



JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Revised April 2020

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.
- Parents will be reminded of attendance requirements through the newsletter.

Teachers

- Teachers must be aware of the school 'Attendance Policy' and its procedures.
- The attendance register is recorded electronically, by class teachers at the commencement of the school day, using the EBS4 system.
- 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. Teachers must transfer this information onto the electronic register once this becomes available and keep dated and initialled manual rolls that have been taken, using the exemption method, with absence notes.
- Casual teachers 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. The class list taken by the casual teacher is placed in the designated box in the office and then archived.
- School attendance codes, as listed in **Appendix 1**, are used to indicate the various kinds of absences.
- Teachers record 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**). If a student does not return to school after 3 days, the class teacher telephones the parent to ask after the student and to ask them to send an absence letter to the school. This conversation is recorded using **Appendix 6**. A note is also entered onto STARS (parent correspondence). A copy of this written correspondence (**Appendix 6**) and the student's written explanation is to be kept with student attendance records and sent to the office at the end of the year.
- Assistant Principals will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an absence being unexplained (after 9 days of the first day of

absence).

- Class teachers refer attendance patterns causing concern to the Assistant Principal.
- Each Assistant Principal will monitor the stage groups' rolls each term to ensure that the rolls are marked 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.
- The Assistant Principal will send a letter home (as sighted in **Appendix 3**) expressing concern and requesting parents' support in reducing the number of avoidable absences. A copy of the letter is filed with the student's records.
- If attendance patterns do not improve, the Deputy Principal will telephone the parents or caregiver to discuss the matter further or to organise a meeting to discuss this. This may involve learning support 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 a learning support team to:
 - 1) consult with parents regarding the health care needs of the student;
 - 2) seek medical certificates for the absences;
 - 3) 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
 - 4) develop strategies to ensure regular attendance at school.
- If excessive absenteeism continues, prior to referral, the principal letter (Appendix 5) 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

- 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 on an electronic late slip, which is signed by a parent and taken to the class teacher.
- 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, who advises the Deputy Principal. This note can be found in **Appendix 4**.
- Parents are required to sign the electronic early note at the office when collecting their child before 2:55pm. 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.
- 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 [*Exemption from School – Procedures*](#).

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.

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*
- 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. 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

- 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

- The Admission Register is retained permanently.
- Teachers file attendance records until the end of the school year, at which time they should 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 two years from the date of receipt.
- Attendance Registers (roll) will be retained for three years. 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 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.

Appendix 1: Attendance Register Codes

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

Symbol	Meaning
A	<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>
S	<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"> - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. <p>Principal explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.</p>
L	<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"> - misadventure or recognised 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
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a <i>Certificate of Exemption</i> has been issued by a delegated officer.
F	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - online learning at home during a pandemic - Best Start assessments
B	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange

Appendix 2: Class Teacher letter to parent



JOHN PURCHASE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Purchase Road, Cherrybrook NSW 2126

Telephone: 02 9875 3100

www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au

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

Dear _____

Regular attendance at school fosters students' ability to fulfill their educational, social and psychological potential, and increases career and life options.

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 you are able to explain any absences within seven days of their occurrence we will adjust our records.

_____ was absent from school on dates and no explanation has been received. If you have concerns that our records are incorrect please contact the school immediately.

Please assist us by completing the details below and return it to school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Leonie Black
Principal

Class Teacher

Date:

Please provide an explanation for the absence/s by returning this section.

Name of Student _____ Year/Class _____

Date/s of absence _____

Reason for absence

Parent name: _____ Signed _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Assistant Principal Letter to Parents



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Date

Dear

A recent check of the class attendance register has indicated that _____ 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

Mrs Leonie Black

Principal

Assistant Principal

REASON FOR ABSENCES

Student Name _____ Class _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 4: Arrival late to school without parent sent home by SAO.



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Date

Dear

Today our office staff have noted that your child arrived to school late. When children arrive late, we ask that a parent/carer accompanies them to the office to complete a late slip, or alternatively that the parent/carer writes a note outlining the date, the reason for lateness and the time of arrival.

We therefore ask that you complete the slip below and return it to the office at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Adela King
Deputy Principal

Mrs Leonie Black
Principal

LATE ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

Child's name: _____

Class: _____

Date of late arrival: _____

Time of Arrival: _____

Reason for lateness:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Principal letter to parent - Application for Home School Liaison Support



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Telephone: 02 9875 3100

www.johnpurch-p.schools.nsw.gov.au

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

Date

Correspondence Name

Correspondence Address

Student SRN:

Dear Correspondence Name

I refer to the attendance of Student Name at school.

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

Regular attendance at school is essential if Student First Name 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 First Name's from full participation at school.

As a result of Student First Name'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 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 Student First Name'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 Student First Name's attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Leonie Black
Principal

