

PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

2.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Associated policies:	1.1 PMQSS Student Enrolment Policy 9.7 PMQSS Privacy Policy	
Associated Laws:	<i>Education Act 1990</i> <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act 1998)</i> <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i>	

INTENTION

To provide clear direction to staff, students and parents of the expectations of the School with regards to student attendance.

INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to ensure that the *Education Act 1990* and the NESA requirements in relation to student attendance at primary schools are followed.

The School endeavours to instil in each student family the value of participation and to promote optimal attendance as routine and rhythm are an integral part of the School day. Expectations of attendance and punctuality encourage a healthy respect for work, study and their learning and teaching community.

It is expected that students will participate in all aspects of the School curriculum. Seasonal Festivals and School excursions are an important part of the Schools educational program, and in accordance with the values of the School, students are required to attend. The curriculum includes a variety of age appropriate local excursions. All children, including those who find excursions challenging are supported to be able to participate. Appropriate modifications will be made for any person with a disability.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- Government legislation requires students between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) to be enrolled at a school (unless registered in a home Schooling program) and to attend school on each day that instruction is given.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child/ren comply with these legal requirements. It is the responsibility of the School to support parents by monitoring student attendance and helping to address attendance issues when they arise.

POLICY

1. Register of Enrolments

The Teaching Principal is responsible for maintaining a Register of Enrolments on paper or in the School database in collaboration with the Administration Officer.

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The following information is collected through the Enrolment Application Form and entered into the School database:

- Student's name, age and address
- Name and contact telephone of parents/guardians
- 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 the Department of Education officer with home school liaison responsibilities has been notified of the following details:
 - Student's full name
 - Date of birth
 - Last known address
 - Last date of attendance
 - Parents' or guardians' names and contact details
 - An indication of possible destination
 - Other information that may assist officers to locate the student
 - Any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the Parents, Guardians or student

It is the responsibility of the Teaching Principal with the assistance of the Administration Officer to maintain the Register of Enrolments for a minimum of 5 years before archiving.

2. The Class Roll

The Register of Enrolments is used to create the Class Roll for each class in the School. The Administration Officer is responsible for creating the Class Rolls and providing these to the Class Teachers each term along with a copy of the Minister's Codes.

The Minister's codes referred to in this Policy are in the Resources section of the PMQSS Policy Folder on Dropbox and in the School Administration Office.

Each Class Teacher is responsible for monitoring the daily attendance of each student in their class by marking the Class Roll. Student absences are to be identified and recorded in line with the Minister's Codes by the Class Teacher. Any signed notes, emails or SMS messages explaining absences should be recorded at this time.

The Administration Officer is responsible for collecting the Class Rolls from each classroom, following up on any unexplained absences and entering the information into the School database. On days where the Administration Officer is away, this is the responsibility of each Class Teacher.

It is the responsibility of the Teaching Principal with the assistance of the Administration Officer to maintain the Class Rolls for a minimum of 7 years after the last entry was made.

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3. Student Sign in Sign Out Sheet

When a student is late to school or released early from school, Parents and Guardians are to complete the Student Sign in Sign Out Sheet accordingly and receive the appropriate slip and Student Absent Note from the Administration Office.

It is the responsibility of the Administration Officer to cross check the Student Sign in Sign Out Sheet each morning and afternoon against the Class Rolls and adjust this for any late arrivals or early releases. This is to ensure that attendance for students who are late to class or released early from class is recorded accurately.

The Student Sign In Sign Out Sheet is to be filed each Term with the Class Rolls.

4. Unexplained Absences

If a student has been marked absent on the Class Roll and the Student Sign In Sign Out Register has not been completed for this student, the Administration Officer is to follow up with the student's Parents or Guardians by a phone call or SMS message within 25 minutes after class commences.

The Administration Officer will record this phone call or SMS in the phone log.

If there is no response to the phone call or SMS message, the Administration Officer is to inform the student's Class Teacher and continue to follow up throughout the day.

If there is no response to the phone call or SMS message by the end of the day and there is particular concern for the child, the student's teacher may request that the child's emergency contacts be contacted regarding the absence. The Administration Officer is to inform the Teaching Principal who will refer to the School's Child Protection Policy and Mandatory Reporter Guide to assess if a report is to be made to the relevant Government Authorities.

If there is no response after seven days, the absence is to be recorded as unexplained.

5. Unsatisfactory Attendance

The Class Teachers are responsible for identifying students with unsatisfactory attendance in their class. These students can be vulnerable and at risk of disengagement from the School.

Class Teachers are to raise concerns regarding unsatisfactory attendance with the Teaching Principal. Early intervention is focused on those who are at higher risk of harm or disengagement from education, and aims to improve their resilience through effective and appropriate support.

Where a student has an unsatisfactory record of attendance, the student's Class Teacher will notify Parents or Guardians in writing, and request a meeting with them. As part of this meeting, an Attendance Improvement Plan will be drafted by the Class Teacher which is to

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be implemented under the direction of the Class Teacher or Teaching Principal and the Parents or Guardians of the student. A Teacher and Parent Meeting Record will be kept in the student file along with the Attendance Improvement Plan and any actions taken.

Where a student is absent for a significant amount of time without appropriate explanation, or has had repeated unexplained absences, the Teaching Principal will refer to the School's Child Protection Policy and Mandatory Reporter Guide to assess if a report is to be made to the relevant Government

6. Exemption From Attendance

Where the Parents or Guardians of a student of compulsory school age seeks an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, they are to complete the Application for Exemption from Attendance at School Form.

This form can be found in the PMQSS Forms folder in Dropbox or in the Master Forms folder in the School Administration Office.

The Teaching Principal will process the application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education and Communities.

The Teaching Principal may exercise the Minister's delegation under section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances. These being:

- exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate);
- the child being prevented from attending School because of a direction under the [Public Health Act 2010](#). (Note that in the case of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School is required to advise an unvaccinated student not to attend until advised to do so. The parent is not required to complete an application for exemption);
- employment in the entertainment industry; or
- participation in elite arts or elite sporting events.

The Teaching Principal may grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student.

7. Extended Leave – Travel

Families planning to travel during school terms are required to complete an Application for Extended Leave – Travel Form.

This form can be found in the PMQSS Forms folder in Dropbox or in the Master Forms folder in the School Administration Office.

Requests for extended leave must be made to the Teaching Principal not less than four (4) weeks before the anticipated date of departure in writing giving reasons for why such leave is requested and the benefits to the student of the proposed travel.

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When considering an application for Extended Leave – Travel, the Teaching Principal will consider the impact on the student over the duration of the extended leave.

If the Teaching Principal decides that a place is unable to be reserved for the student and the Parents or Guardians wish to remove their child from the School, the re-entry of their child into the School will be subject to the School Enrolment Policy.

Students travelling during school terms are not to be exempt as in point six (6) of this policy. If the Teaching Principal accepts the reasons and leave is granted, the 'L' code should be used on the Class Roll.

8. Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

Parents and Guardians are responsible for the following in terms of attendance of their child/ren, to:

- recognise the importance of attendance at school as an integral part of their child's education;
- complete the Student Sign In Sign Out Register at the Administration Office if their child is arriving late or leaving early;
- complete a Student Absent Note explaining their child's absences. SMS messages and emails to the School Administration phone and email address explaining absences are acceptable and should be followed up by a signed Student Absent Note the next day their child is present;
- adhere to any recommendations made by their child's Class Teacher or the Teaching Principal in terms of an Attendance Improvement Plan.

PROCEDURE(S)

1. Register of Enrolments

The Teaching Principal is responsible for maintaining the Register of Enrolments and collecting relevant information pertaining to each student. The ACARA Data Standards Manual is used to guide the collection of relevant information about each student.

Once a student enrolment is complete, their details are added to the Register of Enrolments by the Administration Officer.

The Register of Enrolments is to be maintained for a minimum of 5 years before archiving. These records may be moved off site within this time for storage, prior to archiving.

2. The Class Roll

The Class Roll will be taken daily by each Class Teacher and entered into the School database by the Administration Officer using the Attendance Register Codes which include:

- Daily attendance, that may be recorded by noting daily absences
- Absences
- Reason for absence

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- Documentation to substantiate reason for absence

The Class Rolls are to be collected from the Class Teachers by the Administration Officer at an appropriate time each day.

The Administration Officer is responsible for following up on any unexplained absences and entering the attendance information into the School database.

Student Absent Notes can be completed by the Parents or Guardians and submitted to the Administration Officer or Class Teacher.

This information is to be retained for each student for a minimum of 7 years after the last entry was made in respect to the student. These records may be moved off site within this time for storage purposes.

3. Student Sign In Sign Out Register

When a student is late to school or released early from school, Parents and Guardians are to complete the Student Sign in Sign Out Sheet accordingly.

Once the Register has been completed, the Administration Officer will issue a slip for the Parent or Guardian to give to their child's Teacher. This will allow the Teacher to accept their child late into the class or release their child early from the class.

The Administration Officer will also give the Parents or Guardians a Student Absent Note to complete and return with details of the absence.

Parents or Guardians who present to the classroom without the appropriate slip are to be referred to Administration to complete the Student Sign In Sign Out Register and obtain the appropriate slip to give to their child's Teacher.

The Administration Officer cross checks the Student Sign In Sign Out Register with the Class Rolls each morning and afternoon and adjusts the attendance information with the code 'Pa' for those students who have arrived to class late or left class early to reflect the partial absence.

Where a student has been marked absent and the Student Sign In Sign Out Register has not been completed for this student, the Administration Officer is to follow up with the student's Parents or Guardians by a phone call or SMS message within 25 minutes after class commences.

The Administration Officer will record this phone call or SMS in the phone log.

If there is no response to the phone call or SMS message, the Administration Officer is to inform the student's Class Teacher and continue to follow up throughout the day.

If there is no response to the phone call or SMS message by the end of the day and there is particular concern for the child, the student's teacher may request that the child's

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emergency contacts be contacted regarding the absence. The Administration Officer is to inform the Teaching Principal who will refer to the School's Child Protection Policy and Mandatory Reporter Guide to assess if a report is to be made to the relevant Government Authorities.

If there is no response after seven days, the absence is to be recorded as unexplained.

4. Request for an Exemption from Attendance

An Application for Exemption from Attendance at School Form is available from the Administration Office and can be completed and returned to the Teaching Principal.

The Teaching Principal may exercise the Minister's delegation under section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in these prescribed circumstances.

All applications will be considered with procedural fairness. If the Teaching Principal is considering refusing granting an exemption, the Parents or Guardians will be given an opportunity to respond in writing to the concerns before a final decision is made.

Parents and Guardians are required to clearly demonstrate that an exemption is in their child's best interests in the short and long term.

The Class Roll must indicate full day exemptions with the code 'M'.

The School will send applications for over 100 days in a year, to AISNSW for their consideration.

- Where this application is supported, the Teaching Principal will provide the original exemption certificate to the Parents or Guardians;
- Where this application is not supported, the Teaching Principal will notify the Parents or Guardians in writing of the unsuccessful outcome in accordance with the format from the guidelines;
- Copies of the application and exemption certificate or notification are kept on the student file;
- The Minister's delegation and copies of exemption certificates should be filed with the School's attendance records.

4. Extended Leave – Travel

Families planning to travel during school terms are required to complete an Application for Extended Leave – Travel Form.

Requests for extended leave must be made not less than four (4) weeks before the anticipated date of departure in writing giving reasons for why such leave is requested and outlining the benefits to the student. These forms are to be submitted to the Teaching Principal for consideration.

Students travelling during school terms are not to be exempt. If the Teaching Principal accepts the reasons and leave is granted, the 'L' code should be used on the attendance register.

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RESOURCES

Register of Enrolments

Class Rolls

Teacher and Parent Meeting Record

Enrolment Application Form

Student Absent Note

Attendance Register Codes

ACARA Data Standards Manual

Application for Exemption from Attendance at School Form

Application for Extended Leave – Travel Form

DEC Exemption from School – Procedures

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed annually.