



# JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

## GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Revised 23 October 2023

### Rationale

Regular attendance at school is believed to facilitate students' educational, social and psychological success and increase career and life options.

### Parents

- Students are required by law to attend school each day instruction is provided. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their children attend school.
- Absences due to sickness, infectious illness, participation in special religious ceremonies or a serious or urgent family situation, are justified.
- An explanation for absence must be provided to the school within **7 days** from the first day of any period of absence. An explanation in writing, is preferred, including a digital School Bytes response, email or handwritten note.
- Parents will be reminded of attendance requirements through the newsletter and parent meetings.

### Teachers

- Teachers must be aware of the school 'Attendance Guidelines' and its procedures.
- The attendance register is recorded electronically, by class teachers (or RFF teachers on class) at the commencement of the school day, using the School Bytes system. This process should be completed before 9:15am each day.
- When the electronic attendance register is not available (e.g. due to technical difficulties or at the commencement of the school year), teachers take the roll manually on a class list using the exemption method and ensure that this is dated and initialled. This information must be transferred onto the electronic register once this becomes available. Any paper rolls must be handed in to the office.
- Casual teachers who are new to the school, take the roll manually on a class list using the exemption method and ensure that this is dated and initialled. This is sent to the office so that office staff can transfer this to the electronic roll.
- Casual teachers, already registered on School Bytes at this school, are able to mark the electronic rolls to record student attendance.
- School attendance codes, as listed in **Appendix 1: Attendance Register Codes**, are used to indicate the various kinds of absences.
- Teachers are no longer required to update attendance details on Student Record Cards at the end of each term.

## Monitoring Attendance

- If absence notes are not provided on the day students return to school, the class teacher will send home a letter requesting a reason for the absence/s in writing (refer **Appendix 2: Regular School Attendance**).
  - Class teacher (principal's 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. This contact is noted in STARS – Parent Communication tab.
  - The DoE policy on School Attendance is observed:
  - <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0259>
- An 'absence' is considered to be unexplained, if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days. When received, the parent's written explanation is to be scanned and uploaded and stored on School Bytes.
- Assistant Principals will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents if there is nosatisfactory response to the teacher's initial phone call.
- Class teachers must refer student attendance patterns, which are causing concern, to theirAssistant Principal. A referral may occur at any time, or in a stage meeting.
- The attendance summary report will be downloaded by the SAM and provided to the APs and Principal for review each fortnight (or as required).
- Each Assistant Principal will monitor the stage groups' rolls each term to ensure that the rolls aremarked in accordance with policy and that any student's attendance patterns causing concern are identified and adequately monitored. Attendance patterns, which may cause concern include frequent lateness, unexplained absences, extended periods of absences or frequent absences. A record of any concern is noted in the stage meeting minutes, to be followed up.
- The Assistant Principal will send a letter home (**Appendix 3: Repeated Whole Day Absences - End Term**) expressing concern and requesting parents' support in reducing the number of avoidable absences. A copy of the letter is filed on School Bytes.
- If attendance patterns do not improve, The Deputy Principal is informed. The Deputy Principal may telephone the parents or caregiver to discuss the matter further or organise a meeting to discuss this. This may involve Learning Support Team intervention. A record of the conversation will be added to STARS.
- When frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the Assistant Principal notifies the Deputy Principal, who works with the Learning Support Team to:
  - consult with parents regarding the health care needs of the student;
  - seek medical certificates for the absences;
  - seek approval from parents to contact the student's doctor so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs; and
  - develop strategies to ensure regular attendance at school.
- If the student's attendance falls below 85%, the Deputy Principal is informed and **Appendix 5: Attendance Less Than 85%**, letter is sent home.
- If excessive absenteeism continues, prior to referral, the Principal Letter (**Appendix 6 – option 1 or option 2** according to Principal's discretion) will be sent to the parent. The matter will then be referred to the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO).
- The HSLO will monitor attendance remotely and visit the school periodically to support the school. This will involve checking rolls, monitoring attendance and investigating individual absenteeism concerns.

## Partial Absences (including late arrival to school)

- Students are required to visit the office if they arrive after 8:55am or need to leave prior to 2:50pm. This will be recorded electronically on School Bytes.
- When recording a partial absence, the precise time of arrival and/or departure is documented.
- When a child is late and presents to the office without a parent, a letter, notifying them of the child's late arrival, is emailed to the parent by the office staff. This note is **Appendix 4: Late Arrival to School.**
- When collecting their child before 2:55pm, parents are required to sign the electronic early note at the office. This should then be presented to the class teacher when collecting the child from the classroom.
- Students who are consistently late for school should be referred to the Assistant Principal.
- The Assistant Principal will consult with the parents or caregiver in an effort to reduce the frequency of late arrivals.
- **Appendix 4a: Repeated Late Arrival to School** will be sent home by the Assistant Principal.
- Ongoing lateness will be referred to the Deputy Principal.

## Exemptions

- Exemptions from attendance can be granted by the Principal for students engaged in approved elite arts, elite sporting events, exceptional circumstances and employment in the entertainment industry (up to 100 days), when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is in the student's best interests in the short and long term and that alternatives to exemption have been considered. Children who have reached 6 years of age on or after 1st October can be exempted when a confirmation of enrolment or participation in an accredited preschool program until the end of the year, is received.
- Applications for a Certificate of Exemption from School are managed consistent with the
  - DoE Exemption from School Procedures.
  - [https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/implementation-documents/exempt\\_gui.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/implementation-documents/exempt_gui.pdf)

## Travel During School Term

- Travel during school term will be recorded as an absence. Exemptions will no longer be provided for travel. This type of absence will be recorded as 'L' unless the Principal does not accept the reason for travel as valid. In this case, any absences would be recorded as 'A'.
- Parents complete an Application for Extended Leave – Travel and submit this to the principal. If the application is accepted, the parents will be provided with a Certificate of Extended Leave. If it is not accepted, the parents receive written confirmation that the absence is declined.
- SASS staff enter the extended leave on School Bytes.

## Student Safety and Wellbeing

- Any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns for the student arise, must be reported to the principal so that:
  - consideration is given to the requirements of the *Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy*  
[https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/NSW.2026.001\\_0292.pdf](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/NSW.2026.001_0292.pdf)
  - all required reports are made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit

- When students leave the school permanently, parents notify the school, in writing, of the student's destination school. If written advice is not provided, a member of the office staff will contact the parent to seek the name of the new school the student is to be enrolled. If parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contact for the student is contacted. Where the school is unable to determine the location of a student, the school should submit an Application for Home School Liaison Program support to the local Educational Services Teams for Education Destination Unknown (EDU).

## Special Circumstance Register

Special Circumstance Registers are used:

- when there is full or part day industrial action involving teachers;
- when there is an approved school development day;
- on days on which the school is inaccessible due to natural occurrences such as fire or flood. Principals should consult with the Director Public Schools NSW, prior to deciding that a school is inaccessible.
- when students with a shared enrolment are attending specialist education settings and that setting is not the home or census school;
- when students are attending another NSW government school for a short period of time, while enrolled in their local school. The Attendance Register Code 'H' should be used on the local school's Attendance Register (roll).
- for students who attend a Suspension Centre who are suspended from school in accordance with the Department's Suspension and Expulsion of School Students
  - Procedures. The Attendance Register Code 'E' should be used on the school's Attendance Register (roll) to denote the days the student was suspended from school.

Special Circumstance Registers: specify the dates and times of the variation, indicate the reason for the variation, list students attending on that day, are signed by the teacher maintaining the register and are permanently attached to the Attendance Registers (rolls). Absences on these days are **not** to be recorded on student records or counted as absences for statistical purposes.

## Attendance Records

- **JPPS will transition all extra curricular rolls to School Bytes including: SRE/SEE rolls, PSSA Teams (including before school training sessions), Dance Troupes (including before school sessions), Choir and excursion rolls.**
- When digital explanations of absences arrive from parents/carers in the School Bytes Parent Portal, these are uploaded automatically to School Bytes.
- When explanations are provided via the school email, office staff will upload the letter to School Bytes.
- When handwritten explanations of absences are received by the class teacher, the class teacher will scan the document and upload it to School Bytes. The original document is kept by the teacher until the end of the school year, at which time they will be sent to the office for archiving.
- Written notes, records of verbal explanations and records of electronic explanations for absences from parents will be retained for three years from the date of receipt.
- Attendance Registers (rolls) are maintained electronically in School Bytes. In a case where a student has an accident requiring an accident report, all attendance records should be retained until the year the student reaches the age of 25 years.
- Manual attendance lists (e.g. beginning of year, casual teacher roll, excursion roll) must be filed and returned at the end of the year along with absence notes.
- Information detailing a student's absences each year is kept on the student's file until seven years after the student has left. In the case of a student who has had an accident necessitating an accident report, the record should be retained until the student reaches the age of 25 years.

[Type here]

## List of Appendices:

**Appendix 1: Attendance Register Codes**

**Appendix 2: Class Teacher Letter - Regular School Attendance**

**Appendix 3: Assistant Principal Letter - Repeated Whole Day Absences - End Term**

**Appendix 4: Office Letter - Late Arrival to School**

**Appendix 4a: Assistant Principal Letter – Repeated Late Arrival to School**

**Appendix 5: Deputy Principal Letter - Attendance Less Than 85%**

**Appendix 6: Principal Letter (Option A) - HSLO Support**

**Appendix 6a: Principal Letter (Option B) - HSLO Support**

### **Appendix 1: Attendance Register Codes**

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/covid-19/roll-marking?deliveryName=DM25605#Guidance0>

[https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/related-documents/reg\\_codes.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/related-documents/reg_codes.pdf)

Only the following attendance register codes are used to record the explanation of student absence and/or variation in student attendance.

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>A</b>	<p>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</p> <p>It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.</p>
<b>S</b>	<p>The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- a medical certificate is provided or</li><li>- the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation.</li></ul> <p>Principal explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.</p>
<b>L</b>	<p>An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- misadventure or recognised event</li><li>- participation in special events not related to the school</li><li>- domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member</li><li>- attendance at funerals</li><li>- travel in Australia and overseas</li><li>- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.</li></ul>
<b>E</b>	<p>The student was suspended from school</p>

<b>M</b>	The student was exempted from attending school and a <i>Certificate of Exemption</i> has been issued by a delegated officer.
<b>F</b>	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- online learning at home during a pandemic</li> <li>- Best Start assessments</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- school sport (regional and state carnivals)</li> <li>- school excursions</li> <li>- student exchange</li> </ul>
<b>H</b>	The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full-time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education  Note: In most cases this code will only be used by Department of Education and Communities schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools.

## Appendix 2: Class Teacher Letter - Regular School Attendance



# JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW 2126

Telephone: 02 9875 3100

[www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au)

e: johnpurch-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

### IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Re: {student\_name}

Absence date(s): {absence\_dates\_list}

Dear {recipient\_name},

Regular attendance at school is important for students to reach their potential. The school is required to record the reason for any absences as a way of ensuring that students are absent from school only when they are sick or have another good reason for missing school.

Your child was absent from school on the date or dates shown above and no explanation has been received. Please assist us by indicating a **reason for your child's absence in the parent portal**, or alternatively you can email the school with the reason for the absence.

If you need an interpreter to assist you to contact the school, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. The interpreter will call the school and stay on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

Yours sincerely

**{Classroom Teacher}**

Classroom Teacher

{school\_name}

e: {school\_email}

[Type here]

## Appendix 3: Assistant Principal Letter - Repeated Whole Day Absences - End Term



# JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW 2126

Telephone: 02 9875 3100

[www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au)

e: johnpurch-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

{today\_date}

Dear {recipient\_name}

A recent check of the class attendance register has indicated that {student\_name} has been absent from school for ??? days during Term ???. Whilst explanations have been received, the school is concerned with periods of non-attendance because they can adversely affect a child's progress.

Sickness, of course, cannot be avoided but I seek your assistance in minimising all other absences.

Yours sincerely

**Insert name of AP**

Assistant Principal

{school\_name}

e: {school\_email}

[Type here]



## Appendix 4: Office Letter - Late Arrival to School



# JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW 2126

Telephone: 02 9875 3100

[www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au)

e: [johnpurch-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:johnpurch-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

Dear {recipient\_name}

Your child, {student\_name} was marked partially absent on:

{absence\_dates\_formatted}

Please indicate a **reason for your child's absence in the School Bytes parent portal.**

Note: If you prefer, you may email the school to explain your child's absence.

{school\_name}

e: {school\_email}

[Type here]

## Appendix 4a: Assistant Principal Letter – Repeated Late Arrival to School



# JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW 2126

Telephone: 02 9875 3100

[www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au)

e: johnpurch-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

{today\_date}

Dear {recipient\_name}

A recent check of the class attendance register has indicated that {student\_name} has been late to school for ??? days during Term ???. Whilst explanations have been received, the school is concerned with repeated lateness because this can adversely affect a child's progress. Sickness, of course, cannot be avoided but I seek your assistance in minimising all other late arrivals.

Yours sincerely

**Insert AP name**

Assistant Principal

{school\_name}

e: {school\_email}

[Type here]

**Appendix 5: Deputy Principal Letter Attendance Below 85%**



# JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW  
2126 Telephone: 02 9875 3100

[www.johnpurchase-  
p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.johnpurchase.schools.nsw.gov.au)

e: johnpurchase.p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

## ABSENTEE NOTICE

### COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

#### ATTENDANCE BELOW 85%

Dear {recipient\_name}

Regular attendance at school is important for students to reach their potential. The school is required to record explanations for any absences as a way of ensuring that students are absent from school only when they are sick or have another acceptable reason for missing school.

If a student attends school at a rate of 85% or less, they will have missed a whole year or more of school by the time they leave Year 6.

{student\_name}'s attendance is currently at {attendance\_percentage}.

{student\_fname} has had the following days absent to date this year:

{absence\_dates\_formatted}

Please ensure {student\_fname} is only absent from school where there is an acceptable reason so that they have the best possible chance of success at school. Please also ensure that the school is notified about each occasion of absence from school. This could be via the parent portal, email or written notes.

If you wish, you may like to contact the school to discuss {student\_fname}'s attendance with us.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Adela King  
Deputy Principal  
{school\_name}  
e: {school\_email}

[Type here]

## Appendix 6: Principal Letter (Option A) HSLO Support



# JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW

2126 Telephone: 02 9875 3100

[www.johnpurchase.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.johnpurchase.schools.nsw.gov.au)

e: johnpurchase.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Dear {recipient\_name}

Student SRN: {student\_srn}

I refer to the attendance of {student\_fname} {student\_lname} at school.

At a recent school Learning and Support Team meeting your child's pattern of attendance was reviewed and despite the school implementing a number of strategies your child's lack of attendance remains a concern.

Regular attendance at school is essential for your child's educational achievement and to increase career and life options. School staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child from fully participating at school.

As a result of child's unsatisfactory attendance, I am required to make an Application for Home School Liaison Support to the local Educational Services Team for their consideration of further action. The Home School Liaison Program manager may allocate an attendance officer to work with you and the school to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

I would like to remind you that the Education Act (1990) requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school each day it is open for instruction. If you do not meaningfully engage in the Attendance Improvement Plan or there is no improvement in your child's attendance during this time, the Department of Education may consider further action such as an application to the Children's Court for Compulsory Schooling Orders.

It is important that we work together to improve your child's attendance at school.

If you have difficulty understanding this letter or would like further information please call me. If you need assistance with English please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on telephone 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. The operator will get an interpreter on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Leonie Black  
Principal  
{school\_name}  
e: {school\_email}

**Appendix 6a: Principal Letter (Option B HSLO Support)**



## JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW

2126 Telephone: 02 9875 3100

[www.johnpurchase-](http://www.johnpurchase.schools.nsw.gov.au)

[p.schools.nsw.gov.au](http://www.johnpurchase.schools.nsw.gov.au)

e: johnpurchase.p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Dear {recipient\_name}

Student SRN: {student\_srn}

I refer to the attendance of {student\_fname} {student\_lname} at school.

At a recent school Learning and Support Team meeting {student\_fname}'s pattern of attendance was reviewed and despite the school implementing a number of strategies {student\_fname}'s lack of attendance remains a concern.

Regular attendance at school is essential if {student\_fname} is to achieve his/her educational best, and increase his/her career and life options. School staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing {student\_fname}'s from full participation at school.

As a result of {student\_fname}'s unsatisfactory attendance I am required to make an Application for Home School Liaison Support to the local Educational Services Team for their consideration of further action. The Home School Liaison Program manager may allocate an attendance officer to work with you and the school to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

I would like to remind you that the Education Act (1990) requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school each day it is open for instruction.

It is important that we work together to improve {student\_fname}'s attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Leonie Black  
Principal  
{school\_name}  
e: {school\_email}