

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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A: Recording School Attendance

Hard copy: NSW Attendance Register Codes (printed on 12/8/2013)

Policy

Mumbulla School for Rudolf Steiner Education's Attendance Policy seeks to ensure that government legislation and Board of Studies requirements in relation to student attendance at primary schools are followed. This policy includes processes and procedures to support school attendance.

1. Legal Requirements

- 1.1 Government legislation requires students between the ages of six and sixteen to be enrolled at a school (unless registered for home schooling) and to attend school on each day that instruction is provided.
- 1.2 Parents or carers are responsible for making sure that their children comply with these legal requirements. Schools support parents by monitoring student attendance and helping to address attendance issues when they emerge.
- 1.3 The *Education Reform Act 1990* specifies that absences must be explained within 7 days of the occurrence. Mumbulla School keeps records of daily attendance and notification from parents or carers are kept by the school for at least 12 months from the date received. Notification can be by note, phone or email and is recorded both electronically on the school's database and in written form.
- 1.4 Mumbulla School maintains a record of enrolments both electronically on the school's database and in written form in the Admissions Register.

2. Rationale

- 2.1. The consequences of inconsistent attendance may become apparent in a child's academic progress and social life:
 - 2.1.1. the individual student begins to experience gaps in knowledge, which are continually compounded by further absence
 - 2.1.2. the progress of the class as a whole is held back.
 - 2.1.3. students may begin to experience learning difficulties. This often manifests in and leads to difficult behaviour or loss of self-esteem and in the child's social relationships
 - 2.1.4. Where the school has unsuccessfully tried a range of strategies to help resolve a student's attendance problems the school may seek external assistance including from the Association of Independent Schools (AISNSW).
- 2.2. Routine and rhythm are part of the school day at Mumbulla School and for the following reasons punctuality is considered important:
 - 2.2.1. Expectations of punctuality encourage a healthy respect for work and study.
 - 2.2.2. It is very disruptive to the class and the rhythm of the lesson for students to come in after a lesson has started.
 - 2.2.3. A student who has missed the beginning of a lesson may find it difficult to engage fully in the lesson.

3. Attendance at Mumbulla School

- 3.1. Attendance at school is a legal requirement except in the case of:
 - 3.1.1. Sickness
 - 3.1.2. special circumstances with prior approval of the College of Teachers
 - 3.1.3. if the student has received an exemption from the College of Teachers for absences amounting to 50 days or less in one year
 - 3.1.4. if the student has received an exemption from the College of Teachers for absences of more than 50 days in one year.

3.2. Continued sporadic attendance may be deemed to indicate lack of support on behalf of the family and the child's continued place in the class will have to be questioned.

4. Responsibilities of the College of Teachers

4.1. The College of Teachers, acting as the Principal, is empowered under Section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* to grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student.

4.2. Exemption from school attendance should only be granted where conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable in the view of the College of Teachers that a Certificate of Exemption be granted.

4.3. The College of Teachers may grant exemptions due to:

4.3.1. Exceptional domestic circumstances, including but not limited to participation in family holidays during school term subject to being satisfied that this is in the best educational interests of the child;

4.3.2. Other exceptional circumstances such as health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate;

4.3.3. The child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under Section 42D of the *Public Health Act 1991*;

4.3.4. Employment in the entertainment industry of participation in elite sporting events for short periods of time i.e. for one or two days, and at short notice;

4.3.5. Other cases not specifically referred to in the above but where an exemption appears to be in the best interests of the child

4.4. The College of Teachers may refer to the Minister for Education (State Government) in cases where the exemption is considered not reasonable.

5. Responsibilities of the School

5.1. Mumbulla School will monitor the daily attendance and absence of students in the school by maintaining a weekly roll sheet for each class.

5.2. Student absences, late arrivals and early departures will be identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the class teacher and front office staff. (*See Attachment A – "Filling out your Weekly Attendance Sheet"*)

5.3. All absences including late arrivals and early departures, require verbal or written notification from the parent and/or carer stating date and reason for absence.

5.4. Unexplained absences from classes or school will be followed up in an appropriate manner with the students and/or their parent or carer.

5.5. Class teachers will notify the parents and/or carers in an appropriate manner where a student has a poor record of school or class attendance.

5.6. Where unsatisfactory class or school attendance is identified, the attendance issue and any action taken will be recorded, as appropriate, in the student's file.

5.7. Where a student leaves Mumbulla School leaving no forwarding address or information about which school the student will be attending, the school will:

- forward a letter by Registered Post to the last known address of the family, and
- notify the Home School Liaison Officer.

6. Responsibilities of the Teachers and Staff

6.1. Class teachers will:

- 6.1.1. Provide an example of punctuality and responsibility in their commitments. This will encourage students to develop self-responsibility in this area.
- 6.1.2. Ensure that weekly attendance sheets are filled out and sent to the front office in a timely fashion.
- 6.1.3. initially follow up cases of inconsistent attendance with the parents concerned.
- 6.1.4. Communicate with the front office in relation to recording late arrivals and early departures.

6.2. The College of Teachers will:

- 6.2.1. provide structures and procedures so that teachers have support when dealing with attendance problems.
- 6.2.2. decide, in the case of unexplained or unjustified school absence, what form of school intervention is appropriate.
- 6.2.3. investigate all cases where a student has been absent without satisfactory explanation.
- 6.2.4. Seek external assistance where required.

6.3. The Front Office Staff will:

- 6.3.1. Maintain the school's database with up-to-date information on student attendance.
- 6.3.2. Send out a note to parents at the end of term asking for a signed explanation of any absences unexplained within the 7 days required (see Section 1.3).
- 6.3.3. Provide reports on student attendance as may be required from time to time.

7. School Attendance Records

7.1. The school's attendance records include:

- 7.1.1. The school's database system, SchoolPro, which is maintained by front office staff.
- 7.1.2. Notes from parents or care-providers which explain absences.
- 7.1.3. The Admissions Register which is kept in the top office and updated by the Educational Administrator at the beginning of each year and when new enrolments are made during the year.
- 7.1.4. Records of Student Transfer.

For more info:

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/a-zattendance.php

Date of review	Reviewed by:	Actions taken	Next review date
June 2012	College Exec	All sections updated. Taken to Board in August 2012	
August 2012	Board	Ratified	2/8/2014

ATTACHMENT A RECORDING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

1. Teachers fill out daily attendance for their class on a form generated through the front office. The Front Office collects these forms daily and records the absences in the Data Entry system. Teachers also fill out roll books for their individual classes. Roll books are kept in the classroom. The absences are filled out in the following way:
 - a. A green arrow (\Rightarrow) denotes a late arrival
 - b. A red arrow (\Leftarrow) denotes an early departure
 - c. The time a child arrives or leaves if late or early is entered manually by the front office staff.
 - d. The reason for absence or partial absence is entered by means of a drop down list within the database system.
 - e. Comments are added manually by front office staff to denote who notified the school and whether by phone, email, note or in person.

This system of recording has superseded the old system of codes.

2. **Leave** that is approved by the Class teacher includes:
 - a. Misadventure and unforeseen events eg. fire, floods.
 - b. Industrial disputes (absences recorded as leave in this situation should not affect a student's attendance record).
 - c. Participation in special events eg. Eisteddfod, etc.
 - d. Family holidays which cannot be taken within the normal school holiday period.
 - e. Domestic necessity which may include serious illness or death of an immediate relative or care-provider, moving residence, arrival or departure of an immediate relative from overseas, recognised religious holidays and festivals or ceremonial occasions.
 - f. Travel to family or medical appointments
3. **If a student is suspended** this will be recorded in the Comments section.
4. Students who arrive late or leave early will be required to fill out a pink slip from the Front Office before going to class or leaving the school.
5. With the exception of a student who is absent for a substantial part of a day (ie. more than 3 hours) the student should be counted as present.
6. When a student's pattern of attendance gives rise to concern, the class teacher should immediately alert the College of Teachers.
7. **Unjustified absences** will be entered in cases where:
 - a. no notice is provided by parents or care-providers within 7 days of the occurrence of the absence.
 - b. the absence is explained but is not accepted by the College of Teachers due to the activity leading to absence being sustained for more than 2 days within a reasonable amount of time.

8. Absence due to sickness is recorded where:
 - a. the medical certificate or notice provided by the parent or care-provider is a reasonable explanation of the student's sickness.
 - b. In cases where the sickness is in excess of four school days, the teacher may request a medical certificate detailing the nature of the sickness and the duration of the sickness.

9. Absences for visits to dentists, optometrists, physiotherapists, or other specialist services are to be dealt with on the same basis as absence due to sickness, however will be recorded as absence due to "appointment".

10. If industrial action prevents the school from being open for a half day, the Attendance sheets should be marked for the half day the school is open. Students who are absent for the half day the school is open should be recorded as partially absent.

College Curriculum Days

On Colleger Curriculum Days the roll should show in the column for that day a broken line and the notation "Roll Not Marked – College Curriculum Day".

Off-Site School Activities

Students involved in school-organised educational excursions, sporting and other visits are to be marked present.

Removal of Names from the Class Roll

When a student transfers to another school and the enrolment at the new school is confirmed or if the student has been expelled, the date on which enrolment ceased and the name of the new school will be entered in the student's data entry record.