

# Kempsey West Public School

## Attendance - Procedural Document

### 1. Rationale

At Kempsey West Public School, regular attendance is regarded as an integral component in the achievement of student learning outcomes. All School procedures are aligned with the School Attendance Policy and Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures - 2015.

Measures to establish acceptable attendance patterns include:

- Acknowledging and encouraging good attendance.
- Early detection of poor attendance.
- Prompt, positive intervention measures.

Students who have frequent or long periods of absences are likely to fall behind in their work. This may lead to, or increase, difficulties with learning.

Kempsey West Public School recognises and values the benefits of positive home/school relationships and seeks to involve parents in developing and maintaining the strategies that support the development of positive patterns of attendance for all students. Parent and care giver support will be sought in developing and maintaining the Attendance Policy.

Students are required to be present at lessons or activities organised by the school, unless, through sickness or other acceptable reasons, they are unable to attend. If a student is absent for a whole day or part thereof, the parents /carers are required to provide an explanation for non-attendance when the student returns to school. Where parents/carers are aware that a student is likely to be absent for 3 days or more, they should advise the school prior to the student's return. If no explanation is forthcoming, the school will contact the parent/carer and seek an explanation after the second day of absence.

The direct responsibility for the efficient monitoring of daily attendance is placed on the classroom teacher, who is required to mark class rolls daily, by 9:30am. It should be noted that a positive, caring approach to the student by the class teacher is vital to developing and maintaining good attendance. Support will be sought from the District Home School Liaison Officer where school strategies are not successful.

Notes regarding attendance should be retained by the school for seven years. The school will inform parents of attendance policies and procedures at the beginning of each new school year and include periodic reminders in the newsletter.

## 2. Whole school responsibilities

### Principal:

- Identify changing patterns of student attendance and absence.
- Initiate early intervention or more targeted support, informed by data.
- Track and measure the impact of attendance strategies.

### Parents:

- Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school.

### Students:

- Know what class activities are on which school day (for example, which day is sport or library).
- Make sure they are ready for each school day: uniform, books, bag, lunch.
- Chat with family, a friend or teacher if you 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.

## School staff (who, what and when):

### School Executive

- Ensure staff are knowledgeable of policy and practice regarding monitoring of student attendance.
- Be notified by the classroom teacher and contact parents on second day of absence.
- Inform the principal of all issues relating to student attendance.
- Executive, with support from attendance officers (home school liaison officers and Aboriginal student liaison officers), monitor the regular attendance of students and develop and follow-up to support students with identified attendance issues.
- Roll check Week 4 each term. Week 5 – Non-attendance Interview Program (NIPS) letters and Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) referrals.

### Wellbeing Team Responsibilities Each Term:

- Week 4 Roll check- Follow-up. (Week 3 term 4)
- Week 5 NIPs letters/ HSLO Referrals. (Week 4 term 4)
- Week 8 Roll check- Follow-up.

- Week 9 NIPs Letters/ HSLO Referrals.
- Fortnightly attendance focus in wellbeing meeting. Supervisors update Wellbeing Meeting minutes with what has been done as follow-up by CRT and Supervisor for non-attendance.

### **Classroom Teacher**

- Ensure that the roll is marked in accordance with policy and recorded on Sentral attendance by 9.30am each day.
- Let executive know on second day of unexplained absence and record in Sentral as an attendance concern.
- Advise stage supervisors/ deputy principal of students with regular attendance issues.
- Inform executive of outcome of unexplained absence phone calls or letters.
- Keep late notes in a file and hand in to administration at the end of the year.
- Reinforce importance of regular attendance.
- Actively encourage parents to provide explanations of absences.
- Welcome students with a 'late arrival note' and send late students to the office if they do not have a late arrival note.

### **Office staff:**

- Send text message to parents when student is marked absent on class roll.
- Verify, sign and date all absent notes and record reasons for absences on Sentral.
- Verbal reasons need a written notation (signed and dated).
- Securely store absentee notes for required period of seven years.

### **Attendance Support Officer (ASO):**

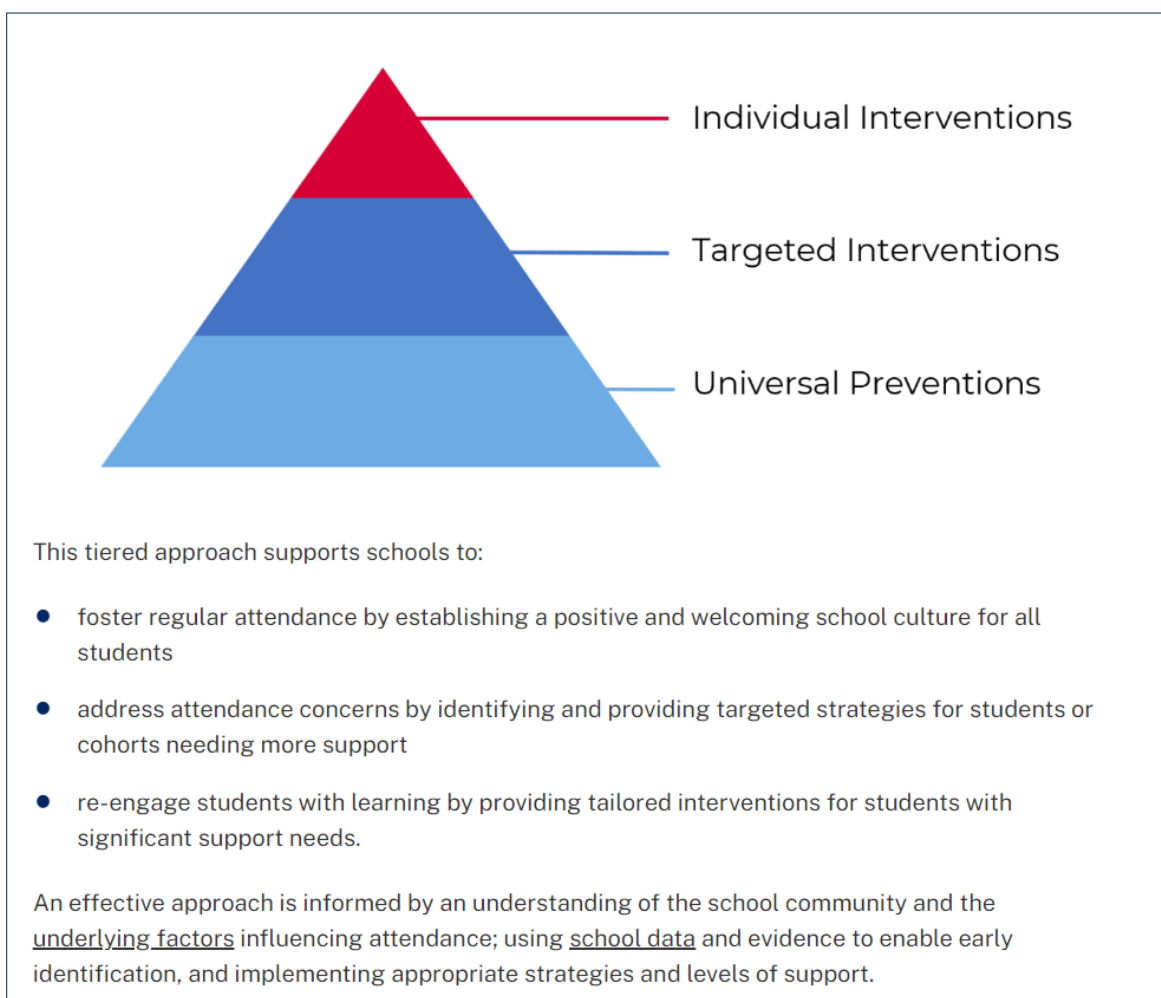
- Support attendance of compulsory school age students, between six and seventeen years.
- Monitor attendance registers, suggesting areas for development with school-based procedures and identifying emerging issues or concerns.
- Support schools with the development and implementation of school-based strategies and school plans to improve attendance.
- Collaborate with School Service staff in the resolution of attendance issues.
- Provide advice to School Services and school staff on matters related to attendance; this may include information about attendance professional learning available to department staff.
- Liaise with community, government and non-government agencies.

### 3. Whole School Approach - Attendance support strategies and programs

#### Department of Education information and resources

Your role in supporting attendance: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters-resources-for-schools/your-role-in-supporting-attendance#Individual1>

Attendance strategies: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters-resources-for-schools/attendance-strategies>



#### Universal preventions

Wellbeing Team to implement the following strategies:

- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

- Ensuring the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences.
- Ensuring school staff, including new staff and casual teachers, are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.
- Schools monitor and promote regular student attendance.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with and implement the attendance policy and procedures.
- Class teachers maintain accurate attendance rolls and follow up absences.
- Early identification and early intervention.
- Child Protection requirements are adhered to by all, for any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student.
- Developing positive teacher-student relationships: know students at a personal level to better understand their cultures and interests, as well as any challenges they may be facing.
- Promoting the importance and benefits of regular attendance in school communications, such as the school website, social media and newsletters.
- Encouraging students to have high expectations by promoting personal goal setting, providing clear instruction, and giving explicit feedback.
- Implementing whole school approaches for inclusion and positive behaviour such as breakfast club.
- Applying behavioural insights to encourage the desired attendance behaviour.
- Engaging the school community through a welcoming culture and involvement with school activities and planning.
- Providing inclusive education for students with disability.
- Explore the attendance resources for more examples of strategies.

### **Targeted interventions:**

- Student pickup and drop offs, check-in and check-outs, and reward assemblies.
- Addressing the learning needs for students with attendance concerns.
- Ensuring Child Protection requirements are adhered to for any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student.
- Schools contact parents promptly to follow up unexplained absences.
- Staff work with the student and parent/carer to understand the underlying factors contributing to non-attendance and plan supportive strategies.
- Executive and Wellbeing Team regularly review and monitor attendance reports for patterns or students at risk of chronic absence.
- Acknowledge improvements in attendance.
- Develop an attendance plan with the student and parent/family.

- Provide parents/families with information about relevant assistance: for example, school initiatives to assist with uniform, literacy, school counselling; or local community support services.
- Explore the attendance resources for more examples of strategies.
- Support from school counsellor/psychologist.

### **Individual interventions:**

- Staff work with the student and parent/carer to understand the underlying factors contributing to non-attendance and plan supportive strategies.
- School and support agencies work collaboratively with the student and parent/family to assist re-engagement and access support services.
- Provide an open invitation for the families of the students to participate and be included in decision-making.
- Assist the student to develop explicit learning goals, with clear and consistent expectations about what the student is to do and how they are to do it
- Engage student-centred inquiry based pedagogies or opportunities for students to collaborate with peers.
- One to one teacher to student support, including mentoring.
- Design learning spaces to promote 'place attachment' and the social interactions critical to student engagement and learning.
- Explore the attendance resources for more examples of strategies.  
Implement individual school support plan.

## **4. Communication strategy**

### **Staff**

- All existing staff undergo targeted training in the KWPS Attendance Policy annually at the first Staff Development Day.
- All new employees are familiarised with this document when completing their site induction.

### **Parents**

- KWPS Attendance Policy and Procedures digitally available on the school website.
- Contacted daily via text message when an absence is recorded on the class roll.
- Executive/ classroom teacher to contact parents after two consecutive absences and record as an attendance concern.

### **Students**

- Students complete in class learning on Why Attendance Matters.
- Actively promote student voice by: surveying students or running focus groups to hear their opinion about why attendance matters; engage student groups to help analyse attendance data for other insights; plan a creative writing or poster task, sculpt an installation using craft or recycled materials; engage students with individual attendance or re-engagement plans, and develop agreed goals and actions; work with student groups to create a welcoming school environment.

## **5. Illness**

- Students who are ill and need to be sent home (with the permission of the principal) will have the early release recorded on Sentral at the time of departure.
- Parent/carer consultation regarding the health care needs of the student to support the family and student in returning to school.
- Medical certificates need to be provided when illness/injury exceeds 5 consecutive absences.
- Where there are ongoing concerns, approval is sought from parents for the SLCE or school executive to contact the student's doctor, so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs.

## **6. Learning and support needs**

- Executive will arrange a case conference through the Wellbeing Team, including the HSLO where available, to discuss gradual/ part-time/ fulltime return to school and level of assistance required. It is expected that the Wellbeing Team will develop and monitor a program to support individual students in returning to school.
- Executive and the Wellbeing Team review attendance data and learning adjustments to ensure students with attendance concerns are actively being encouraged and supported to re-engage with learning.

## **7. Unsatisfactory pattern of attendance**

- Executive team defines an unsatisfactory pattern of attendance as below 80%, habitual early leavers and late arrivals.
- School attendance data reviewed regularly by Wellbeing Team and executive team to identify at risk students - <80%, habitual early leavers and late arrivals.
- Parent/carer face to face conferencing to unpack the concerns prohibiting regular attendance.
- Tailored individual attendance interventions to improve attendance.

## 8. Record Keeping

- Ensure that the roll is marked by classroom teacher in accordance with policy and recorded on Sentral roll by 9.30am.
- Verify, sign and date all absent notes and record reasons for absences on Sentral.
- Verbal reasons need a written notation (signed and dated).
- Securely store absentee notes for required period of seven years.
- Office staff check to see that rolls have been submitted.
- Text messages sent to parents to inform them of student absence.
- Attendance data on Sentral collected twice annually and compared with the enrolment records on ERN.
- Annual review of rolls staff training at the first Staff Development Day or at new teacher induction.

## 9. Roll call marking

- Class rolls will be maintained by the classroom teacher and are recorded on Sentral by 9:30am.
- Rolls will be kept from the first day of term. A temporary roll will be kept for one week until numbers stabilise, and official rolls are distributed.
- Rolls will be kept within school records for 7 years.
- Rolls will be available for inspection and use by Departmental officers in accordance with regulations.
- Reasons for absences offered by parents or guardians should be provided in writing. Teachers may accept a verbal reason from parents provided they make a written notation (signed and dated) to add to their note file. Make sure that Verbal Messages are recorded on Sentral.
- At the end of the school year all absence notes are to be sent to the administrative staff for secure storage.
- All absence notes must be verified, signed and dated.

## 10. Monitoring processes

- Executive and Wellbeing Team monitor attendance on a weekly basis.
- Attendance concerns recorded by classroom teacher after two consecutive absences.
- Executive team and Wellbeing Team meetings review school and individual attendance trends.
- Regular monitoring meetings with the HSLO and deputy principal wellbeing to discuss individual student cases.

## 11. Reporting child protection concerns



Individual Child Protection concerns are raised with the executive and reported to the Principal. These students are monitored and supported daily at check-ins and check-outs.

- Staff member identifies child protection concern and raises with their supervisor.
- Executive access the Mandatory Reporting Guide and the implement the decision/actions from the decision tree.
- Principal notified.

## **12. Exemptions**

- Applications for exemptions are managed by the principal according to the Exemption from Attendance Policy (2015).

## **13. Acknowledging improved or sustained attendance**

- Weekly individual and class rewards.
- End of term reward activities for students with attendance above 90%.
- End of year assembly with individualised student rewards for above 90% attendance.

## **14. Change of Attendance Records**

- Removals/ additions/ corrections will be carried out by a school administration officer. Names of students who leave the school to attend another school will be removed from the roll only when confirmation of enrolment at the new school has been received. This confirmation would be in the form of a transfer request from a government school or confirmation from an Executive member of a non-government school.
- The HSLO is to be contacted if a student has received a transfer certificate and no request for Personal Record Card has been received after 5 days.

## **15. Excursions/Sporting and Other Visits**

- Students attending off site Departmental activities/ programs are to be marked as present, school business.
- At School Carnivals, rolls are marked in the usual way. Similarly, all Stewart House visits to be recorded on the Student's Record Card with dates.

## **16. Partial Absence**

- Class rolls will be marked immediately after the morning bell at 9.20am. Students arriving after that must report to the office and follow the procedures set out below:
- Complete a late arrival note from Sentral by the SAM.

- Promptly proceed to class and present the late arrival note to the class teacher.
- Details of all late arrival should be noted.
- Parent/caregivers of persistent latecomers will be contacted, by letter, by the class teacher and/or Executive.
- Notes of explanation for lateness are filed with absence notes.
- Verbal reports of student absence from the parent will be recorded on Sentral.
- Class teacher must verify, sign and date late arrival note.
- Students will not leave school grounds without prior permission of the principal or executive.
- Students who leave before normal completion time must:
  - Be collected from the school by a parent/caregiver or by a responsible adult who has written permission from the parent/caregiver to collect the child.
  - -The person responsible for collecting the student must call at the front office and receive an early release recorded on Sentral.

## 17. Returning to School from Lengthy Absence

- School refusers and students returning to school from extended absences need support.
- Executive will arrange a case conference through the Wellbeing Team including the HSLO, to discuss gradual/part-time/fulltime return to school and level of assistance required. It is expected that the Wellbeing Team will develop and monitor a program to support individual students in returning to school.

## 18. Strike Days/Industrial Disputes

- If the rolls are marked on a strike day and a student is absent, “F” is to be recorded. Such an absence will not affect the student’s attendance record, i.e. the absence is not recorded as part of the student’s absence total.
- If industrial action prevents the school being open for a half day, Attendance Registers are to be marked for the half day the school is open. Students who are absent for the half day the school is open should be recorded as **“A PA” unless** parents or caregivers have notified the school of the student’s absence. A half day strike should be noted in the class roll.

## 19. Variations in Routine

- Variations to school routines are to be recorded on Sentral.