



# Kurmond Public School

Effort Courtesy Responsibility Safety Achievement

## Student 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. It is vital that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of regular student attendance and is to be recorded and monitored by the school.*

*School Attendance Policy Updated 2017 - Student Attendance in Schools Procedures, NSW Department of Education and Training 2015*

### Expectations

1. Kurmond 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; and
- 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 in line with the requirements set out in [The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy \(1997\)](#);
- the school education director or nominee are given access to information about chronic non-attendance;
- school staff are trained to implement attendance policies and procedures and are supervised;
- accurate attendance records are maintained in an approved format;
- early identification of students at risk of poor attendance is monitored;

- effective measures are in place to monitor and follow up absences and 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;
- all reasonable measures are undertaken to contact parents promptly and within two days of an unexplained absence. Contact may be made either by providing the parent with an [Absentee Notice – Compulsory School Attendance](#) or by telephone;
- interpreters and translated materials are made available to parents from backgrounds other than English;
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate school based intervention strategies are implemented;
- attendance reports are generated and are followed up by appropriate staff;
- an application to the Home School Liaison Program is submitted after a range of school based interventions has been unsuccessful. Parents should be advised using the Principal to parent letter advising of [Application to the Home School Liaison Program](#);
- effective referral and support networks are established with agencies connecting families to this support and for the purpose of information sharing and collaborating; and
- any child protection issues, non sighting concerns and concerns about suspected risk of harm are dealt with in accordance with the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy [and Procedures](#), [the Mandatory Reporter Guide \(MRG\)](#) or *contact with the NSW Police Force*.

## 2. Principals may grant:

- sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness;
- request a medical certificate if there are concerns with explanations or there is a history of poor attendance;
- request a parents consent for a doctor to provide information about a child's health;
- grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student. This includes part day;
- 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. This may include special events not relating to school, misadventure or an unforeseen event, domestic necessity, funerals or recognised religious festivals or ceremonies;
- decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence and record absence as unjustified; and
- request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged.

2.2.1 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.

2.2.2 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'.

## 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. Parents have a legal obligation under the Education Act (1990) to ensure regular attendance;
- ensuring that their children attend school regularly on days the school is open for instruction;
- explaining the absences of their children from school promptly to the school (within 7 days as required in the Education Act 1990) with a justified reason for absence;
- working in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance and to resolve attendance issues involving their children; and
- communicating with the school issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with the school.

## Implementation of the DEC Attendance Policy at Kurmond Public School

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Kurmond 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; and
- provides clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

## Roll Marking Procedures

- Roll marking is to be recorded daily and accurately by teachers in ebS4 Agent (Roll marking tool on Department of Education Staff Portal);
- Casual teachers are to mark the Roll on a Class list and send to the School Office for Office Staff to enter through ebS4 Client (Roll marking tool on Department of Education Staff Portal);

The following points should be noted:

- school Development Days and Public Holidays are deactivated in ebS4 so as not to appear in the class roll as active;
- a Late Arrival Docket or Early Departure Docket is printed by the Office staff from ebS4 – this will automatically appear in the Class Roll for students who arrive after 9:10am or leave before 3.10pm;
- students should present to the School office where they will be given a Late Arrival Docket. Students must not leave early unless collected by a parent/caregiver or their approved nominated persons. If a child brings a note requesting to leave early, the Principal must be informed. If a student consistently arrives late or leaves early the relevant Stage Team Leader should be alerted by the class teacher; and
- unexplained or unsatisfactory reason for absences should be marked 'A' and the relevant Stage Team Leader alerted by the class teacher.

**Note: Exemptions can no longer be requested or approved for parents / caregivers going on holidays during a school term. These absences are marked as leave (L) and are counted in the student's attendance record.**

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

- Teachers are to monitor absences and unjustified lateness and any concerns should be brought to the attention of the relevant Stage Team Leader;
- Stage Team Leaders will monitor rolls at 4 weekly intervals and bring any concerns to the attention of the Learning Support Team, the Principal and the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO);
- The HSLO will monitor attendance of notified students with the assistance of the relevant Stage Team Leader who will make daily checks on these students' attendance. The HSLO will be notified immediately of any non-attendance of these students; and
- All records will be maintained so that they are easily accessible for the HSLO.

## Liaison with Parents, Caregivers

- All explanatory notes must be dated. Teachers should date and initial any undated parental note;
- Verbal notifications of absence, if this information is relayed to the teacher it must be in writing. If no note is produced teachers or office staff are to complete a Verbal Notification of Absence. Refer to Class roll folder for blank copies of this note;
- Where a student's consistent lateness causes concern teachers should alert the relevant Stage Team Leader;
- If no satisfactory explanation is received within 5 days teachers should contact the parent. If no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming the teacher should alert the relevant Stage Team Leader; and
- If no explanation for absence has been received, the child has not returned to school and there has been no request for a transfer the teacher should notify the relevant Stage Team Leader immediately.

## Students who have left the school

When a student leaves the school they are marked as "Left" in ERN and the class as 'Finished' in ebS4 by the Office Staff.

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. 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](#); and
- 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).

## Strategies for Good Attendance:

At Kurmond 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, Stage Team Leaders and the Principal. Attendance issues are tracked, monitored and communicated to the parents. Ongoing concerns or no improvement in attendance after class teachers, and Stage Team Leaders and the Principal have intervened, are referred to the Learning Support Team;
- recognising students with 100% attendance rates at the end of each term with an attendance certificate and celebrating their achievement in the school newsletter; and
- awarding students who achieve 100% attendance for the entire school year a Certificate at the school's Presentation Ceremony.

## Codes for Attendance Register

**W** The student was absent on that day.

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

**B** The student is absent from the school site on official school business. This may include school sport competitions (regional and state carnivals), and school excursions.

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

**Note:** The following symbols should be recorded beside the **W** or **P** 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; and
- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.

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

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; and
- support from school based personnel.

## Responses to absences

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

- contact the parent / carer;
- communicate any issues to the grade / stage supervisor;
- monitor and track attendance of the student;
- refer the student to the school's Learning Support Team to discuss previous interventions and future attendance plans; and
- the Learning Support Team may decide to refer the student to the Home School Liaison Officer after all school based approaches have been exhausted.

## Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Kurmond 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; and
- an electronic message sent to the school by the parent / carer.

## 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/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_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/implementation_2_PD20050259.shtml)

[https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student\\_admin/attendance/sch\\_polproc/HSLOgui09.pdf](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/HSLOgui09.pdf)

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