

GLENHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY



Education

GLENHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL
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Attendance Policy

1. Context:

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 routinely.

These procedures should be read in the context of *Student Attendance in Government School-Procedures* which provides schools and the community with information on the entitlements, requirements and procedures for the enrolment and regular attendance of students in government schools.

2. Responsibilities:

Parents are responsible for:

- enrolling their children of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school ensuring that their children attend school regularly
- explaining the absences of their children from school promptly to the school, usually within 7 days of the absence occurring
- taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

School staff are responsible for:

- providing a caring learning environment which fosters students' sense of belonging
- marking the class roll promptly every morning (prior to 9:30am)
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance, including recording absence notes in the roll
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- providing clear information to parents regarding attendance requirements for their children

The Assistant Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures
- regularly overseeing the accuracy of class rolls and recording student absence notes
- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements
- liaising with the Principal, Learning Support Team and HSLO if and when required
- conducting an audit on unexplained absences for teachers under their supervision every 5 weeks.

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring students are enrolled in line with the requirements set out in *The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy (1997)*
- all attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the Executive Director, HSLO and other personnel nominated by the Executive Director, Audit Directorate or nominated by the Secretary
- the HSLO is informed of attendance problems and issues
- the school Student Welfare Policy addressing 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.
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.

3. Roll Marking Procedures:

- Roll marking is to be recorded daily and accurately by teachers in ebs4 Agent.
- Casual Teachers are to mark the roll on a class list on send directly to the Administration Office.
- The office staff will input attendance on the system but cannot submit the roll
- The class list will be returned to the classroom at the conclusion of the school day for the Classroom Teacher to maintain a record and then submit the roll upon their return to duty.
- The office staff will record any partial absences when the student arrives or departs from school.
- If a casual teacher is planned to be on a class for a long period of time, they are asked to follow the procedures set out in the 'roll marking for casual teachers' guide.

4. Absences:

The classroom teacher will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly after any unexplained absences occurring. Contact may be made:

- If, after 5 days of a student returning to school, a note has not been provided, the teacher will provide the parent with an Absentee Notice – Compulsory School Attendance. This letter can be generated from the school server (a copy of this note is also in your Green Class folder)
- If a child has 3 consecutive unexplained days absent, the teacher will phone the parent and record this call and the results in the electronic roll.

Principals may grant:

- sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- leave to students of compulsory school age totaling not more than 15 days per school year in addition to sick leave. Applications for leave in excess of 5 days should be treated as applications for exemption from school attendance
- in exceptional circumstances, leave for brief periods of time
- additional leave for students not of compulsory school age may be granted at the discretion of the principal
- any leave granted by the Principal will still be recorded. Leave is not an 'exemption' from school

Principals may decline to accept any form of communication as a satisfactory explanation for an absence on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the classroom teacher. Parents should be reminded of what constitutes an unacceptable explanation.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged or there is concern that the illness may affect other students.

Principals may delegate responsibility for the maintenance of attendance registers to teachers and other school personnel. In such cases, the principal must ensure that these staff:

- know the procedures in this document before marking the attendance register and following up absences. Staff must understand how an absence should be noted on an attendance register using the approved codes
- seek verbal or written advice promptly from parents regarding unexplained full or part day absences. Parents may not be aware that their child has been absent from school and will expect to be informed promptly if unexplained absences occur.
- retain records of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents. If teachers receive verbal explanations from parents, a record of these must be kept with written and printed electronic explanations
- alert the stage supervisor when a student's pattern of attendance is of concern, or if no explanation is received from the parent or caregiver

- report chronic non-attendance, fractional truancy and persistent lateness promptly to the stage supervisor and principal.

Home School Liaison Officers and other regional attendance personnel conduct regular audits of school attendance registers and provide support to principals in maintaining these documents.

The approval of the Director of Public Education is required prior to students with behaviour difficulties participating in programs involving part time attendance.

School Education Directors make recommendations to the Director of Student Welfare, about the prosecution of cases of non-attendance or failure to enrol a child at school where warranted.

School Education Directors are responsible for the implementation of plans for the improvement of the attendance of students who are identified by schools as chronic non-attenders.

The Executive Director is responsible for the development and implementation of a Regional Attendance Action Plan that outlines strategies, targets, timelines, resources and responsibilities for the improvement of attendance in the Region.

5. School Attendance Records Requirements

School attendance records must include:

- a Register of Admission to be retained permanently
- notes and records of verbal explanations for absences from parents. This advice is to be retained for two years from the date of receipt
- an Attendance Register to be retained for three years. In a case where a student has an accident necessitating an accident report, all attendance records should be retained until the year the student reaches the age of 24 years
- the student's record card listing the number of absences each year to be retained for seven years after the student has left. In the case of a student who has had an accident necessitating an accident report, the record card should be retained until the student's 24th birthday.
- Administration staff record verbal leave/ absence messages on school registrar

6. Attendance Registers (rolls)

Attendance registers must be maintained on all days on which the school is open for instruction, including school sports days, swimming carnivals, excursions and similar events.

School attendance must be recorded on the attendance register early in the school day.

Students involved in off-site activities organised by the school or Department of Education must not be marked as absent. They are marked as 'on school business'.

Glenhaven Public School uses an electronic attendance register. If access to this electronic roll is not available, a paper roll will be completed and sent to the front office for entry by the School Administrative Staff.

Staff responsible for maintaining attendance registers must be acquainted with requirements of this document and correct procedures. Advice and further information may be obtained from regional home school liaison personnel.

A hard copy of the students absent to be generated daily at 9:30am by the office staff.

Where an alteration is necessary on an electronic attendance register, the class teacher can amend for up to 7 days after an absence or longer using ebs4 Client.

Codes to be used on electronic attendance registers are found in the appendix document **Student Attendance Register Codes**. Additional codes are not to be used.

In the case of late arrival or early departure, the office staff must record the precise times of arrival or departure.

Special circumstance registers should:

- specify the dates and times of the variation
- indicate the reason for the variation
- list students attending on that day
- be signed by the teacher maintaining the register
- be permanently attached to attendance registers.

7. School Development Days:

Electronic attendance registers will not need to be kept on Staff Development Days. A similar notation must be made on hard copies of electronic attendance registers regarding other reasons for maintaining a special circumstance register (eg industrial action or fire or flood).

Absences on these days are not to be recorded on student record cards or counted as absences for statistical purposes.

8. Security:

At the end of each school year, the Principal must ensure that the generated reports, any absentee notes and any special circumstance registers are preserved as a complete record of students' absences for that year.

School Sport is an integral part of the curriculum. Principals must ensure adequate attendance monitoring practices at school sport to ensure the safety of students. Specific sports rolls must be marked at the beginning and conclusion of each sports session (ie: carnivals, off-site sport).

Class teachers must follow up absentees promptly and ensure that the school's procedures for managing fractional truancy are implemented. Attendance information contained on excursion and sport carnival rolls must be transferred to the attendance register by the classroom teachers where appropriate.

9. Suspension:

Students who are suspended from school in accordance with Department's **Suspension and Expulsion of School Student – Procedures**.

The appropriate symbol for suspension is to be used to denote the absences of students whilst on suspension. This symbol is to be used only for the duration of the suspension and must not be applied to students who fail to return to school following the suspension period.

The absences of students who are suspended are counted as absences for statistical purposes.

10. Removal from Register:

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

- a student has moved out of New South Wales and has not applied for a cross-border enrolment in New South Wales
- the student enrolls in another school
- advice has been received from parents that the student is to be enrolled in a non-government or other registered school, or is registered with the Board of Studies for home schooling
- the student has been expelled from the school in accordance with the Department's **Suspension and Expulsion of School Students - Procedures**
- the student is between the ages of six and fifteen years, their whereabouts is unknown and the student has not attended school for a continuous period of 10 weeks in which the school was open. In such circumstances, the advice of regional student welfare personnel must be sought and a home school liaison officer must undertake a full investigation into the whereabouts of the student. Regional personnel will advise the officer responsible for maintaining the database of missing students

If a student's name has been removed from the roll because they are missing, absences from the last day of attendance at school are not included as absences for statistical purposes. The roll should be amended to reflect this.

11. Supporting the Regular Attendance of Students at School

Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of students at school. Principals and school staff, in consultation with students and their parents, will usually be able to resolve problems of non-attendance. While parents should be reminded of their legal obligations under *the Education Act 1990*, the welfare of the student must be the focus of this consultation.

The most effective means of restoring and maintaining regular school attendance includes sound attendance monitoring practices and regular follow-up of unexplained absences by contacting parents promptly. Early telephone contact with parents is one means of achieving this.

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
- referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies
- support from school based personnel.

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 role of home school liaison officers and a proforma to be used when applying for Home School Liaison Program support are found in the appendices.

Police officers are authorised to act as attendance officers under Section 122 of the *Education Act 1990*. During school hours police officers may approach a student who is apparently of or above six years of age and less than fifteen years of age, and who is not at school. They may request the student's name and address and the name and address of his/her school. They may approach a student who is accompanied by an adult. Police officers may accompany the student either to the school or to the home to verify this information. Under this authorisation, police have no power of arrest, detention or physical restraint. Police and Departmental personnel conduct regular Joint Anti-Truancy initiatives (JATS) targeting truancy.

12. Failure to enrol:

Legal action in such matters is a last resort and must only be considered when all other reasonable avenues have been explored without success. If interventions by school and regional attendance personnel fail to

satisfactorily restore attendance of students of compulsory school age, Section 23 (5) of the Act requires that the parents attend a conciliation conference. Conciliation conferences are convened by senior Departmental officers, usually a school education director or nominee. The objective of conciliation conferences is to resolve non-attendance matters in an informal, non-threatening atmosphere.

In a situation where parents are invited to a conciliation conference but fail to attend without reasonable cause or the conference fails to resolve an attendance issue, the matter should be referred to the Student Welfare Directorate for consideration of prosecution.

Conciliation conferences are not required when a parent declines to enrol a child at school or register the child with the Board of Studies for home schooling.

When school, regional or state office personnel believe that a parent has failed to enrol a child of compulsory school age at school or register them with the Board of Studies for home schooling, the matter should be referred to regional student welfare personnel who should investigate the matter. The school education Director of Education of prosecution if a parent declines to comply with the requirements of the Act regarding enrolment in school. Parents should be advised in writing that the attendance or enrolment issue has been referred to Student Welfare Directorate for consideration of legal proceedings.

13. Exemption from Attendance at School

In the case of students of compulsory school age, applications for student leave in excess of fifteen days in a twelve month period must be considered as applications for exemption from school attendance. Under Section 25 of the Act, the Minister may grant a certificate of exemption. This power is delegated to Executive Directors, and in the case of exemptions for the purpose of participation in the entertainment industry, to the General Manager, Access and Equity. Delegates cannot delegate this power. Exemption should only be granted where conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable that a certificate of exemption be granted.

Executive Directors may grant exemptions due to:

- domestic necessity, including but not limited to participation in family holidays during school term
- health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment are not appropriate
- engagement in full time education offered by an accredited provider

The General Manager (Access and Equity) may grant exemptions for students to participate in the entertainment industry.

Certificates of Exemption issued by Executive Directors and the General Manager (Access and Equity) will include the specific conditions that apply to the exemption. The Certificate of Exemption must state that the exemption may be withdrawn if these conditions cease to apply. The certificate will specify a period for which the exemption had been granted. The original Certificates of Exemption will be provided to the parents or carer. A copy of the Certificates of Exemption will be provided to the school and must be attached to the student's record card. It should be noted that student holidays are not a reasons to provide an exemption and of granted by the principal will be recorded as leave on the register.

14. Students Attending Lessons Outside School During School Hours

Involvement in private lessons, such as ballet and music classes, conducted outside the school during school hours may not be conducive to the effective operation of the school or to the education of the student concerned. Students' involvement in extra-curricula activities will usually be limited to outside school hours. Where attendance at a private lesson during school hours is of exceptional importance such as sitting

examinations, principals may use their discretion in granting short leave. This provision must not be used on a regular basis. If parents withdraw their children from school for private lessons, an unjustified absence should be recorded and dealt with in the usual manner.

References:

Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures (PD 2005 0259)

Student Attendance in Government Schools: Absentee Notices (2015)

Exemption from School Procedures (2015)

APPENDIX ONE



GLENHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Phone: 9634-3675 Fax: 9899-5911

74A Glenhaven Road, Glenhaven, NSW, 2156

ABSENTEE NOTICE 1 – COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dear

Regular attendance at school is essential ifis to achieve their educational best, social and psychological potential, and increase their career and life options.

The school is required to record explanations for any absences as a way of ensuring that students are absent from school only when they are sick or have another acceptable reason for missing school.

If you are able to explain any absences within seven days of their occurrence we will adjust our records.

(Student Name) was absent from school on and no explanation has been received. If you have concerns that our records are incorrect please contact the school immediately.

Please assist us by completing the details below and return it to school as soon as possible.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the school on 9634 3675 to discuss your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Maxwell
PRINCIPAL

please keep this section

..... ✂

Please return this section to your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible

ABSENTEE NOTICE 1 – COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Please provide an explanation for the absence/s by returning this section or telephoning the school.

Name of Student:..... Year/Class:.....

Date/s of absence:.....

Reason for absence:

Parent Name.....Date.....
(Parent/Caregiver signature)

APPENDIX TWO

ATTENDANCE CODES	
SYMBOL	MEANING
+	Present at school
W	The student was absent
A	The student has an unexplained absence
S	Absence due to sickness
L	Leave approved by the Principal
E	Suspension from school
M	Exempted from school (High School)
F	Flexible timetable (High School)
B	Attending official School Business
H	Sharing enrolment with another school