



Attendance Procedure

Wellbeing Team
Last Revised April 2021

Purpose

Addressing the attendance of students is a whole school approach where all staff, students and the wider school community have a responsibility or role to ensure every student is at school each day it is open for instruction.

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to achieve their educational best, and increase their career and life options. School staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing students from full participation at school.

Responsibilities

Supporting positive school attendance is a shared responsibility - everyone has a role.

Students

Regular attendance at school helps students to maximise their potential. Students should;

- make sure they ready for each school day: uniform, books, bag, lunch
- chat with family, a friend or teacher if they have concerns about attending school, or something is making it difficult to get to school
- ask a teacher for help if school work is challenging or they are having social issues

Parents

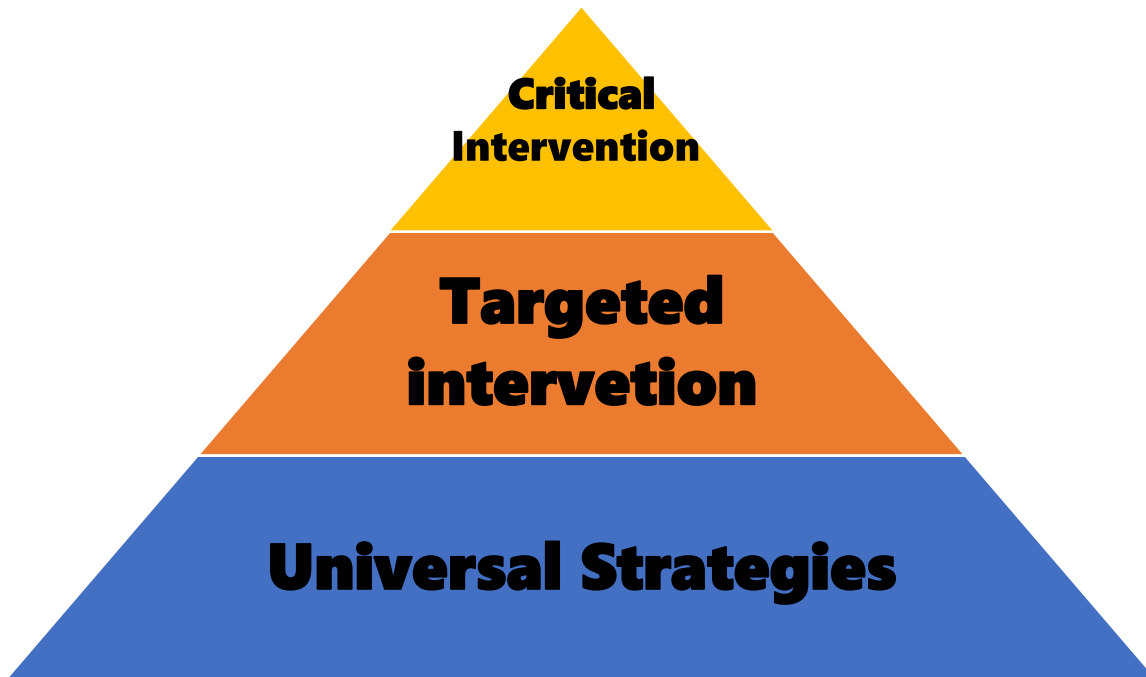
It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to make sure the child:

- is enrolled at, and attends a government school or a registered non-government school, or
- is registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and receives instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject
- attends school every day it is open unless a there is a justified reason for the child being absent

Staff

Staff, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility. Staff;

- must provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- must ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences
- are responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students
- address the learning needs for students with attendance concerns
- ensure Child Protection requirements are adhered to for any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student



Universal Strategies to Address Absenteeism

Shoalhaven Heads expects student attendance to be at or above 95%

- Rolls are marked accurately before 9:30am each day
- Regular attendance monitoring practices are communicated and followed by all staff, including attendance monitoring by Learning & Support Teachers, audit of roll marking processes by wellbeing team, HSLO roll checks
- Regular follow up of unexplained absences by contacting parents after 2 consecutive days of absence. This can be verbal or in writing
- Maintain effective contact between classroom teachers and parents regarding absenteeism
- Attendance concerns are raised and discussed at Learning and Support meetings

Targeted School Based Intervention Strategies to Address Students with Chronic Non-attendance or Lateness

(Students with attendance below 90%)

- School based reminder letter to parent about the importance of school attendance when student falls below 90%
- Meet with the student and parents, as required, when student's attendance does not improve after the letter or falls below 85%, to create an improvement plan created with the student and parents reviewed for improvement every 2 weeks
- If no sustained improvement recorded through the improvement plan, attendance Letter 1, sent to parents outlining next steps to improve student attendance which includes making an application to the HSLO
- Request and share information and working collaboratively with other government or non-government agencies to collectively support the attendance of students

Critical Intervention strategies

- Case management of students through the HSLO/ASLO
- External supports including outside agencies

Actions		
SASS	Whole School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify teachers whose roll appears as unmarked (daily) • Record late arriving students in school systems • Students who are late (after 9.05am) will sign in at the Front Office and attend class with a note • Promote responsible attendance with the community
Classroom Teacher	Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark rolls accurately and submit roll at the beginning of the day. Complete head count to ensure accurate numbers • Monitor/track students for notes if they have been absent • Make contact with parents on the second consecutive day of absence • Amend discrepancies in the roll • Referral to Learning & Support Team if you have attendance concerns about a student
Parents	Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure your child attends school every day on time • Provide a written explanation to justify absence. This can be done through Compass, in writing or on the phone through the front office • Provide a medical certificate when requested after an ongoing absence due to illness • Ensure you speak with classroom teacher or Learning and Support Teacher if there are concerns with your child's attendance
Wellbeing Team	Whole School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss attendance concerns at Learning and Support meetings • Follow up with teachers about student attendance • Monitor attendance data looking for trends • Manage targeted interventions • Liaise with external supports at critical intervention
School Counsellor	Whole School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support students and families with concerns of attendance and relay to LaST and classroom teacher
HSLO/ASLO	Whole School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Home visits
Principal	Whole School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage complex cases with LaST, HSLO and Director of Education • Monitor attendance data

Monitoring Attendance

Student attendance data is regularly monitored by Class Teachers, Wellbeing Team, Learning and Support Team and the school Principal.

Learning and Support meetings are held weekly where attendance concerns are discussed and interventions planned.

What if my child is 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)

You must contact the school to provide an explanation within 7 days or the absence will be marked as unjustified. Attendance explanations can be provided through Compass, in writing or on the phone through the school office. Facebook and SeeSaw are **NOT** acceptable platforms for explaining absences at Shoalhaven Heads Public School.

The Wellbeing Team may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long-term absences are explained as being due to illness. This will help the school support the medical needs of the student while at school.

The Principal 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.

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

Our school will continue to work in partnership with parents to achieve the best outcomes for our students.

The Department of Education and its employees may take further action outside the school setting where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- Notification to government authority (Family and Community FACS)
- Compulsory Schooling Conferences- 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 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

Review date

To ensure currency of information and continuous improvement of school practice, this document is due for review on or before 20 May 2022.

Endorsement

This document supersedes any previous documents and is effective from 29 March 2021

Endorsed by: Sarah Baker

Principal,

Shoalhaven Heads Public School

Resources

- [School Attendance Policy](#)
- [School Attendance in Government Schools Procedures 2015](#)
- [Attendance Matters – resources for schools](#)

Compulsory School Attendance

Information for parents

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 Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards 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
- Give 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 a verbal or written 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. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. 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.





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.

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

You should contact the principal 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 principal 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 and Communities 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:

- Compulsory Schooling Conferences

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 and Communities 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.

Further information regarding school attendance can be obtained from the following websites:

Policy, information and brochures:

Please visit the Department of Education's *Policy library*

The school leaving age:

Please visit the Department of Education's *Wellbeing and Learning website*

Do you need an interpreter?

Interpreting services are available on request, including for the hearing impaired. The Telephone Interpreter Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 131 450. You will not be charged for this service.

For further advice and questions contact your educational services team

T 131 536

Learning and Engagement

Student Engagement & Interagency Partnerships

T 9244 512

www.dec.nsw.gov.au

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