

Attendance

Context

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility. This document should be read in the context of The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A summary and consolidation of policy (1997) and the Memorandum Enhanced Enrolment Procedures (Intranet only).

- Section 22 of the Education Act (1990) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to ensure the child to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or to be registered for home schooling.
- All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.
- Section 24 of the Act requires Principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister. Attendance registers must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board Inspector or by any authorised person.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents must ensure:

- Their children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a government or registered non-- government school or, registered for Home Schooling.
- Their children who are enrolled at school attend every day the school is open for instruction.
- They provide an explanation for absences to the school within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence through means such as telephone call, written note or email. The 7-day timeframe for explaining absences is a requirement of the Education Act (1990).
- They work in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school. This includes communicating with the school if they are aware of issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with school.

School staff:

- Provide a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- Promote regular attendance at school through teaching and learning activities that acknowledge the learning and support needs of students.



- Maintain accurate records of student attendance by marking the roll every morning and providing students with an Absence notification slip when needed – see below
- Alert the Principal, when a student's pattern of attendance is of concern
- Who have concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person must report their concerns to the Principal.

Principals must ensure:

- All attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the Director, attendance officers and other personnel nominated by the Secretary, Director, or Audit Directorate.
- The school regularly evaluates and addresses school attendance through the school plan.
- Open communication on issues affecting student attendance is promoted with parents.
- Effective strategies are in place to contact parents where there is a pattern of attendance causing concern or the parent has failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence.
- Interpreters and translated materials, including letters are available when communicating with parents from language backgrounds other than English in matters relating to school attendance.
- School staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised.
- All cases of unsatisfactory attendance, including part day absences are investigated promptly and school-based factors impacting on attendance are addressed.
- Early identification of students at risk of developing poor school attendance patterns through strategies such as regular roll checks.
- Attendance reports from roll checks are generated and tabled at Learning Support Team or attendance meetings for follow up by appropriate staff members.
- The school's Learning and Support Team in partnership with parents, identify and implement strategies that address the learning and support needs of a student with attendance patterns of concern.
- Parents, students and the school community are regularly informed of the importance of school and attendance requirements.
- Effective referral and support networks are established so that students, whose attendance is identified as being of concern, and their families can be connected with relevant services within the department and with local external agencies.
- Communication, collaboration and information sharing occurs with other services and agencies to enhance the effectiveness of interventions with students and



families.

- Any other child protection concerns underlying school attendance issues (including educational neglect) are managed consistent with the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.
- If concerns include not sighting the child, contact the NSW Police Force to request that a child safety check be undertaken.
- Consideration is given to the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG), specialist advice and professional judgement, where there are concerns about suspected risk of harm. In accordance with the MRG Neglect Education - Habitual Absence is defined as 'The child/young person is of compulsory school age (6 years to current leaving age) AND is habitually absent'. 'Habitually absent is a minimum of 30 days of absence within the past 100 school days. However, Principals should consider other factors, such as the student's age and learning support needs in deciding on action earlier than the 30 days indicated.
- Other decision trees can be used if the underlying issues impacting on school attendance are also of concern. For example, care concerns, neglect: supervision, or child /young person is a danger to self and others.

Principals have the authority to:

- Grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- Accept other explanations for absence and record the absence as "L"
- Decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
- Grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (See Exemption from School - Procedures).
- Grant part-day exemptions from school for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period.

School Practices and Procedures

Roll Marking

- Attendance records are maintained using Sentral. Teachers mark class rolls daily by 9:30am.
- If no reason has been given, parents/carers will receive a text message between 9:30am and 10:30am to notify them of the absence and request reason be given as a reply message.
- Any students who have returned from absence without an explanation are given a 'notification of absence note' by the class teacher.
- Late arrivals and early departures are recorded in Sentral at the office by office staff. Late students will receive a slip from the office to give to their class teacher.



Notes and explanations for absence

- Teachers check Dojo for any messages received notifying teachers of absence. Teachers to update Sentral prior to 9:30am with reason for absence.
- Teachers collect notes – Written notes from parents are to be sent to the office in the attendance folder each Friday and **retained for two years from the date of receipt.**
- After attendance data from folders has been updated and collated on Sentral each Friday the office sends an additional text message sent for any unexplained absences from the week.
- On Monday, if there are still any unexplained absences from the past week, office staff call parents/carers. If no response is received, a formal letter from the Principal is printed and sent home.
- A list of any unexplained absences is collated and given to the Principal each Monday afternoon to discuss with the Executive Team.

Recording absences

- See Roll Marking codes in the roll folder to be used for coding explanation of student absences.
- Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school within seven days from the first date of absence.
- Teachers will undertake **ALL** reasonable measures to contact parents/carers promptly, if contact has not already been made. An absence is unexplained if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days. Teachers to follow Attendance Monitoring Flowchart for Erina Heights Public School as below.
- When frequent absences are explained as being due to illness:
 - Consult with parents regarding the health care needs of the student.
 - Discuss with Principal
 - Principal may request that medical certificates are sought for the absences.
 - Where there are ongoing concerns, seek approval from parents to contact the student's doctor so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs.
 - Develop strategies to ensure regular attendance at school.
 - In any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student:
 - Consideration is given to the requirements of the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy
 - All required reports are made to Community Services or contact made with the Child Wellbeing Unit (as required by the Mandatory Reporter Guide).

Partial absences

Teachers do not need to record partial absences. A record detailing the date and specific times the student was absent will be maintained by office staff as all parents are required



to request a late note or early departure slip from the office.

Procedures for the school office staff around daily attendance and record keeping at Erina Heights Public School.

Roll Marking - Permanent/Temporary Teachers

- Attendance records are maintained using Sentral, teachers mark class rolls daily by 9:30am.
- Late arrivals and early departures are recorded at the office. Teachers do not need to record partial absences. A record detailing the date and specific times the student was absent will be maintained by office staff as all parents are required to request a late note or early departure slip from the office.
- Absence notifications from parents by phone, email and sms to office staff, are entered into Sentral.

Roll Marking - Casual Teachers

- Attendance records are maintained using Sentral, casual teachers mark class rolls daily by 9:30am on Sentral.
- Late arrivals and early departures are recorded at the office. Teachers do not need to record partial absences. A record detailing the date and specific times the student was absent will be maintained by office staff as all parents are required to request a late note or early departure slip from the office.
- Absence notifications from parents by phone, email and sms to office staff, are entered into Sentral.

Roll marking is monitored daily by the office. If a class roll has not been submitted by 9:30am, the office will make contact asking the class teacher responsible to mark and submit their class roll. Office staff rechecks that roll has been marked.

Office staff generate a report from Sentral weekly on any student below 92% attendance. The report is passed to the Principal who follows DoE procedures for assisting students with 92% or less attendance.

Office Staff meet fortnightly with HSLO officer and review any students with attendance less than 82%. HSLO officer follows up with any attendance concerns.

When a student transfers to another school and the enrolment at the new school is confirmed, the student's name will be removed from the Attendance Register and roll by the School Office Staff. The new school's request for the Transfer Certificate and/or Student Record can be taken as confirmation of transfer.

Exemptions from School

- Applications for a Certificate of Exemption from School are managed consistent with the Exemption from School - Procedures.



- Certificates of Exemption from the compulsory schooling requirements of the Education Act (1990) will only be granted when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is in the student's best interests in the short and long term and that alternatives to exemption have been considered.

Extended Leave - travel or holiday

When Parents/Caregivers inform office staff of intended long term absences or family holidays, outside of vacation period, the Principal is consulted.

Office staff issue and facilitate the completion of pertinent documents as directed by the Principal.

- If a parent notifies the classroom teacher of any intended leave including holidays, they should instruct the parent to notify the office as soon as possible to complete any relevant documentation to support this.
- Family holidays and travel are no longer considered under the *Exemption from School - Procedures*. Travel outside of vacation period is now counted as an absence for statistical purposes.
- Where a Principal considers that the travel is appropriate during school term, the Principal should issue the parent with an Application for Extended Leave - Travel for completion and inform the parent that the absences will be recorded as "L" - Leave.
- When the travel period exceeds one school term access to Distance Education must be considered.
- On accepting a parent's application, a Certificate of Extended Leave - Travel must be issued. The original certificate is provided to the parent and a copy of the certificate placed in each student's record.

Training

- School staff are provided with annual training and ongoing information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

School attendance records include:

- A Register of Admission to be retained permanently.
- Written notes, records of verbal explanations and records of electronic explanations for absences from parents are to be **retained for two years from the date of receipt**.
- Attendance Register to be retained for three years. This is maintained in scout. In a case where a student has an accident requiring an accident report, all attendance records should be retained until the year the student reaches the age of 25 years.
- Information detailing a student's absences each year, kept on the student's file until 7 years after the student has left. In the case of a student who has had an accident necessitating an accident report, the record should be retained until the student reaches the age of 25 years.
- Records for Certificates of Exemptions from attendance and enrolment must be kept



consistent with the requirements of the Exemption from School - Procedures.

Planned monitoring:

Action	Responsibility	Time frame
Check ClassDojo; school emails and messages for any absence notifications	Class Teacher and Office	Daily prior to 9:30am
Mark class rolls	Class Teacher	Daily - prior to 9:30am
Check all rolls are marked	Office	Daily – 9:30am
Attendance Text Message Sent	Office	Daily between 9:30am - 10:30am
Request absence explanations	Class Teacher	Immediately on return, Notification of absence letter
Text Message sent for any remaining unexplained absences from the week	Office	Weekly - Friday's
Phone Call for Any Remaining Unexplained Absences from the week prior	Office	Weekly - Monday's
Refer to the Classroom Teachers Responsibility Flowchart		
Attendance monitoring	School office staff provide the Principal an 92% absence report. Attendance discussed with the Executive Team during weekly meetings.	Weekly
Attendance monitoring	Office and HSLO	Fortnightly
HSLO referrals	Principal	As required
Admissions Register	School office staff	As required
Annual report data	Principal	Annually

- The school, with support from attendance officers (Home School Liaison Officers and Aboriginal Student Liaison Officers), monitor the regular attendance of students and develop and implement strategies to support students with identified attendance issues.
- Attendance reports are monitored weekly by the office.
- In investigating cases of poor attendance, consideration should be given to any factors relating to the student, the student's family and the school itself, which may contribute to poor attendance. These may include: poor health, academic performance, social integration: staff/student relations, social integration outside the school, family composition, dynamics, socio-economic situation, relevance of school curriculum to student needs. A consideration of all factors should enable teachers to identify possible



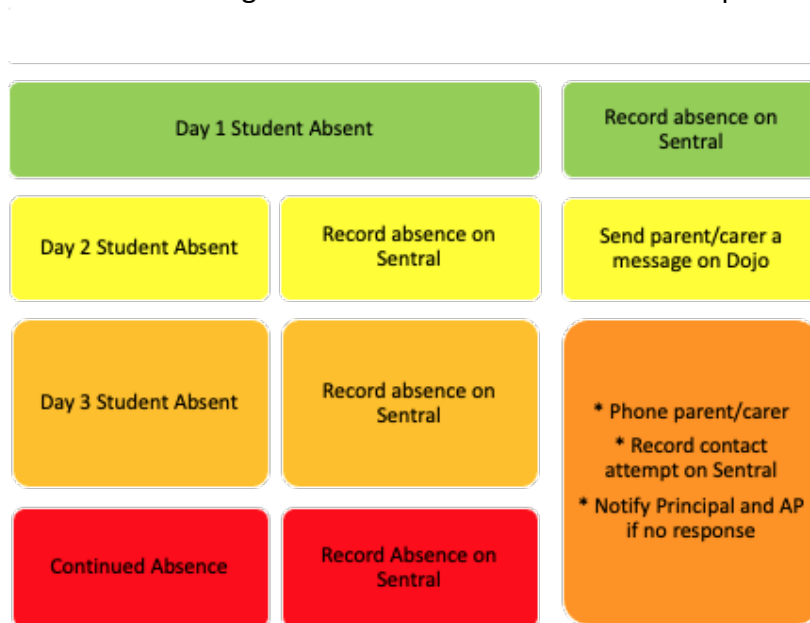
reasons for poor attendance and provide a basis for appropriate action.

- If the school is unable to resolve individual cases of unsatisfactory attendance, the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) will be notified. This referral may be based on any one incidence of unsatisfactory attendance, long-term absence or patterns of recurring short-term absence. Referrals are made in writing on the Referral Form: Unsatisfactory School Attendance. A record of all referrals is kept at the school and notated on the Student Record Card.

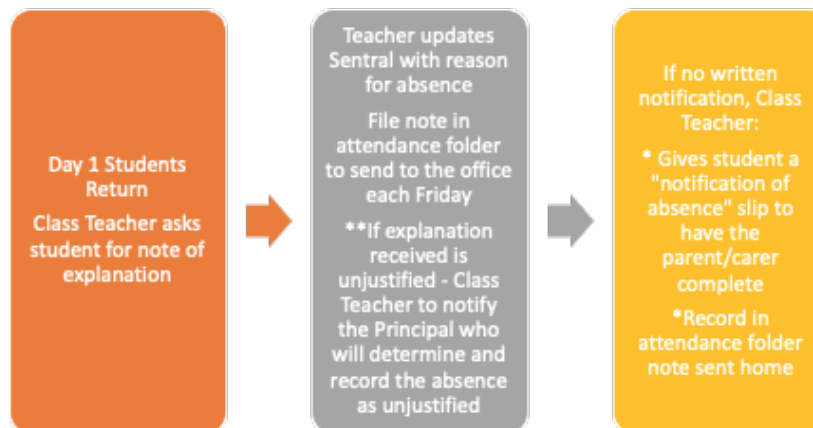
Reporting

- Attendance rates are included in the Annual Report.

Attendance Monitoring FlowChart - Classroom Teacher Responsibilities



Unexplained Absences





Marking Codes

A	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the Principal. It is at the Principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.
S	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a medical certificate is provided or the absence was due to sickness and the Principal accepts this explanation Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.
L	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the Principal. This may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> misadventure or unforeseen event participation in special events not related to the school domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member attendance at funerals travel in Australia and overseas* recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions *An Application for Extended Leave-Travel must be made by the parents. A Certificate of Extended Leave-Travel is granted by the Principal on acceptance of the application. When the travel period is greater than one school term access to Distance Education must be considered.
E	The student was suspended from school.
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
F	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in Best Start Assessments
B	The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school sport (regional and state carnivals) school excursions
H	The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative Educational setting on a sessional or full-time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education setting separates to their mainstream school such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tutorial centre and programs behaviour schools hospital schools distance education



Dear Parent/Carer,

Regular attendance at school is important for students to reach their potential. The school is required to record the reason for any absences as a way of ensuring that students are absent from school only when they are sick or have another good reason for missing school.

Your child, _____ was absent from school on _____ and no explanation has been received. Please assist us by completing the attached form and return it to school with your child as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Class Teacher

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Student Name: _____ Class: _____ Date Absent: _____

Reason for absence:

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Signed:

Date: