**

**Chair:** Jim Mulherrins, Principal Officer, Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Education and Science

**Tackling non-attendance in schools: A practical approach**

Prof. Dolf van Veen, Director, Netherlands Youth Institute/National Centre for Education and Youth Care

**Questions**

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**1:00pm – 2:15pm Lunch**

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**2:15pm – 2:35pm Afternoon Session**

**Address by Mary Hanafin T.D., Minister for Education & Science**

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**2:35pm – 3:50pm Plenary 3: Improving school attendance in Ireland: What's working and why?**

**Chair:** Aidan Savage, National Co-ordinator, School Completion Programme

**Londubh Project, Inchicore**

Mary Keogh, Principal, Our Lady of Lourdes NS, Inchicore

Julie Mulligan, Childcare Worker, Londubh Project

**Primary Attendance Matters, Northern Ireland**

Alex Barr, Chief Education Welfare Officer, Southern Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland

**Ballymun School Principal Network**

Marian Hackett, Principal, Holy Spirit GNS, Ballymun

**North Inishowen School Completion Programme, Donegal**

Connell McGrenra, SCP Co-ordinator

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**4:00pm – 4:30pm Closing Session: Shaping our future approach**

**Towards attendance strategies that work: Distilling the learning**

Nuala Doherty, Director of Educational Welfare Services, NEWB