

Dorrigo High School Attendance Policy

Context

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their learning. Schools, in partnership with parents/carers, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. Parents/carers have a duty to comply with the compulsory education requirements of the Education Act 1990. Under their duty of care, staff will monitor part and whole day absences.

This document reflects the DET School Attendance Policy (revised 2010) and the School Attendance Procedures as they apply to Dorrigo High School. This policy should be read in the context of The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy (1997).

Legal Requirements

- The school must maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister (Section 24 of the Education Act, 1990).
- Parents or carers are to ensure students attend school each day and explain ALL student absences. Partial absences (arriving late or leaving early) also require a note of explanation (Section 22 of the Education Act, 1990).
- Students whose absence from school is habitual are referred to the Home School Liaison program.
- Habitual Absence is reportable to Community Services when the Home School Liaison Officer has exhausted all attempts at engaging the child/young person/ family to no avail.

DHS Attendance Policy and Procedures

The primary responsibility for a child's attendance is with the parent or caregiver. Parents/carers are required by law through the Education Act to:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Provide the school with an acceptable reason for absences **within 7 days**.

Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility.

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential.

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Regular Attendance

- Regular attendance is essential to ensure that effective learning occurs.
- Government legislation requires students to attend each day and that instruction is provided.
- Regular attendance will be encouraged at all times with students and their parents/carers.
- Class teachers are directly responsible for monitoring attendance each lesson.
- The Executive staff will support class teachers, ensuring that monitoring procedures are effective.

Procedures at DHS

- The roll is marked each morning during roll call. Roll teachers are responsible for the accuracy of roll marking and for returning the roll to the office to be recorded. In the absence of the regular roll teacher, the roll will be completed by the relief teacher.
- Class teachers are responsible for recording accurately the attendance of each student, in each lesson, on a pink absentee sheet and returning that sheet to the office at the end of each day. Teachers are also responsible for recording those students who are marked absent from school but are present in class, on the absentee sheet.
- If a student is absent from school, parents/carers are required to provide the school with an acceptable explanation within seven days of the absence.
- Where parents/carers do not provide an absentee note within seven days of the absence, the roll will reflect an unjustified absence. Notes that provide inadequate explanations are recorded as unjustified and are followed up by the Deputy Principal.

- All absentee notes are to be signed and dated by the roll teacher. These notes are to be stored in the roll and collected by the office staff each day. Office staff are responsible for placing the notes in storage.
- When a verbal absence message is received it is recorded on the electronic attendance register.
- If a student is late for school, they must come to the office for a 'late note' which they give to their class teacher. The exact time of arrival is recorded by the office staff.
- If a student is leaving early, they must bring a note from their parent/carer to the office before 8:50am to be issued with an early leaver's pass. On occasions where unforeseen circumstances have occurred students will be issued with an early leavers pass on parental request. The exact time of leaving is recorded by the office staff.
- Students will be issued with a leave pass to attend medical appointments and for other acceptable reasons, on parent request. Students are able to bring a note from their parents/carers to purchase lunch outside of the school grounds on Wednesday as the school canteen is not open. On other days students can purchase their lunch from the school canteen. Students must bring a note to the school office requesting a leave pass before 8:50am. *
- Students who catch a school bus will be dropped off at school. The school buses set down at Dorrigo High School and Dorrigo Primary School only. Once students arrive at school they are to remain on site, unless they have a leave pass. Students must bring a note to the office as soon as they alight from the bus if they require a leave pass before school.
- Senior students are entitled to apply for a flexible timetable for sport, period 1, period 6, or they have 2 or more consecutive periods during the day without a timetabled lesson or study period. They must collect an application form from the office, have it signed by their parents and carers and bring it to the Deputy Principal with a copy of their timetable. If they are successful and granted a flexible timetable, they have to sign in and out at the office and carry a copy of their timetable with them at all times.
- Any student with less than 85% attendance (whole days) is monitored by the Year Adviser and both school (interviews, LST referrals etc.) and HSLO (Home School Liaison Officer) interventions may occur.
- The school will keep a file of the attendance records as required by the NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- School organised events such as sports carnivals are part of the school curriculum. Students are required to attend. Students who do not attend these events, without a justified excuse, are to be marked unjustified.
- If a child is representing the school in a sporting or other activity, the student will be marked "on school business".
- During teacher strikes, School Development Days or natural disasters a special circumstance register is to be kept for students who are in attendance.

Information to Parents and Carers

- Information on attendance requirements is provided in the Dorrigo High School's Welcome Book. The Welcome Book is provided to all new enrolments. The school will inform parents/carers of attendance requirements regularly through the newsletter and website.

Roles in Attendance Monitoring

1. Teachers must be aware of the 'Attendance Policy' and its procedures.
2. Parents/carers are responsible for:
 - Ensuring that their child attend school every day and explain all student absences.
 - Ensuring that their child arrives to school on time.
 - Applying for leave if their child will be absent from school for a justified purpose.
 - Informing the school if their child is away for 3 or more consecutive days.

*Please note unjustifiable reasons for absences include shopping, sleeping in, working at home, minor family events such as birthdays and haircuts.

3. Roll teachers will:

- Reinforce that regular attendance is necessary and that notes are required.
- Monitor closely attendance patterns: absences and lateness.
- Remind students, and if possible, their parents/carers that explanatory notes are required if the note is overdue i.e. if the note has not been received within seven school days.
- Record the category of absence in roll e.g. 'L' for leave "U" for unjustified.
- Sign and date notes with a reason for absence. These notes are to be stored in the class attendance folder and sent to the office at the end of every term.

4. The School Administrative Officers will:

- Ensure accurate absentee information is recorded on OASIS/ERN.
- Ensure that the absence (roll) folders are up to date.
- Ensure that procedures are in place for notifying parents and carers about their children's lateness or absences.
- Keep student's current addresses and phone numbers up to date.
- Update OASIS.
- Check pink absentee sheets against early leavers and sick bay.
- Include fractional truancies in OASIS.

5. The Year Advisers will:

- Monitor any student with less than 85% attendance (whole days) on a fortnightly basis.
- Complete 85% attendance roll check fortnightly at welfare meetings.
- Send home letters of concern to parents/carers if a student's attendance falls below 85%.
- Request additional documentation from parents/carers, such as medical certificates detailing the nature and duration of the sickness if there are concerns about notes provided by the parents/carers or the period of sickness exceeds the period of extended absence.

6. The Deputy Principal will:

- Send letters home to inform parents/carers of fractional and whole day truancy.
- Place students on Attendance Monitoring Cards for persistent truancy.
- Contact parents/carers when extended unexplained absences have occurred if initial monitoring does not improve attendance.
- Implement appropriate school intervention (interviews, LST referral etc) or refer the case to the HSLO.

Note: students who are on Attendance Monitoring Cards are ineligible for a flexible timetable during the attendance monitoring period

Dorrigo High School recognises the importance of attendance at school.

At the end of each year, executive staff member identifies students who have achieved 100% attendance.

Those students will receive an attendance award at the end of the school year presentation assembly.

* It is a Department of Education requirement that all notes explaining your child's absence from school for any part of the day give an acceptable reason for the absence. It is insufficient to just indicate that you are aware of or approve the absence. For example for an appointment parents/caregivers need to indicate or identify the type of appointment e.g. medical or dental. Acceptable reasons for an absence can include:

- illness or medical appointments
- domestic necessity such as the serious illness of an immediate family member
- attendance at funerals
- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions
- misadventure or an unforeseen event
- participation in special events not related to the school.

Any absence from school for which no acceptable reason has been given will be recorded as either an "unexplained" or "unjustified" absence.

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HSLO

Intervention