



Kariong Public School
VIEW TO THE FUTURE

Kariong Public School

Student Attendance Policy

Updated July 2017

Kariong Public School **Student Attendance Policy**

RATIONALE

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. Encouraging regular school attendance is a core school responsibility.

DOE POLICY STATEMENT / THE LAW

- Section 22 of the Education Act (1990) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school age to cause the child:
 - a) to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
 - b) be registered for home schooling with the Board of Studies and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.
- 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 Act requires principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister. Attendance registers must be made available for inspection during school hours by a Board inspector or by any authorised person.
- This policy reflects the DOE School Attendance Policy and the School Attendance Procedures as they apply to Kariong Public School. [School Attendance Policy](#)

AIMS

- To promote regular student attendance and punctual arrival to school.
- To ensure accurate attendance registers are maintained
- To act promptly in the follow up of absences
- To refer individual cases to Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) if necessary.
- To develop and monitor attendance improvement plans, if required, in consultation with parents /carers/student/ district HSLO.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Guardians must ensure:

- their children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a government or registered non-government school, or registered with the Board of Studies for Home Schooling.
- their children who are enrolled at school attend every day the school is open for instruction.
- 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 a telephone call, written note or email. The 7 day timeframe for explaining absences is a requirement of the *Education Act (1990)*.
- 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 with school.

Class Teachers must:

- provide a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters and enables students to gain a sense of belonging to the school community
- maintain accurate records of students attendance through the use of Sentral.
- mark and submit class roll accurately at the beginning of each school day before 9:30am.
- sign, date and file all notes for absences and lateness and store them appropriately
- retain records of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents and carers. Verbal explanations must be noted and kept with written and printed electronic explanations. (Electronic explanations may include messages in class dojo or through email)
- follow up absences/lateness within the 7 day timeframe by asking parents/guardians for explanations and by handing out notes provided by the office staff.
- send home further follow up letter if still no explanation has been received. These will be placed in staff pigeon holes each week by office staff.
- alert stage supervisor when a student's pattern of attendance is of concern.
- update individual pupil record cards with the total number of absences at the conclusion of each term or when the child is transferring from the school. Any relevant information regarding these absences should also be noted on the pupil record cards.

Assistant Principals must:

- monitor weekly class rolls for stage teams supervised.
- follow intervention steps for unexplained/unjustified absences as detailed in this policy (See following page for intervention steps.)
- ensure new staff members are inducted in school attendance and roll marking procedures.
- request and conduct official meetings with parents/guardians of students whose attendance is of concern.
- refer problem cases to the Learning and Support Team if no attendance/punctuality improvements as a result of intervention.

Deputy Principal/Principal must:

- ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school
- ensure departmental, as well as school policies and procedures related to attendance are being followed by all staff.
- conduct regular roll checks and monitoring to ensure early identification of students at risk of developing poor school attendance.
- ensure all records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the Director Public Schools NSW, attendance officers and other personnel nominated by the Secretary Department of Education or Audit Directorate.
- plan and implement effective strategies to contact parents where there is a pattern of attendance concerns.
- set child as an attendance concern in Sentral recording system
- ensure the School's Learning and Support Team (SLST) in partnership with parents identify and implement strategies that address the learning and support needs of a student with attendance patterns of concern.
- send 'Letter 1' to parents expressing seriousness of attendance.
- send Letter 2 to parents if no improvement in attendance after first letter has been sent
- refer cases to HSLO if no attendance improvement.
- liaise regularly with HSLO in regards to referred cases.

- help develop, implement and evaluate individual attendance improvements plans with HSLO, AP, Class teacher, student and parents.
- collate and analyse whole school attendance data. Share with staff and send relevant data to district/regional centres when required.
- complete required forms for students requesting exemption from school. Send forms to School Education Director, if required.

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTIONS

See Appendix F for school flowchart to follow

If a student has been absent from school for three consecutive days with no explanation provided, the class teacher needs to contact the parent/guardian to ensure the child's wellbeing.

If an absence or partial absence to school has not been explained by the parent within the 7 day timeframe:

STEP ONE – CLASS TEACHER

- Ask for an explanation for the absence or partial absence to school by:
 - talking to parents or guardians. Document phone call in Staff comments in Sentral
 - telephoning the parent or guardian
 - sending a note home requesting explanation (See Appendix A and B). The notes will be placed in teachers pigeon holes each Tuesday afternoon.
- If there are five or more absences or partial absences within the term with no explanation provided (despite follow-up from the school) or the explanation/s is unjustified:
 - refer attendance concerns to stage supervisor.

STEP TWO – ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

- Contact parents/guardians by letter and phone. Document phone call in Staff comments in Sentral. Request an official meeting with parents/guardians to discuss attendance concerns. Plan and implement strategies for attendance improvement with parents and class teacher.
- If no improvement in attendance within next 1-2 weeks (maximum), proceed to Step 3.

STEP THREE – DEPUTY PRINCIPAL / PRINCIPAL

- Send letter to parent advising of Application to the Home School Liaison Program (See Appendix C). Conduct meeting with parent if applicable.
- Continue with strategies to improve attendance
- If no improvement in attendance within next 2 weeks (maximum), send letter to parent. Conduct meeting with parent and inform them of HSLO intervention if no improvement in attendance. (See Appendix D)
- After 1 week if no further improvement in attendance refer to Step 4 and contact HSLO.

STEP 4 – DISTRICT HSLO

- Principal to refer student case to district HSLO (See Appendix E)
- Continue with strategies to improve attendance.
- Documents to be shared with HSLO include: Any notes in Staff comments on Sentral regarding follow up phone calls etc, Copies of notes that have been sent home, attendance print out from Sentral.

JUSTIFIED REASONS FOR STUDENT ABSENCES

Absences for reasons such as some of the following may be justified:

- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments (encourage appointments outside of school hours or close to home time)
- Religious holiday
- Urgent family situation (e.g. funeral)
- Sick or infectious disease

Children are not absent and they should not be marked present if they are:

- Representing the school at approved activities
- Attending alternative programs/schools
- Attending Stewart House
- Temporarily enrolled at another school

UNJUSTIFIED REASONS FOR STUDENT ABSENCES

Full day or partial absences for reasons such as some of the following may not be justified:

- Shopping
- Sleeping in
- Working around the house
- Mind siblings/other children/older relatives
- Minor family events such as birthdays
- Haircuts
- Weather conditions: rainy/windy/hot
- Frequent car problems
- Frequent late train/bus
- Airport/visitors from overseas
- Other member of family is sick
- Hospital visits to relatives/friends
- Head lice

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES REGISTERS

A Special Circumstances Register should be used:

- when there is full or part day industrial action involving teachers.
- when there is an approved school development day
- on days when the school is inaccessible due to natural occurrences such as fire or flood.
- when students with a shared enrolment are attending specialist education settings and that setting is not the home school.
- when students are attending another NSW government school for a short period of time, while enrolled in their local school. Attendance register code 'H' should be used on the local school's attendance register.
- for students who attend a Suspension Centre.

Absences on these days are not to be counted as absences on the student record cards or for statistical purposes.

EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL

Parents/caregivers seeking exemption from school for their child for an extended period (more than 5 days) should see the principal to complete the necessary application forms. The principal or delegate will determine whether exemption will be granted.

Certificates of Exemption from the compulsory schooling requirements of the *Education Act (1990)* must only be granted by the delegated officer 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 the exemption have been considered. The principal should refer to *Exemption from School – Procedures*.

Where possible, students on leave from school for extended periods are encouraged to undertake a study with a work folder provided by the school.

- Refer to the document *Guidelines for Exemption from School* for more details.

https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/exempt_gui.pdf

Appendix A
FIRST LETTER SENT HOME BY CLASS TEACHER ASKING FOR AN EXPLANATION

Dear {parent_title},

Re: Unexplained absence for your {gender_ref},
{student_first_name} {student_surname}

Regular attendance at school is essential if your child is to achieve their educational best, social and psychological potential, and increase their 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.

{student_first_name} was absent from school on: {absence_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 with your child as soon as possible.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the school on 4340 1885 to discuss your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

{principal}
PRINCIPAL

Appendix B

SECOND LETTER SENT HOME BY CLASS TEACHER ASKING FOR AN EXPLANATION

Dear {parent_title}

{student_first_name} was absent from school on {absence_dates} and no satisfactory explanation has been received.

The Education Act 1990 requires you to ensure your child attends school each day that instruction is provided unless they are prevented from doing so by sickness or other acceptable reason and for you to provide an explanation for any absence.

The Act requires you to explain your child's absences within seven days of their occurrence. Failure to do so will result in an unjustified absence being recorded.

Please provide an explanation in the space below and return this form to the school as soon as possible. If you have concerns that our records are incorrect please contact the school immediately.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the school on 4340 1885 to discuss your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

{principal}
PRINCIPAL

Appendix C

FIRST LETTER SENT BY DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Ms and Mr
KARIONG NSW 2250

Student SRN:

Dear

I refer to the attendance of _____ at school.

At a recent school Learning and Support Team meeting _____ pattern of attendance was reviewed and it was noted that his overall attendance percentage for 201_ is ____%. I have attached a report of _____'s attendance to this letter for your information.

Regular attendance at school is essential if _____ is to achieve his educational best, and increase his career and life options. School staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing _____ from full participation at school.

As a result of _____'s unsatisfactory attendance in 201_ his attendance will now be monitored very closely. If _____'s attendance does not improve I am required to make an Application to the Home School Liaison Program local manager for consideration of further action. An attendance officer may then be allocated 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. Please see the enclosed leaflet for further information about Compulsory school attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Deputy Principal
Kariong Public School

Appendix D SECOND LETTER SENT BY DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Parent Address
KARIONG NSW 2250

Student SRN: _____

Dear _____,

I am writing in regard to the school absences of your son/daughter _____.

_____’s attendance this term is at ____%. If _____’s attendance does not improve I will make an Application to the Home School Liaison Program local manager for consideration of further action. An attendance officer will then be allocated to work with you and the school to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

Section 22 of the *Education Act (1990)* requires parents to ensure that students of compulsory school age are enrolled at a government or registered non-government school and attend that school whenever instruction is provided, or are registered with the Board of Studies for home schooling. Students must attend school unless there are justified reasons for an absence. All absences must be explained to the school at which the child is enrolled.

I would like to make a time to contact you in the near future to discuss this matter. Please phone the school on 43401885 to make an appointment with me at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

**Deputy Principal
Kariong Public School**

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Please return to Class Teacher

I acknowledge receipt of the letter regarding _____’s absences.

Signed: _____ (Parent/care provider) Date: _____

Appendix E

Learning and Engagement Officer to parent advising of HSLO case allocation & Attendance Improvement Plan

Correspondence Name
Correspondence Address

Student SRN:

Dear Correspondence Name

I refer to the attendance of Student Name at school.

School Name has previously advised you that Student First Name's attendance is a matter of great concern. The matter has been referred to the Home School Liaison Program to assist you and the school to restore Student First Name's attendance.

I have allocated HSLO/ASLO Name, Home School Liaison Officer/ Aboriginal Student Liaison Officer to work with you and School Name to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan to restore Student First Name's attendance to a satisfactory level. It is important that you work closely with HSLO/ASLO Name and the school to resolve the issues and improve Student First Name's attendance at school.

I would like to remind you that the *Education Act (1990)* requires that parents ensure children of compulsory school age attend school on each day the school is open for instruction and any absences are satisfactorily explained. 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 and Communities will consider further action such as an application to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Conference and/or Compulsory Schooling Orders.

Please contact HSLO/ASLO Name urgently on telephone number HSLO/ASLO Telephone Number to discuss the development of this plan.

Yours sincerely

Learning and Engagement Officer Name
Learning and Engagement Officer
<Insert date>

Appendix F School Flowchart procedures

