

## **Attendance Policy**

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. NSW public schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

### **What are my legal responsibilities?**

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age. The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESAs) for homeschooling. Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

### **The importance of arriving on time**

Arriving at school and class on time;

- ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- gives students time to greet their friends before class
- reduces classroom disruption.

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

### **What if my child has to be away from school?**

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance e.g. attending a funeral.

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with an explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence. Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the Principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why. Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the Principal can record the absences as unjustified.

### **Travel**

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. An Application for Extended Leave may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year. In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school Principal.

### **My child won't go to school. What should I do?**

You should contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The school may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

### **What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?**

It is important to understand that the Department of Education may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school. Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.
- Application to the Children's Court - Compulsory Schooling Order. If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.
- Prosecution in the Local Court School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

### **What age can my child leave school?**

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling. Working in partnership The Department of Education recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school. We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

If a student misses as little as 8 days in a school term, by the end of primary school they'll have missed over a year of school.

For translated versions on the information above please go to:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/translated-documents/compulsory-school-attendance-information-for-parents>

### **Student Absences**

You can enter notes and approvals in advance, if you know that your child is going to be absent from school. This can be entered in Compass.

All absences will be summarised (including partial absence) and presented as part of each semester's Student Progress Report.

Should a student need to leave school early, a written note is required from home which must be signed by a parent. This must be given in the morning to the Deputy Principal to grant approval and their signature is required. Once approval has been given the student will need to go to the Student Services window in A Block and hand in their signed note. They will be given a slip which will need to be taken with them. Please note that approval is rarely given for students to leave school without a parent or guardian to pick them up.

**Lunchtime**

No student may leave the school premises for any reason, to go home or to the local shops during lunchtime unless written permission is obtained from one of the Deputy Principals.

**Absence Alert Messaging**

If your child has any unapproved absences or late arrivals, you will receive an alert on your Compass home page and an SMS letting you know this, and allowing you to add a note or approval in Compass.

**Leaving Killara High School to attend another school**

School leavers must bring a note from their parents indicating their intention to leave, the reason and, if known, which school they will be attending. This note is to be presented to Reception, at least one week prior to leaving. The student is then required to complete a Leaver's Form. Teachers and Head Teachers will initial opposite their name on this form to indicate the student has returned all the text books, library books, sports uniforms, locker key, laptop (if appropriate), etc., and has paid any outstanding contributions. The completed form should be returned to Reception.