



The Ponds School Attendance Policy

The Ponds School implements the Department of Education Attendance Policy and Procedures implemented from 03/02/2015.

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/attendance/sch_polproc/PD20050259.shtml

Introduction

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential, and increase their career and life options. Schools in partnership 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. Schools, in providing a caring teaching and learning environment, which addresses the learning and support needs of students, including those with additional learning and support needs or complex health conditions, foster students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.

Context

All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.

Section 24 of the Education Act requires principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister. Attendance registers must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board Inspector or by any authorised person.

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

The principal of a school must keep a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school.

The attendance registers must be in a form approved by the Minister for Education. The system may provide specific advice to its schools on the application of the common codes.

The Minister under Section 25 of the Education Act has delegated the power to the principal of a school to grant and cancel a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances. Schools are to maintain documentary evidence in regard to the exercising of this delegation.



Principal's responsibilities as outlined in the Department of Education Attendance Policy

Principals:

4.2.1

Must provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

4.2.2

Must ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences.

4.2.3

Or their delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an absence being unexplained, if contact has not already been made. An absence is unexplained if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days.

4.2.4

Are responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.

4.2.5

Must ensure that for students with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are addressed in consultation with parents.

4.2.6

Are responsible for ensuring that when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness that:

- consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of the student
- medical certificates are sought for the absences
- where there are ongoing concerns, approval is sought from parents to contact the student's doctor so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs
- Strategies are developed to ensure regular attendance at school.

4.2.7

Must ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.

4.2.8

Must ensure that any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student:

- consideration is given to the requirements of the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy



- All required reports are made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or contact made with the Child Wellbeing Unit (as required by the Mandatory Reporter Guide).

4.2.9

Have the authority to:

- grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- accept other explanations for absence and record the absence as "L"
- decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
- Grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (See the Exemption from School - Procedures).
- Grant part-day exemptions from school for periods totaling up to 100 days in a twelve month period (See the Exemption from School - Procedures).
- Grant exemption from enrolment for students who have completed year 9 and have the required approval to complete their education in special circumstances through an apprenticeship or traineeship (See the Exemption from School - Procedures).

At The Ponds School, Collegiate Support Team Leaders will ensure:

- All staff are trained in the correct method of marking a roll via the online attendance system through EBS4 and provided with the current Minister's Codes for marking attendance.
- That for any student with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are reviewed in consultation with parents/caregivers and the class teacher.
- That when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness or medical appointments that a medical certificate is sought and, where necessary, consultation occurs with parents/caregivers in regard to ongoing health care needs and approval is sought to contact the student's doctor to gain relevant information regarding the student's health care needs.
- That when an absence is escalated to them by the class teacher, they seek a suitable explanation from the parent/caregiver and if this is not forthcoming that they escalate the absence to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

At The Ponds School, Class Teachers will ensure:

- They mark the class roll each day via the online attendance system through EBS4.
- Students who arrive at school late or leave school early complete a late arrival/early departure slip at the front office. This will be marked as a partial absence in the online attendance system through EBS4 by a member of the office staff.
- They follow-up any absence of 3 or more days with a phone call to the parents/caregivers.
- They escalate any response regarding an absence they feel is not satisfactory or when no response is received regarding an absence to their collegiate support team leader.
- They submit their roll to the Deputy Principal or Principal at the end of each term to confirm the roll is being marked in accordance with the Minister's Code.



Where ongoing concerns regarding attendance are raised about a student, the Principal, Deputy Principal and on occasions the Learning Support Team Coordinator and School Counsellor will work with parents to put strategies in place to support the child and family and help restore regular attendance. Where satisfactory attendance is not restored, an application may be made to the Home School Liaison Officer for additional support and intervention.

What are the responsibilities of parents?

Parents must ensure:

- 2.1 their children of compulsory school are enrolled in a government or registered non-government school or, registered with the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) for Home Schooling.
- 2.2 their children who are enrolled at school attend every day the school is open for instruction.
- 2.3 they 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)*.
- 2.4 they 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 at school.

In addition, at The Ponds School parents are responsible for:

- Signing their child in through the main office if their child is late arriving at school
- Signing their child out through the main office if their child will be leaving early
- Informing the school as soon as possible if their child will be leaving the school and arrange a meeting to discuss future school options with the Principal or Deputy Principal and the class teacher.

Application for Extended Leave (travel or holiday)

From the beginning of 2015, family holidays and travel are no longer considered under the Exemption from School – Procedures. Travel outside of vacation period is now counted as an absence for statistical purposes. Travel under this application process is considered to be domestic or international travel for the purpose of a family holiday, family business, bereavement or other reasons, which should be specified on the application.

Parents wishing to make Application for Extended Leave (travel or holiday) should contact the school to request an application form. Applications should be submitted to the Principal and be accompanied by supporting documentation such as a travel itinerary or e-ticket. Applications will be assessed on an individual basis.

On acceptance of the Application for Extended Leave (travel or holiday), the Principal will issue a Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel.



The Ponds School

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Evidence of Compliance

Documentation or evidence to be maintained by The Ponds School includes:

- A register of enrolments that includes: name, age and address of the student, the name and contact telephone number of parents/caregivers, date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination.
- For students older than six (6) years, previous school or pre-enrolment situation.
- Where the destination of a student below seventeen (17) years of age is unknown, evidence that a DoE officer with home school liaison responsibilities has been notified.
- A register of daily attendance that uses the attendance codes approved by the Minister and includes: daily attendance and absences, reasons for absence, documentation to substantiate reason for absence.
- Policies and procedures for: monitoring the daily attendance/absence of students, following up unexplained absences, notifying parents/caregivers of attendance concerns, transferring unsatisfactory attendance information to student files.
- Policies and procedures for exercising the Minister's delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act for exemption from attending school.
- Records of exercising the Minister's delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act, including copies of certificates issued under this delegation.

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