Hobartville Public School

Attendance Policy

Draft 2013
School Expectation & Responsibilities

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. The following is a summary of some of the major points in Student attendance in Government Schools: Procedures PD20050259.

Parents are responsible for:
- enrolling their children of compulsory school age.
- ensuring that their children attend school regularly
- explaining the absences of their children from school promptly to the school (within 7 days)
- taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

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)
- accurate attendance records are maintained in an approved format
- providing the school education director or nominee with information about chronic non-attendance
- school staff are trained to implement attendance policies and procedures and are supervised
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.
- 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.

Principals may grant:
- sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- 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
- 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. This may include special events not relating to school, misadventure or an unforeseen event,
- Domestic necessity, funerals or recognised religious festivals or ceremonies.
- Principals may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence.
- Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged

School staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:
- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters a sense of belonging
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- seeking 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 may also be used for this purpose
- retaining 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 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. 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.
- providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
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.
- 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 record card detailing the number of absences each year to be retained for seven years after the student has left. 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.

Registering the attendance of students
- 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 but not on School development days or days on which there is teacher industrial action.
- 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 DET eg selective school tests, High School orientation etc must not be marked as absent.
- Staff responsible for maintaining attendance registers must be acquainted with requirements of the procedures document Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures, School Attendance Policy PD20050259 which is available on the DET website.
- A hard copy of the electronic record is to be generated weekly for the previous two-week period. The principal or delegated school executive must endorse this hard copy, certifying its accuracy. Once signed, this hard copy becomes the record of attendance.

Special Circumstance Registers
Attendance registers must be maintained each day the school is open with the exception of
- days on which there is part or full day industrial action involving teachers
- Approved school development days
- Days on which the school is inaccessible due to natural occurrences such as fire or flood. Principals should consult with regional personnel prior to deciding that a school is inaccessible.
- These days should specify dates and times of variation, reason for variation, list of students attending on the day, signed by teacher attending on the day and be permanently attached to attendance register.
- Absences on these days are not to be recorded on student record cards or counted as absences for statistical purposes.
School Attendance Records Symbols

Electronic Attendance Registers
Symbols to be used where students are absent from school
Symbol Meaning
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.

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 unforseen 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.
F Senior student participating in flexible timetable not present because they are not required to be at school
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:
- work experience
- school sport (regional and state carnivals)
- school excursions.
H The student is attending two or more education settings for a period of time (shared enrolment). This symbol is recorded where a student accesses a specialist educational setting on a sessional or full-time basis in line with the Department’s Enrolment Policy (Enrolment of Students in NSW Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy 1997).
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.