

School Attendance Policy



Context

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential, and encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility.

Schools, in partnership 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 monitor part or whole day absences as part of their duty of care.

This policy has been written in accordance with relevant NSW Department of Education (DoE) Policies and Guidelines.

Responsibilities

Parents and Carers

Parents / Carers are responsible for:-

- enrolling their children of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school or registering them with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for home schooling;
- ensuring that their children attend school regularly;
- explaining the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school; and
- working in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school and taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

Notification of absence

Parents and carers are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven school days to the school. These explanations can be:-

- Verbal - a phone call or a conversation in person with a member of staff. A record of the conversation will be documented by school staff and kept with other absence explanations.
- Written - a note from the parent or a doctor's certificate explaining the absence.
- Electronic - an email to palinyewah-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au or message using the *Skool Loop* app explaining an absence. The message will be printed by school staff and kept with other absence explanations.

If at all possible, parents and carers are asked to notify the school in the morning on the day their child is absent. This can be by phone, email or using the *School Loop* app. Early notification of an absence is very much appreciated by the staff at Palinyewah.

Partial absences

Students arriving after 9am or departing before 3pm will have their attendance status for that day shown as a partial absence. Partial absences must also be explained verbally, in writing or electronically.

Exemptions from school

Exemption from school may be granted for specific reasons. Parents and carers must formally apply for extended leave from school by completing an *Application for Exemption from Attendance at School*. A *Certificate of Exemption from Attendance at School* will be provided for exemptions which are granted. Students with an exemption will not have the days absent counted as part of their attendance record.

Exemptions cannot be granted for travel purposes. The school will record leave (L) for students who have provided an explanation of the absence as being due to travel in Australia and overseas which has been accepted by the principal. An *Application for Extended Leave – Travel* should be completed by the parent and provided to the principal prior to travelling. On acceptance of the application, a *Certificate of Extended Leave - Travel* will be issued. Travel outside of school vacation periods is counted as an absence for statistical purposes.

School staff

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
- promoting regular attendance at school through teaching and learning activities that acknowledge the learning and support needs of students
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance

Principal

The principal is responsible for ensuring that:-

- clear information is provided to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences
- all reasonable measures are undertaken to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an absence being unexplained, 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
- attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students
- the learning and support needs of students with attendance concerns are addressed in consultation with parents
- when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness that:
 - consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of the student
 - medical certificates are sought for the absences
 - where there are 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

- school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school
- 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 the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or contact made with the Child Wellbeing Unit (as required by the Mandatory Reporter Guide).

Principals have the authority to:

- grant sick leave or leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness or another approved reason
- decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
- grant full or part day exemptions from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a twelve month period provided certain conditions are met

Resources used to compile this document

Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures - PD 2005 0259

School Attendance Policy

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy>

Compulsory School Attendance – Information for parents

https://education.nsw.gov.au/wellbeing-and-learning/media/documents/attendance-behaviour-engagement/attendance_parents.pdf

School Attendance Register Codes

https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/related-documents/reg_codes.pdf

Exemption from School Procedures

https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/exempt_gui.pdf

Exemption from School – Frequently Asked Questions

https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/intranet/lists/directoratesaz/stuwelfare/stuwellbeing/attendance/exemp_faq.pdf

Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy

https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/protecting_proced.pdf

Student Attendance in Government Schools – Absentee Notices

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/related-documents/absentee.pdf>

Attendance Register Codes

Only the following attendance register codes must be used to record the:

- explanation of student absence, and/or
- variation in student attendance.

Symbols used for explanation of student absence - counted as an absence for statistical purposes	
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. In these cases: - 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 due to: - 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.
E	The student was suspended from school

Symbols used for explanation of student absence – not counted as an absence for statistical purposes	
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: - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses
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: - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange
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 settings separate to their mainstream school such as: - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education