#  PUBLIC

**Otford**SCHOOL

## We Learn and Grow Together

**School Attendance Policy**

**This policy sets out the requirements for the attendance of students in NSW government schools.**

**1. Objectives - Policy statement**

**1.1** Section 22 of the [Education Act (1990)](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/ea1990104/) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of [compulsory school-age](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/ea1990104/s21b.html) 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, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) 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.

**Context**

**3.1** 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.

**3.2** Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility. **School note:** While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitors part or whole day absences.

**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).

This document supports the *School Attendance Policy (2010)* and applies to all NSW Government schools, excluding pre-schools. It replaces *Student* *Attendance in Government Schools – Procedures (2006).*

These procedures should be read in the context of *The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy (1997)* which provides schools and the community with information on theentitlements, requirements and procedures for the enrolment of students in government schools.

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

**2. Responsibilities**

**2.1 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.

**2.2 The responsibilities of school staff:**

**2.2.1** School staff is 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.

**Student Welfare Director ATTENDANCE IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS - PROCEDUR**

**2.2.2 The principal is responsible for ensuring that:**

* students are enrolled consistent with the requirements set out in *The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy (1997)* and the *Memorandum Enhanced Enrolment Procedures* (Intranet only)
* attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students
* all attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the regional director, home school liaison officer and other personnel nominated by the regional director, Audit Directorate or nominated by the Director-General
* documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern, prior to referral to the Home School Liaison Program
* the school education director is or nominee is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance
* the school discipline policy addresses attendance issues, including truancy.
* a School Attendance Action Plan that includes attendance targets, strategies, resources and timelines
* school staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised
* parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements
* all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.**010 Telephone (02) 9266 8936**

**2.2.3** The principal or delegate will undertake all reasonable measures tocontact parents promptly and within two days of an unexplainedabsence occurring. Contact may be made either by providing the parent with an Absentee Notice – Compulsory School Attendance by mail or e-mail if a pre-arranged secure address has been provided. A sample Absentee Notice – Compulsory School Attendance can be found in the support documents.

**2.2.4**  The principal or delegate will ensure that where absences are recorded within seven days of the occurrence of the absence, the hard copy roll cannot be amended.

**2.2.5** In the case of students participating in course work or school activities away from the school site (such as sports events), the principal or nominee should obtain an accurate record of student attendance at other sites at the conclusion of each school week.

**2.2.6** The Principal may grant:

* sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness (Attendance Register Code ‘S’)
* an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student (Attendance Register Code “M” )

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/delegate/eda/eda019.htm>

* an exemption from school attendance for students wishing to participate in employment in the entertainment industry or
* participation in elite sports events for short periods of time i.e. for one or two days, and at short notice (Attendance Register Code ‘M’)

https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/delegate/eda/eda019.htm

Note: For large scale and long running productions applications for exemptions should be forwarded to the Student Welfare Directorate for approval by the Director, Student Welfare.

* part-day exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student ( ‘M’ and ‘Pa’) (See Statements 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 of *Guidelines for Exemption from School 2009*)

**Student Welfare Directorate 2010 Telephone (02) 9266 893**

**2.2.7** The Principal 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 (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.

**2.2.8**  The Principal 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.

**2.2.9** The Principal 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. 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’. (Attendance Register Code ‘A’)

**2.2.10** The Principal may delegate responsibility for the maintenance of attendance registers (rolls) 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. Schools may wish to request this information by telephone. A letter such as Absentee Notice - Compulsory School Attendance or Frequent Absenteeism Note may also be used for this purpose.

**3. Retention of Records**

**3.1** Teachers should: **Directorate 2010 Telephone (02) 9266 8936**

* retain records of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents. If teachers receive verbal explanations from parents, they should record, sign and date the explanation
* are aware of their responsibility to 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
* report chronic non-attendance, fractional truancy and persistent lateness promptly to the principal or nominee.
	+ 1. 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 (roll) 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 detailing 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 reaches the age of 24 years.
	+ 1. **Security of attendance registers (rolls)**
		2. Registers (rolls) must be stored in a secure location within the school.
		3. They must not be removed from the school premises unless removal is warranted by exceptional circumstances such as fire or flood. Teachers must not take attendance registers home
		4. The loss of an attendance register (roll) is a serious occurrence and must be reported immediately to the school education director. A new register (roll) should be commenced immediately. Attendance information referring to absences on occasions prior to the commencement of the new register must not be included.
		5. A notice signed by the principal must be attached to the new register (roll). The notice must state the period for which the original register was a record of student attendance (e.g. 1 February - 30 March, 2009) and the date from which the replacement register (roll) commences
		6. At the end of each school year the principal must ensure that the attendance register (roll) and attached special circumstance registers are preserved as a complete record of students’ absences for that year.

**4. Procedures for Policy Implementation**

**Manual attendance registers (rolls)**

* + 1. Manual rolls must reflect the highest professional standards.
		2. Codes to be used on manual attendance registers are found at Appendix A. Additional codes must not be used. Supplementary comments regarding absences may be made, if required.
		3. In the case of late arrival or early departure, the precise times of arrival or departure must be recorded at the register located at the front office
		4. The teacher or other nominee of the principal, responsible for maintaining a manual attendance register, is required to sign the register each day in the place indicated.
		5. Where an alteration is necessary on a manual attendance register, a line is to be ruled through the existing entry and the correct entry made above. Correction fluid must not be used.

**4.2 Supporting the Regular Attendance of Students at School**

**4.2.1** All families will be issues with booklet of Absentee Notes at the commencement of each school year. Additional booklets will available from the office.

**4.2.2** If a child is absent for 2 consecutive days the parents/ carers will be contacted via telephone. A telephone log of the conversation will be recorded.

**4.2.3** In the event of a late arrival at school, or early departure, parents/ carers must report to the office to complete the register. The register will record the name of the adult collecting the child, reason for late arrival / early departure, date, time and signature. This will also be recorded in the manual register.

**4.2.4** In the event of no notification of reason for absence has been received within 7 days a letter such as Absentee Notice - Compulsory School Attendance will be forwarded to the parents / carers.

**4.2.5** In the event of frequent unexplained absences a letter Frequent Absenteeism Note will be forwarded to parents / carers requesting an interview.

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

* 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 school based personnel.

**4.2.7** 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 Home School Liaison Program Guidelines outline the role of home school liaison officers and Aboriginal student liaison officers.

**5. Manual Attendance Registers**

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

**Symbols to be used where students are absent from school**

**Symbol Meaning**

**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.

**Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence**

**Note:** The following symbols should be recorded above the **a** or **Pa** symbol as appropriate

**Symbol Meaning**

**A** The student’s absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no notice has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of the absence.

**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 duration of the absence is more than four days.

**L** 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. Additional days for students not of compulsory school age may be recorded at the principal’s discretion. This symbol is recorded where a student’s absence is due to reasons 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

- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.

**E** The student was suspended from school.

**M** The student was exempted from attending school.