



Education &  
Communities

Public Schools NSW



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Policy Rationale

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential, and increase their career and life options. Schools in partnerships with parents are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, record and monitor part and whole day absences. Schools, in providing a caring teaching and learning environment, which addresses the learning and support needs of students, including those with additional learning and support needs or complex health conditions, foster students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.

## Context

This policy has been developed to provide greater clarity for teachers and parents on the dual responsibilities as they relate to student attendance.

## Legislative/Policy Framework

Section 22 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of [compulsory school-age](#) to cause the child:

- (a) to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
- (b) to be registered for home schooling with the Board of Studies and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

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.

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.

## **Implementation and Responsibility**

Implementation of the school attendance policy is a joint responsibility held by school and parents.

School staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- Providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community
- Recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- Maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance

The principal is responsible for ensuring that:

- Students are enrolled consistent with the requirements set out in document; [Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures \(2015\)](#)
- Attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students
- Staff record accurately the attendance of each student in each lesson when lessons are conducted in a number of locations. Schools should develop a suitable proforma for recording the attendance of students at each lesson
- All attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the regional director, home school liaison officer and other personnel nominated by the regional director, Audit Directorate or nominated by the Director-General
- Documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern, prior to referral to the Home School Liaison Program
- The Director, Public Schools NSW, or nominee, is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance
- The school discipline policy addresses attendance issues, including truancy. It should provide strategies for encouraging good attendance and establish structures and procedures that support teachers in addressing issues of student non-attendance.
- School staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised
- Parents and students are regularly informed of the importance of school and attendance requirements.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that:

- Their children of [compulsory school age](#) are enrolled in a government or registered non-government school or, registered with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) 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, text message 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.

## **Requirements**

- All cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented
- The principal or delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two days of an unexplained absence occurring.

## **What are the record keeping requirements for school attendance?**

### School attendance records must include:

- A Register of Admission to be retained permanently (now maintained on the Enrolment Registration Number System - ERN)
- Written notes, records of verbal explanations and records of electronic explanations for absences from parents. This advice is to be retained for two years from the date of receipt
- An Attendance Register (roll), to be retained for three years. 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 seven 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.

### Record keeping requirements for student attendance:

- Attendance registers (rolls) must reflect the highest professional standards
- The teacher or other nominee of the principal responsible for maintaining a manual attendance register is required to sign the register each day
- The principal or delegate will ensure that explanations for absences are recorded within 7 days of the occurrence of the absence
- School attendance must be recorded on the attendance register (roll) at the commencement of the school day
- In the case of late arrival or early departure, the precise times of arrival or departure must be recorded with the relevant attendance register codes
- Principals can request the parents provide a medical certificate of the explanation is doubted or where there is a history of poor attendance.

## **Support policies and websites**

This policy should be read in the context of:

[The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy \(1997\)](#)

**Document history and details**

Approval date

18 December, 2015

**Approving Officer**

Dace Elletson (Acting Principal)

**Implementation Date**

Term 1 2016