



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. 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, as a part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

Student Attendance Policy - Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures, NSW Department of Education 2015

Expectations

1. Sherwood Ridge Public School expects all students under Section 22 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) which 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.

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

3. The school attendance register (roll) should reflect the highest professional standards. 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.

Responsibilities – School

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.

Responsibilities – Principal

1. The principal is responsible for ensuring that:
 - students are enrolled consistent with the requirements set out in the [School Attendance Policy](#) (2015) and applies to all NSW Government



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schools, excluding pre-schools. It replaces Student Attendance in Government Schools – Procedures 2010.

These procedures should be read in the context of:

- [The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy \(1997\)](#)
 - [Memorandum DN/06/00168 Enhanced Enrolment Procedures](#) (intranet only)
 - [Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and Procedures](#)
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- all attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the Director Public Schools NSW, attendance officers and other personnel nominated by the Secretary Department of Education and Communities, Director Public Schools NSW, 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 at least fortnightly 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. A range of resources (refer to resource section) have been developed for schools to provide information to parents and key community groups about the requirements of school attendance.
 - 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. Appropriate staff members may be nominated to meet with parents, arrange referrals and to be the contact points for consultation and coordination of school involvement.
 - 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 principals must, as soon as possible 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 absence within the past 100



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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 decisions 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.

Responsibilities – 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.
- alert the principal, or staff member responsible for monitoring attendance, when a
- student's pattern of attendance is of concern, or if no explanation is received from the
- parent or carer within required timeframes (see section 5).
- when nominated by the principal, liaise with external agencies, arrange referrals,
- coordinate involvement of the school with other services and agencies working with students, and provide feedback about outcomes to the principal.
- who have concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or youngperson must report their concerns to the principal.

Principals may record up to 15 days in a school year for students of **compulsory school age** who have provided an explanation of the absence which has been accepted by the principal (See **Appendix A** : Attendance Register Code 'L'). Additional days for students not of **compulsory school age** may be recorded at the principal's discretion. 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
- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.

1.2.1 Principals may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence. The parent should be advised that the explanation has not been accepted and a reason for the decision provided.

1.2.2 Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged. Medical certificates are not sacrosanct documents. Where principals have concerns about medical certificates being produced for absences, they can ask the parent to request that the doctor write on the certificate the statement 'this child is unfit for school' with specified dates included.

2.2.3 Where principals have ongoing concerns they can request the parents' consent to contact the doctor. If the request is denied, or if the principal is still not happy with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as 'unjustified'. (See **Appendix A**: Attendance Register Code)



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Responsibilities – Students

Students of compulsory school age are responsible for attending school in a government or registered non-government school. Students are to be supported in attending school by a parent or legal guardian.

Responsibilities – Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- enrolling their children of [compulsory school age](#) in a government or registered non-government school or registering them with the [Board of Studies NSW](#) 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;
- taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

Implementation of the DoE Attendance Policy at Sherwood Ridge Public School

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.

Sherwood Ridge Public School:

- provides a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community;
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance and punctuality;
- maintains accurate records of student attendance;
- implements programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- provides clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

Electronic Attendance Registers

Recording student attendance is recorded daily by class teachers on the school's SENTRAL system. This is to be completed as soon as it is practicable upon entering the classroom.

Class teachers maintain the register and grant leave when students provide a written note as explanation for absences. Class teachers are to consult with their supervising executive or the school Principal if they are unsure when receiving written explanations for leave.

A hard copy of the electronic record is to be generated weekly for the previous two-week period. The Deputy Principal must endorse this hard copy, certifying its accuracy. Once signed, this hard copy becomes the record of attendance and must not be amended.

In the case of late arrivals or early departures, the precise times of arrival or departure must be recorded with the relevant attendance register code. Late arrivals are recorded at the office. Students are provided with a late slip from the office before attending class.

Where an alteration is necessary on an electronic attendance register, a line is to be ruled through the existing hard copy entry and the correct entry made above. The electronic record must then also be amended. The Deputy Principal should initial any changes. Note: Alterations only apply to errors in roll marking

Codes to be used on electronic attendance registers are found at **Appendix A**. Additional codes are not to be used.

The Attendance Register Code 'B' is to be used where a student is absent from the school site on official school business. This may include work experience, school sport (regional and state carnivals), and school excursions. 'B' is not an absence code and is not included as an absence for statistical purposes. (See **Appendix A**)

A student's name must be removed from an attendance register (roll) if:

- a student has moved out of New South Wales and has not applied for a cross-border enrolment in New South Wales. This will only be done by the office under the guidance of the Principal;
- the student enrolls in another school. This will only be done by the office under the guidance of the Principal;
- advice has been received from parents that the student is enrolled in a non-government or other registered school, or is registered with the [Board of Studies NSW](#) for home schooling. Principals who are concerned about information provided to them by parents should request the name of the non-government or other registered school so that a check can be made;
- the student has been expelled from the school in accordance with the Department's [Suspension and Expulsion of School Student – Procedures](#);
- the student is of [compulsory school age](#), and has been marked as 'absent' for periods exceeding a total of 10 consecutive school days over a three week period, where the school is open for instruction, and is believed to have left the school. The school should report the matter to regional attendance personnel for investigation. Prior to reporting the matter all appropriate checks should be made (including the use of the Enrolment Registration Number database);
- the student is no longer of [compulsory school age](#), their whereabouts is unknown, and the student has not attended school for fifteen continuous school days for reasons not known to the school.

Regions should record the details of "students' whose whereabouts is unknown" on the state-wide database provided for this purpose. This information will be collated by the Student Welfare Directorate regularly.

Strategies

At Sherwood Ridge Public School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Promoting the importance of punctuality and attendance to students in class, at assemblies and in newsletters to parents and carers.
- Ongoing monitoring of student attendance by the class teacher, supervisor and Deputy Principal/s and Principal. Attendance issues are tracked, monitored and communicated to the parents. Ongoing concerns or no improvement in attendance after class teachers, supervisors and Deputy Principals have intervened, are referred to the Learning Support Team.
- Recognising classes with 100% attendance at weekly morning assemblies and awarding them with a certificate.
- Recognising classes with 100% punctuality at weekly morning assemblies and awarding them with a certificate.
- Recognising students with 100% attendance rates at the end of each term with an attendance certificate.
- Awarding students who achieve 100% attendance for the entire school year a Certificate at an assembly at the end of the year

Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school based strategies including:

- student and parent interviews;
- reviewing the appropriateness of the student's educational program;
- development of a school-based attendance improvement plan;
- referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies;
- support from non-school based personnel.



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If a range of school based interventions has been unsuccessful,

- Support may be requested by referring individual cases of unsatisfactory attendance to the regional Home School Liaison Program. The [Guidelines for Supporting Student Attendance](#) outline the role of home school liaison officers and Aboriginal student liaison officers. A pro forma to be used when requesting Home School Liaison Program support can be found here.

Police officers are authorised to act as attendance officers under Section 122 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#). During school hours, an authorised person or police officer may approach a student who is apparently of [compulsory school age](#), and who is apparently not in attendance at school. They may request the student's name and home address and the name and address of his/her school. They may approach a student who is accompanied by an adult.

The Department undertakes legal action in the case of parents who do not fulfil their obligations under the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) despite all reasonable measures being taken by school and regional staff to support them. Actions and timelines leading up to consideration of legal action are identified in Memorandum DN/08/00043 [Compulsory Enrolment and Attendance at School](#).

Section 22 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) states that, parents may be guilty of an offence if they do not enrol a child of compulsory school age in school and ensure that they attend regularly. Legal proceedings may be appropriate when parents fail to:

- ensure their children attend school regularly, or
- enrol their children at a recognised school or register their children with the [Board of Studies NSW](#) for home schooling.

The school education director should refer the matter promptly to the Student Welfare Directorate for consideration of prosecution if a parent declines to comply with the requirements of the Act regarding enrolment in school. The pro forma for Home School Liaison Program support should be used.

Parents should be advised in writing when an attendance or enrolment issue has been referred to Student Welfare Directorate for consideration of legal proceedings.

2015 Attendance Register Codes for Attendance Register (Appendix A)

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence	
Symbol	Meaning
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.

<p>S</p>	<p>The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. <p>Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.</p>
<p>L</p>	<p>An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to:</p> <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.
<p>E</p>	<p>The student was suspended from school</p>
<p>M</p>	<p>The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.</p>
<p>F</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses
<p>B</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange



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H¹	<p>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.</p> <p>The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- tutorial centre and programs- behaviour schools- juvenile justice- hospital schools- distance education
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Responses to absences

When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days or a pattern of absences has been identified, Sherwood Ridge PS will take the following actions:

- Contact the parent / carer;
- Communicate any issues to the grade / stage supervisor;
- Monitor and track attendance of the student;
- Supervisor to meet with the parent and carer
- Refer the student to the school's Learning Support Team to discuss previous interventions and future attendance plans;
- The Learning Support Team may decide to refer the student to the Home School Liaison Officer after all school based approaches have been exhausted.
- An Attendance review is conducted each term by the Principal and Deputy Principal/s. Deputy Principal/s and Supervisors, along with Class teachers maintain responsibility for follow up.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Sherwood Ridge Public School reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- A written and signed note by the parent / carer to the class teacher;
- A medical certificate signed by a doctor explaining the student's absence;
- A verbal explanation made via a phone call to the school;
- An electronic message sent to the school by the parent / carer.

Recording the duration of the absence or variation in attendance

Manual Attendance Registers

Department of Education and Communities schools that maintain manual attendance registers and do not use electronic means for maintaining student attendance must use the following symbols with the appropriate attendance register code for recording the reason for absence or a



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variation in attendance:

A -The student was absent on that day.

Pa-The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

Note: The symbol X is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

For Department of Education and Communities schools using electronic means for maintaining student attendance (OASIS, ebs4 or compliant third party systems), when recording a partial absence, the precise time of arrival and/or departure must be documented.

When information is transferred from other compliant electronic systems, or from manual attendance registers, whole day absence (a) will be shown as W and partial absence (Pa) will be shown as P.

Some related resources

Departmental Policies and Procedures:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/PD20050259.shtml

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/implementation_1_PD20050259.shtml

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/implementation_2_PD20050259.shtml

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/HSL0gui09.pdf

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/exempt_gui.pdf

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/absentee.pdf



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