



1. Objectives - Policy statement

1.1 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 The school attendance register should reflect the highest professional standards.

3.4 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 to the school.

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

4.2.4 must ensure that the school education director is informed of attendance problems and issues. This includes providing the school education director or nominee with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue

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

4.2.6 have the authority to grant:

- sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student
- part-day exemptions from school for periods totalling up to 50 days in a twelve month period (See Statements 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 of *Guidelines for Exemption from School 2009*).



4.3 School education directors:

4.3.1 have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from attendance at school under Section 25 of the Education Act (1990) totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period

4.3.2 support schools to maintain accurate records of student attendance in a form approved by the Minister

4.3.3 support the development and implementation of a Regional Attendance Action Plan that identifies attendance issues and targets

4.3.4 approve students of compulsory school age participating in alternative education programs, prior to exemptions being granted by the delegate, for part day exemption from attendance at school (See Statements 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 of Guidelines for Exemption from School 2009).

4.4 Regional directors:

4.4.1 have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from attendance at school under Section 25 of the Education Act (1990) totalling more than 100 days in a 12 month period

4.4.2 have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from enrolment at school under Section 25 of the Education Act (1990), provided certain conditions are met

4.4.3 are responsible for the development and implementation of a Regional Attendance Action Plan which outlines strategies, targets, timelines, resources and responsibilities for the improvement of attendance in the region.

4.5 Director, Student Welfare:

4.5.1 has the delegated authority to grant exemptions from school attendance under Section 25(1) of the Education Act (1990) for any period of time, for students wishing to participate in employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events.

5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

5.1 The Director, Student Welfare will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and report to the General Manager, Access and Equity.



Record 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.
- 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 role 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. 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

