

HAMBLEDON PUBLIC SCHOOL



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Hambleton Public School Attendance Policy

Aim:

To implement procedures to; record and monitor students' attendance, encourage regular attendance and improve poor attendance.

Responsibilities:

Parents will:

- Understand the legal requirements and educational necessity for regular school attendance.
- Accept help from the school and HSLO to overcome student attendance issues;
- Provide documentation explaining the reason for a student's absence via the school app or by verbal or written communication, no later than 7 days after the student is absent;
- Ensure students are 'signed out' with the appropriate teacher, stating the time, whenever parents/carers pick up students early on special days e.g. athletics carnivals;
- Attend the office when picking up students before 2:45pm;
- When possible, provide a written note of explanation prior to students being away for a period of more than 5 days;
- Provide proof of travel or illness if students are absent for a period of more than 20 days; and
- Provide valid medical certificates as requested by the school.

Students will:

- Unless for valid reasons, attend school every day it is open;
- Take pride in regular attendance;
- Attempt to overcome problems that contribute to poor attendance; and
- not leave school between their arrival and pick up, without a valid reason.

Teachers will:

- Understand the importance of accurately recording and carefully, efficiently and effectively monitoring students' attendance;
- Ensure the class roll is marked daily by 10:00am on Sentral;
- Ensure absence notes received are promptly recorded with the date and a letter symbol, as per DoE guidelines (e.g. L-leave), then sent to the school office where the reason will be marked on Sentral;
- Be conversant with the school and Department's attendance policies;
- Contact parents/carers if there are regular unexplained absences;
- Discuss attendance concerns with team leaders;
- Provide a caring, stimulating and successful learning environment which will encourage students' regular attendance; and
- On special days when parents sign students out early, return the signed class list to the office.
- If notified by parents verbally of a student's absence, record the reason in the comments section on Sentral.

The Attendance Administrator will:

- Regularly oversee of the accurate recording of students' attendance;

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- Follow up instances of unsatisfactory attendance;
- Liaise with the Principal, Learning Support Team and the HSLO (Home School Liaison Officer) when attendance becomes an issue;
- In-service staff as to their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Attendance Policy; and
- Notify parents whenever student(s) truant from school.

The HSLO will: (Home School Liaison Officer)

- Provide the school with support in its endeavours to improve school attendance.

Administration Staff will:

- If contacted by parent/caregiver, notify the relevant teacher and record the reason in the Sentral roll;
- If notified by parents verbally of a student's absence, enter the reason into the comments section on the Sentral roll;
- Print absent letters for parents every even week of the school term;
- File absentee notes from class folder that are ticked, dated and signed when received on the designated day for each class each week.
- Collect the paper copy of special day rolls, recording early sign outs, and file them with the paper copy of the rolls from that day.
- Record students who arrive late or leave early on Sentral.

Roll Marking Procedures

- Teachers will follow the attendance procedures as outlined in the ‘Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures’.
- Roll marking is to be recorded daily and accurately by teachers in Sentral before 10:00am.
- Casual teachers are to mark the roll on a class list and send to school office for office staff to enter through Sentral.
- If casual teacher is to be on the class for a long period of time, they are to follow procedures for teachers and roll marking in Sentral.
- Absent codes will be as outlined in the table, ‘Attendance Register Codes’.

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence	
Symbol	Meaning
A	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal. It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.
S	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.
L	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - travel in Australia and overseas - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.
E	The student was suspended from school

Procedures for Special Event Days/Excursions and PSSA

(Special events days are days which alter the school routine significantly.)

- Coordinators of special events are to inform classroom teachers, and the office, of students who are attending an event. These students are to be marked as 'School Business' on the roll.
- For full day events, teachers will return rolls, which include full or partial absences, to the office. The administrative staff are responsible for filing these with the daily paper rolls.
- For small groups who have left the school, and where a student has been signed out from the group, the supervising teacher should inform the office, who will update Sentral.
- In the instance of industrial action rolls will be marked at the beginning of the day and at the time action ceases. Students who arrive at school upon conclusion of industrial action, will be marked as attending a full day of school.

The following points should be noted:

- The Attendance Supervisor on each stage is the Assistant Principal for that stage. The overall Attendance Administrator is the Deputy Principal.
- School development days and public holidays are deactivated in Sentral, so as not to appear in the class roll as active.
- Students who arrive after 9:00am or leave before 2:45pm will be recorded on Sentral by administration staff.
- If arriving late, students should present to the school office where they will be given a Late Arrival Slip. This must be taken to the classroom teacher.
- Students must not leave early unless collected by a parent/caregiver or their approved nominated representative. Parents or carers picking up students should attend the office. If a student consistently arrives late or leaves early, the relevant Attendance Supervisor should be alerted by the class teacher.
- Unexplained or unsatisfactory reason for absences should be marked as 'A' and the relevant Attendance Supervisor alerted by the class teacher.
- When a student leaves the school, they are marked as "Left" in ERN. However, there will be a delay of a few days before the student leaves the Sentral system.
- **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 Attendance Supervisor.
- The Attendance Supervisor will monitor rolls at 5 weekly intervals in Weeks 5 & 10 each term and bring any concerns to the attention of the Learning Support Team, the Deputy Principal, the Principal and the HSLO (if required).
- Any roll marking anomalies will be investigated by an Attendance Supervisor.
- In the event that a student becomes an attendance concern, the following strategies will be applied at the Attendance Supervisor's discretion;
 - Discussions with student/teacher;
 - Contact with parent;
 - Rewards chart implemented to improve attendance;
 - Meetings with the student's parents; and/or
 - Referral to HSLO.
- The HSLO will monitor attendance remotely using Sentral and notified the school of any students who are an attendance concern.
- 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 should be recorded in the comment section on the Sentral rolls. This information should be conveyed between the office and the class teacher. Where a student's consistent lateness causes concern, teachers should discuss this with the parents of the child. If the child continues to be late, the teacher should alert the relevant Attendance Supervisor.
- If no satisfactory explanation is received within 7 days of the first period of absence, teachers should contact the parent. If no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming, the teacher should alert the relevant Attendance Supervisor.
- Any contact with parents regarding attendance should be recorded in Sentral.
- If no explanation for absence has been received, and the child has not returned to school for more than 3 days or there has been no request for a transfer, the teacher should notify the relevant Attendance Supervisor immediately.

Retain of class rolls

- Class rolls will be kept for the period of time as outlined in School Attendance Policy (PD20050259)
- Class rolls will be stored as outlined in School Attendance Policy (PD20050259)

Strategies for Good Attendance:

- Teachers will provide a caring & stimulating learning environment in which students are able to achieve success and recognition for success every day.
- Teachers will provide praise and incentives to encourage good attendance.
- Class teachers will provide awards for 100% attendance each semester.
- Procedures for notification of absence and the importance of prompt arrival will be regularly inserted into the newsletter and regularly reported on at parent meetings, P&C meetings etc.
- A pamphlet from the NSW Department of Education regarding student attendance is distributed at the start of each year to all families, via the newsletter, and is included in the Kindergarten Orientation packages.

Parent Awareness of the Importance of Attendance

Throughout the year there are several opportunities to raise parent and community awareness of the need for excellent attendance and the impact of poor attendance on academic performance. These include:

- Inclusion of a session on attendance at the Parent Information Evening in Term 1;
- Reminders regarding the requirement of attendance in newsletters;
- Publication of Attendance Census data when compiled in Terms 2 and 4;
- Letters to specific years, such as Kindergarten;
- Letters and attendance reports to parents of children with an attendance pattern of less than 85% at the end of Terms 1, 2 and 3; and/or
- Inclusion of attendance data on the semester reports.

Procedures for Dealing with Unacceptable Attendance

School Measures

Hambledon Public School implements a wide range of strategies to support the regular attendance of students, including extensive contact with parents to resolve issues of non-attendance. These strategies include letters, phone calls, interviews and family support.

In the case of a student who has been identified with unacceptable attendance (an attendance pattern of less than 85%), it is necessary to document the measures taken to monitor and improve attendance. The school is required to provide documentary evidence of its interventions before making a HSLO referral. This documentation will take the form of the *Sydney Region Attendance Checklist for Schools*.

When classroom teachers feel a student has an unacceptable attendance pattern, and the student is not already being monitored, they should make a referral to the L&ST (Learning and Support Team). The L&ST will discuss and implement strategies to improve attendance. This **MUST** include the use of monitoring with the *Sydney Region Attendance Checklist for Schools* so that appropriate documentation is available if a referral needs to be made to the HSLO.

HSLO Intervention and Investigation

Where the school has taken all reasonable action to support the regular attendance of a student of **compulsory** school age but the student continues to attend erratically, the matter should be referred to the Home School Liaison Program for investigation. Investigation, including a review of school documentation, must be completed within five school days of referral.

If appropriate, and within five school days of completing the investigation, home school liaison officers must develop an attendance improvement plan for the student. The plan will be developed in consultation with the school and will identify targets, strategies and timelines.

If the investigation indicates that home school liaison intervention is not warranted, the home school liaison officer must, within five school days, provide the school with advice on additional strategies to be implemented by the school.

Legal Action

It is important that legal action to resolve attendance issues is not delayed unnecessarily. School Education Directors must, as soon as possible and within five school days, refer the matter for legal action if:

- the student's attendance remains poor **and**
- the parents have not meaningfully engaged in the attendance improvement plan within 20 school days of the commencement of the plan.

Conciliation conferences are currently convened prior to referral for consideration of prosecution. However, these conferences have rarely been successful in resolving matters quickly. While attendance meetings may continue to be convened if appropriate, it is now recommended that formally convened conciliation conferences occur as a result of a decision by the court. Any attempt to convene a conciliation conference after a court appearance notice has been issued, should only be done in consultation with the lawyer dealing with the prosecution case, and subject to any orders or recommendations a court makes in any particular case.

Referral to Department of Community Services

If at any stage any officer of the Department, including teachers or the principal, suspects a child is at risk of harm, the officer must make an immediate report to the Department of Community Services.

This Policy is based on the *School Attendance Policy (PD20050259)* and follows the procedures as outlined by the *Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures -2015* and *School Attendance Register Codes 2015*. The policy will be reviewed annually.

References:

School Attendance Policy (PD20050259)

Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures -2015

School Attendance Register Codes 2015