



## Smithfield Public School Attendance Procedures

### 1.Objectives - Policy statement

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.

**1.2** All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.

**1.3** 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.

### 2.Audience and applicability

**2.1** This policy applies to all NSW government schools, **excluding preschools**.

### 3.Context

**3.1** 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.

**3.2** Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility.

**3.3** This policy 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).

### 4.Responsibilities and delegations

#### 4.1 Parents and Carers

**4.1.1** 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.

**4.1.2** Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven school days of the first day of any period of absence.

#### 4.2 Principals:

**4.2.1** must provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

**4.2.2** or their delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an unexplained absence occurring.

**4.2.3** are responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.

**4.2.5** must ensure that for students with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are addressed in consultation with parents.

**4.2.6** are responsible for ensuring that when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness that:

\* Consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of students

\* Medical certificates are sought for the absences

\*Where there is ongoing concerns, approval is sought from parents to contact the student's doctor, so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs.

\* Strategies are developed to ensure regular attendance at school.

**4.2.7** must ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.



4.2.9 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 totally up to 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (Refer to DoE Exemption from School- Procedures)

\* Grant part- day exemptions from school for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period (Refer to DoE Exemptions from School- Procedures)

4.2.10 with support from the attendance officers (HSLO), monitor the regular attendance of students and develop and implement strategies to support students with identified attendance issues.

## 5. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting requirements

5.1 The Director, Child Protection Services monitors the implementation of the DoE School Attendance Policy (Reference Number- PD-2005-0259-V07.0.3), regularly reviews its contents to ensure relevance and accuracy and updates as needed.

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### **Smithfield Public School**

#### **Keeping Requirements of Absences**

- Teachers are required to mark and submit the roll each day, in Sentral, before 9:30am. Teachers record any students who are away, and any notes/verbal explanations received from parents regarding absences on Sentral.
- Teachers are to record any late arrivals on Sentral up until 9:10am. Any student who arrives after this time, must collect a late note from the office. Office staff will record the late arrival.
- Parents must provide a valid reason for late arrivals after 9:10am. This can be done via a note or by accompanying the child to the office and providing a verbal explanation. In the first instance of a child arriving late with no explanation, the office staff will call to inform parents of school policy. In the second instance, the office will make a reminder call. In the third instance, parents will be contacted by the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Any parent who needs to collect their child early must obtain an early leaver note from the office and hand it to the teacher before taking their child. The office staff will record the early leave on Sentral.
- When a class is on an excursion and leaves before going to class, the class teacher will take the roll on a paper class list. Upon returning to school, and no later than the following day, the class teacher is to record the paper roll in Sentral.
- Where there is a casual on the class for the day, the casual will complete a class roll and send it to the office by 9:30am. The office staff will then enter this roll in Sentral.
- All notes/records of absences should be signed and dated by the teacher once entered in Sentral and then sent to the office for safe keeping. Verbal explanations should be recorded on the green *Verbal Explanation* form and sent to the office. Doctor's certificates should be entered in Sentral using the appropriate section. Teachers need to record the doctor's name when entering a doctor's certificate.

#### **Explanation of Absences**

- Parents must provide an explanation to the school within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence.
- If an explanation has not been received within 7 days, teachers are to send home an absent note request (from Sentral) outlining the date/s requiring explanation within 2 school days. If no explanation is received after the initial written request the teacher should then try to contact the parents. Teachers should phone parents or speak to them in person (e.g., when the student is picked up from school).
- The Telephone Interpreter Service and translated materials, including letters, can be used as required when communicating with parents from language backgrounds other than English, if an explanation for absence has not been received.
- If after 10 days and reasonable attempts to contact parents have been made, the absence remain as unexplained.

#### **Frequent Absences due to Illness**

- Teachers need to inform the deputy principal who will consult the parents regarding their child's health care needs. After consultation with parents, the deputy principal may refer the student's absences to the principal if deemed necessary. The principal can request that the parents provide medical certificates for each future absence. Where there are ongoing concerns, the principal can request parent consent for a doctor to provide information to the school about their child's health condition. If the request is denied or if the principal is still not satisfied with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as 'unjustified'.
- Teachers are to phone parents after 3 consecutive days of a student's absence without explanation to determine reason for absence. At this point parents are to be reminded to provide written explanation of absence when the child returns to school.

### **Frequent Unexplained Absences**

Where a student has less than 85% attendance with unexplained absences within a term, teachers should attempt to seek explanation as per procedures above. If there continues to be no explanation the following steps should be followed:

1. Class teacher contacts parents to address attendance concerns.
2. Stage Supervisor contacts parents to address attendance concerns.
3. Learning Support Team notified, and a school 'Attendance Concern' letter is sent home.
4. Deputy Principal organises a meeting with parents. Class teacher, supported by deputy principal, develop a school-based attendance improvement plan with the parent and student.
5. LST sends home a formal letter advising parent of referral to HSLO.
6. Referral to HSLO submitted. Copies of communication with parents and documented strategies that the school has implemented to address student attendance issues are to be included with the Application for Home School Liaison support.

#### **Student Attendance Flowchart**

**1. Mark and submit roll every day before 9.30 AM.**

**2. Monitor student attendance. Send 'Absent Letter' to parents where student absences are unexplained.**

**3. If students' attendance falls below 89% with absences that are regularly unexplained, discuss with your immediate supervisor.**

**4. Discuss concerns with the parents or caregivers. Make sure you keep a record of phone calls/ meetings.**

**5. Stage Supervisor to contact parent to address concerns. Make sure you keep a record of phone calls/ meetings.**

**6. If attendance does not improve, complete LST referral.**

#### **7. LST Referral given to the LST leader:**

- Letter of 'Attendance Concern' sent to parents.
- Deputy Principal to meet with parents. Develop school-based attendance improvement plan with the student and parent.
- Class Teacher and Deputy Principal to continue to monitor attendance.

#### **8. If there is no improvement in attendance:**

- LST to send home formal letter advising parent referral to HSLO.
- Referral to HSLO
- School documentaton to be provided to HSLO