



# HUNTERS HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Student Attendance Guidelines & Procedures

### ***Introduction***

- Hunters Hill Public School in partnerships 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 part of their duty of care, record and monitor part and whole day absences.

### ***Responsibilities of Parents:***

- To ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a government or non-government school, or are registered with BOSTES for home schooling.
- Ensure their children attend every day the school is open for instruction.
- Provide an explanation for absences to the school within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence through means such as telephone call, written note, text message or email. The 7 day timeframe for explaining absences is a requirement of the *Education Act (1990)*.
- Work in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school. This includes communicating with the school if they are aware of issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with school.

### ***Responsibilities of the School Principal:***

- The school principal regularly evaluates and addresses school attendance through the school plan.
- Openly communicates on issues affecting student attendance is promoted with parents.
- Ensures 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.
- Ensures school staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised.
- Reports all cases of unsatisfactory attendance, including part day absences are investigated promptly and school based factors impacting on attendance are addressed.

- Ensures early identification of students at risk of developing poor school attendance patterns through strategies such as regular roll checks.
- Ensures 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. **Attendance report for roll check and whole day and partial day attendance reports will be generated every second Tuesday (even weeks), provided to the principal who will distribute to relevant staff for follow up.**
- 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.
- Ensures communication, collaboration and information sharing occurs with other services and agencies to enhance the effectiveness of interventions with students and families.

### ***Responsibilities of School Staff:***

- To promote regular attendance at school through teaching and learning activities that acknowledge the learning and support needs of students.
- To maintain accurate records of student attendance.
- 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 within required timeframes.
- School staff who have concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person must report their concerns to the principal.

### ***Explanation for Absences not Received:***

- Principals must ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences with parents. Parents must provide an explanation to the school within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence.
- If the school does not receive an explanation of the absence from the parents within 7 days, the principal or delegate will take all reasonable measures to contact the parents within 2 school days after the 7 day timeframe has elapsed (if contact has not already been made).

### ***Frequent Absences due to Illness:***

- Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness consultation with parents must occur regarding the health care needs of the child.
- Principals can request that the parents provide a medical certificate if they have concerns with the explanation provided, or where there is a history of poor attendance.
- Where principals have ongoing concerns they can request the parent's consent for a doctor to provide information to the school about their child's health condition. It is

essential the school has all relevant information so that the learning and health care needs of the student can be addressed.

### ***Unsatisfactory Pattern of Attendance:***

- 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.
- A child is considered to have an unsatisfactory school attendance when they have:
  - regular absences without explanation (despite follow-up from the school)
  - regular absences and explanations provided by parents are not accepted by the principal, or
  - extended periods of absence without an explanation or the explanation is not accepted by the principal. An extended period of absence may be consecutive or irregular patterns of non-attendance.
- The most effective means of restoring and maintaining regular school attendance includes attendance monitoring practices and regular follow-up of unexplained absences by contacting parents on the same day or the following day of an absence.
- Resolution of attendance difficulties may require more targeted school based strategies including:
  - meeting with the student and parents
  - referral to the school's Learning and Support Team to identify and implement strategies that address the learning and support needs for the student
  - development of a school-based attendance improvement plan with the student and parents
  - engaging identified groups of students in programs that support regular attendance and punctuality
  - referral to the school counsellor
  - requesting and sharing information and working collaboratively with other government or non-government agencies
  - seeking advice about culturally appropriate responses from relevant services and working collaboratively with them.
- The school should identify if other agencies are involved with the family and liaise with them when a student's attendance is of concern and where it is determined that the issues impacting on attendance are outside of the role of the school to address in isolation.
- If a range of school based interventions has been unsuccessful in resolving attendance difficulties the principal should request support by making an application to the Home School Liaison Program and submitting the application to their local Educational Services Team for consideration.

### ***Record Keeping Requirements for School Attendance:***

- School attendance records must include:
  - a Register of Admission to be retained permanently (now maintained on the Enrolment Registration Number System - ERN)
  - written notes, records of verbal explanations and records of electronic 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 requiring an accident report, all attendance records should be retained until the year the student reaches the age of 25 years
  - information detailing a student's absences each year, kept on the student's file until seven years after the student has left. In the case of a student who has had an accident necessitating an accident report, the record should be retained until the student reaches the age of 25 years.

### ***Maintenance of Attendance Register:***

- The Education Act (1990) (Section 24) requires that attendance registers (rolls) be maintained in a form approved by the Minister. These may be either manual or electronic rolls.
- Attendance registers (rolls) must be maintained on all days on which the school is open for instruction including school sports days, swimming carnivals, excursions and similar events.
- Attendance information must be recorded on the Department's electronic attendance register, OASIS or SALM/ebs4 or compliant third party systems or an approved manual roll on a daily basis.
- Principals may delegate responsibility to staff for the maintenance of the attendance register (rolls). Staff must be trained on the requirements of Student Attendance in Government Schools – Procedures, and the School Attendance Register Codes. Advice and further information may be obtained from attendance officers.
- Only the approved codes listed in the Attendance Register Codes are to be used.
- Attendance registers (rolls) must reflect the highest professional standards.
- The principal or delegate will ensure that explanations for absences are recorded within 7 days of the occurrence of the absence. Explanations that have been accepted by the principal which are provided after the 7 day period should be retained.
- School attendance must be recorded on the attendance register (roll) at the commencement of the school day.
- Schools using SALM/ebs4 should record both presence and absence.
- In the case of late arrival or early departure, the precise times of arrival or departure must be recorded with the relevant attendance register codes.

- Principals may grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness, or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment.
- School sport is an integral part of the curriculum and principals must ensure adequate attendance monitoring practices occur for the safety of all students. Specific sports rolls must be marked at the beginning and conclusion of each sports session. Attendance information contained on sports rolls must be transferred to the attendance register (roll).
- 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.

### ***Requirements for a Shared Enrolment:***

- Specialist educational settings can include tutorial centres and programs, behaviour schools, juvenile justice and hospital schools.
- Where the mainstream school principal verifies that a student is attending a specialist education setting, the mainstream school can mark the Attendance Register (roll) with the Attendance Register Code 'H' to denote student attending specialist education setting on a sessional or full-time basis.

### ***Attendance Register Codes:***

A – Absence is unexplained or unjustified

S – Absence due to sickness or result of a medical or paramedical appointment.

L – Absence explanation has been accepted by the principal:

- Misadventure or unforeseen event
- Participation in special event not related to 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

E – Student was suspended from school.

M – Certificate of Exemption has been issued

F – Student is participating in a flexible timetable:

- Best Start Assessment

B – Student is absent from school on official school business.

H – Student is enrolled in a school and is approved to be attending an alternative educational setting.