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**AN BILLE OIDEACHAIS (LEAS) (LEASÚ), 2012  
EDUCATION (WELFARE) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2012**

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**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

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The Long Title to the Bill sets out that its objective is to strengthen the role of the NEWB in relation in preventing the non-attendance of students who have been enrolled in “recognised schools” in the State within the meaning of the *Education Act 1998*. In specific terms the Bill enables the provisions of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* (the 2000 Act) to apply to many students who are enrolled in schools as junior or senior infants who have not yet attained the age of 6 years.

Thus, the Bill will provide that where parents have enrolled their child in a school where the child is less than 6 years old they are subject to the requirements set down in section 17 of the 2000 Act, which said provision requires that the child attends school on each day. The Bill does not disturb the compulsory age for schooling set down in the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* itself, which applies to all 6-16 year old children, but instead brings within the remit of the 2000 Act any parent(s) who choose to enrol their child in a “recognised school” before the child attains 6 years of age and are successful in doing so.

It is in that context that the Long Title refers to the Bill itself providing further co-ordination for the role of the NEWB in relation to certain students who are enrolled in recognised schools as the Bill does not reduce the compulsory age for schooling in the State itself and does not impact upon other aspects of the educational infrastructure such as decisions by Boards of Management to refuse to enrol children or section 14 of the 2000 Act concerning children who are educated in places other than recognised schools.

*Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin,  
May, 2012.*