



CREATING OUR FUTURE

# Attendance Policy

Revised 2020

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## 1 Purpose

The attendance policy is a mandatory part of Toormina High School's Student Wellbeing Policy. The wellbeing of all students is a central function of the school. For the school to provide its 'duty of care' it is essential that students attend school and classes on a regular basis. Toormina High School regards regular attendance as of prime importance for its students. A formal education is deemed essential for the personal and social development of individuals. The school has a responsibility to provide each student with a safe, caring and supportive environment for the delivery of relevant and interesting learning programs.

## 2 Broad Guidelines

This Policy is guided by the following principles:

- Effective procedures for monitoring student attendance levels in terms of both whole day absences and partial absences.
- Communication between the school and parents / caregivers effectively informing them about any attendance problems.
- Effective sanctions / supports applied to students who are involved in either whole school day truancy or partial truancy.
- Management of student attendance is seen in the broader context of teacher responsibility and accountability.
- Acquittal of the Department of Education Attendance Policy 2015.

## 3 Legal Requirements

- Students between the ages of 6 and 17 are required, by law, to attend school.
- Students are allowed to be absent from school due to illness, incapacitation, or if they accompany their parents/caregivers for a legitimate reason.
- Leave for non-urgent appointments is not generally authorized during school time.
- Leave for travel needs will be considered on a case by case basis, after application by parents; (these are not exemptions).

- Absences should be explained no later than 7 days from the first day of the absence. Verbal explanations are acceptable as long as the reason and the source of the information is documented, signed and dated by the person accepting the explanation on Sentral.
- Unexplained absences within this time will be marked as 'unjustified' and may result in a FACS referral and Principal Warning Letters.
- Parents/caregivers are expected to contact the school when they know that their child will be absent via phone, SMS or the SkoolBag app.
- Notes explaining absences will be kept for the statutory regulation time.
- Parents will be notified of the attendance requirements and their obligations at the beginning of each school year and at least once per term via the school newsletter.
- The Attendance policy is available to the community via the Toormina High School website. <https://toormina-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/> under 'About Us / Rules and Policies'.

## 4 Attendance Procedures

### 4.1 Roll Call Teachers

- Rolls are to be marked and submitted via Sentral by 9:10am every day during Roll Call.
- Notes explaining absences are to be sent to the rolls office, each day for recording.
- Students will be asked for notes by the roll call teacher to explain absences.
- Phone parents/guardians of students whose attendance pattern is irregular, or who have short absences of 3-5 days, unexplained. If parents give a verbal explanation, this information is to be forwarded to the Rolls Office.
- Roll call teachers should contact the relevant Year Adviser if there are continued absences with no justification / or to note any wellbeing concerns.
- Casual staff who do not have access to Sentral will mark a hard copy of rolls and return the roll call section of the sheet to the Rolls Office by 9:15am.

## 4.2 Teachers

- Rolls are to be marked every lesson.
- Investigate and/or Interview students who have been absent from their lessons by looking for any absence details on the PxP roll in the overall comment sections. Notes for incursions, late arrivals and early leavers are noted on the teachers PxP roll automatically.
- For known truancy, record this data on Sentral. Select Minor Negative / Learner / Truancy, notify Year Adviser. Send letter home using the Truancy Letter template on Sentral.
- For continued, refer to the faculty head teacher.
- An Incursion must be created when removing students from classes temporarily.
- A Variation of Routine (VOR) must be submitted for approval at least 2 weeks prior to the activity.
- Full list of students attending must be submitted with no alterations at least 24 hours prior.

## 4.3 Head Teachers

- Faculty Head Teachers will place students on a Faculty Monitoring Card and select this as a follow up action on the teacher's incident in Sentral under Minor Negative / Learner.

## 4.4 Year Advisers

- Consult with roll call teachers when identifying students who are not attending regularly and make contact with parents to determine if support is required.
- Notify Attendance Officer with regular and ongoing absences if the Year Adviser has not had successful contact with parents or carers.
- May be asked to consult with the Head Teacher Wellbeing and/or Attendance Officer to develop a student Attendance Plan.

## 4.5 Attendance Officer

- Attendance notice 1 School Compulsory School Attendance Notice sent to Parent/Caregiver after unexplained absences. This will be sent weekly.
- Generate a list of students, fortnightly, whose attendance is below 85% without a justified explanation. To be discussed at Attendance Meetings.

- Complete attendance monitoring table for at risk students for fortnightly attendance meeting.
- Attendance Team Meeting once per fortnight chaired by Attendance Officer.
  - This meeting is Inclusive of HT Wellbeing, Deputy Principals, Aboriginal Education Officer, Careers and Transition Advisers.
  - Meeting minutes are uploaded to Sentral Meetings.
- Attendance Officer to oversee case management of students on attendance plans.
- Return phone calls from parents/carers regarding unexplained absence notification letters.
- Check rolls have been submitted by classroom teachers each afternoon and email teachers to remind them to submit their rolls.
- To monitor partial absences, interview and identify truants and provide support as required. If persistent, refer to the relevant Deputy Principal.
- Support Rolls Office with leave codes and absence reasons.
- Identify students consistently on leave for sickness and follow up with students who have not provided medical certificates.

#### 4.6 Head Teacher Wellbeing

- Participate in fortnightly Attendance Meetings.
- Case manage students as allocated by the Attendance Team.
- Develop Attendance Plans.
- Monitor partial attendance/truancy patterns; support faculty intervention – refer to LST if unresolved with YA support.
- Inform the Attendance Team of wellbeing concerns in relation to student attendance.

#### 4.7 Deputy Principal

- Participate in fortnightly Attendance Meetings.
- Case manage students as allocated by the Attendance Team.
- Liaise with HT Wellbeing/Attendance Officer to review and support Attendance Plans.
- Meet as required/on need with the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO).
- Complete Home School Liaison Program (HSLP) referrals.
- Letter 1 and Destination Unknown (DESU) Letter will be sent by Deputy only.
  - Letter 1 - Informs parents of impending action with HSLP.

- o DESU - Informs HSLP that students whereabouts are unknown.
- Deputy Principals to monitor, track and improve whole school attendance.
- Sign Pass Outs and Lunch Passes to enable students to leave the school grounds.
- Process exemptions in consultation with the Principal.
- Approve and process partial attendance plans.

## 4.8 Office Staff

- Collate information from Sentral rolls.
- Enter absentee, late and leave information into Sentral.
- Send SMS to all families of students absent without explanation for the day.
- File Absentee notes.
- Adjust computer records for Excursion details / Late Students / Pass outs / Fractional Truants / Clinic / External providers / Internal variations of routine.
- Post letters to parents / carers, generated by the Attendance Officer, regarding whole day absences.
- Create data entries for all suspensions (E) and exemptions (M) on Sentral.

## 4.9 Late Students

- Students who arrive at school between 8.55am and 9.10am are directed to roll call class for roll marking.
- Students who arrive at school at 9.10 am or later must report to the Front Office, sign in and present to their current class with the late slip provided by office staff.
- Late students are recorded on Sentral.

## 4.10 Leave Passes

- Students needing a Leave Pass must have a note signed by parent/guardian.
- The student must report to the Deputy Principal who will sign the note giving permission for the Front Office to issue a leaver's pass.
- Students will leave school grounds via the front office and must show the leaver's pass to:
  - o their teacher before leaving the classroom

- o The front office staff when leaving the school premises.
- If a student should return to the school campus, they must sign back in via the front office and their leave adjusted on Sentral.
- Students sent home sick are recorded in Sentral.

## 4.11 Suspension of students

- The Deputy Principal manages all suspensions, unless the suspension has been put into place by the Principal or any relieving Deputy Principal.
- Front Office staff will be notified of students suspended and for how long. Rolls will then be adjusted through Sentral.
- Suspensions will be advised through Sentral. Change of attendance on Sentral will be created by the Office Staff.

## 4.12 Flexible Attendance for Senior Students

### 4.12.1 Early Leavers and Late Arrivals

Year 11 and 12 students have permission to arrive late if they have a study period at the beginning of the day and leave early if they have a study period(s) at the end of the school day.

### 4.12.2 Leaving School grounds during Study Periods (Periods 2-5)

No senior student is allowed to leave during the school day without signed consent from a Deputy Principal or the Principal. They must sign in and out at the Front Office. ALL senior students are expected to attend Roll Call if they have a Period 1 class.



## 5 Attendance Checklist

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

	INTERVENTION STRATEGY	WHO	YES / NO	DATE	COMMENT / ACTIONS
Stage 1	SMS Messages sent for unexplained absences	Front Office			
	Absentee Notice 1 School/ Compulsory School Attendance Note sent to Parent/Caregiver after unexplained absence, generated Monday week A.	Attendance Officer Front Office			Letter in file
	RC to contact parent on unexplained student lateness / absence of 3-5 days.	Roll Call Teacher			Note contact on Sentral as a data record in attendance section
	YA to contact parent on unexplained student absence of 5 days or more	YA			Data record on Sentral-attendance record- notify Attendance officer
<b>Further Action Required – Referral to Attendance Officer</b>					
Stage 2	Number of days absent (including the counting of partial absences and truanics in total) totals less than 85% attendance.	Attendance Officer			Copy of attendance print out to attendance meeting fortnightly. Complete action plan sheet during the meeting
	Student interview with HT Wellbeing / Attendance Officer to identify cause of poor attendance	Case Manager			Copy of record of interview. Note made on Sentral
	Contact parent/caregivers by phone or letter to involve them in resolving the attendance issue request medical certificates	Case Manager			Copy of record of interview on Sentral - meetings Commence Attendance Interview Record
Stage 3	Student placed on attendance plan – copy sent to parent. CT and HT's.	Case Manager			Copy on Sentral - attendance
	Action to date noted at Wellbeing/LST meeting regarding attendance and support required.	Case Manager			Noted in Wellbeing/ LST Minutes
	Organise attendance meeting with parent/ caregiver. Revisit Attendance Plan and DEC Policy	Case Manager			Meeting minutes recorded on Sentral
<b>Further Action Required - Referral to Deputy Principal</b>					
Stage 4	Referral to year DP if attendance does not improve above 85 %. DP to contact parent Referral to DET policy, CWU	HT Wellbeing			Data record entry Sentral
	DP to contact parent Referral to DET policy, CWU	Deputy Principal			
	Letter 1- intent to initiate HSLO referral Notify HSLO of impending referral	Year level DP			Copy of letter attached. This must be sent at least 2 weeks before referral to HSLO
<b>Further Action Required - Referral to HSLO</b>					
Stage 5	HSLO referral completed	Attendance Deputy			Noted in Attendance meeting –minutes - Sentral
	Involvement of regional support staff as appropriate	Deputy Principal			Noted in Attendance meeting –minutes - Sentral
	Outside agencies involved e.g. FACS, JJ etc. and/or Student Wellbeing Unit referral made	DP / Principal			Data Record & Noted in Attendance meeting-minutes

Case manager Signature

Date

 /  / 

Deputy Principal Signature

Date

 /  /

## Appendix 1 - Attendance Plan Letter

### HT Wellbeing to parent advising of Attendance Plan

Mr P and Ms S Crosby  
108 Keats Avenue  
DARLINHURST NSW 2010

Dear Mr and Ms Crosby

I refer to the attendance of your son, John at school. Currently John's attendance is \_\_\_\_\_ explained absence, \_\_\_\_\_ unexplained absence.

The *Education Act (1990)* requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on each day that the school is open for instruction. If children are absent from school, parents are required to provide the school with an acceptable explanation within seven days of the absence.

John's attendance is a matter of concern. The school is implementing a range of strategies to encourage John's full attendance at school. The school seeks your support and has attached the Attendance Plan for your comment.

If you do not meaningfully engage in the plan and there is no improvement in John's attendance during this time, the matter may be referred to the local manager of the region's Home School Liaison Program for further investigation by a home school liaison officer/Aboriginal student liaison officer to help resolve the matter.

It is important that you work with us to resolve the issue.

Yours sincerely

Paul Humphrey  
**Principal**  
**Toormina High School**  
<Insert date>

## Appendix 2 – Example Letter Referral to HSLP

### Principal to parent advising of referral to the Home School Liaison Program

Mr P and Ms S Crosby  
108 Keats Avenue  
DARLINHURST NSW 2010

Dear Mr and Ms Crosby

I refer to the attendance of your son, John at school.

The *Education Act (1990)* requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on each day that the school is open for instruction. If children are absent from school, parents are required to provide the school with an acceptable explanation within seven days of the absence.

You have previously been advised that John's attendance is a matter of concern. The school has implemented a range of strategies to encourage John's full attendance at school without success.

At a recent school Learning Support Team/Student Welfare Team meeting John's pattern of attendance was reviewed and it is clear that John's attendance is still at an unacceptable level.

I am obliged to report apparent unresolved non-compliance with the *Education Act (1990)* to the local manager of the region's Home School Liaison Program for further investigation by a home school liaison officer/Aboriginal student liaison officer to help resolve the matter. The local manager will consider if further action is necessary. This may include the development of an Attendance Improvement Plan with specific targets, strategies and timelines.

If you do not meaningfully engage in the plan and there is no improvement in John's attendance during this time, the matter may be referred to the Department's senior officers for possible legal action.

It is important that you work with us to resolve the issue.

Yours sincerely

Paul Humphrey  
**Principal**  
**Toormina High School**  
<Insert date>

## Appendix 3 – Strategies to support attendance

- School to send SMS attendance messages daily.
- Set alarm/phone each night to allow plenty of time to get ready for school.
- Develop a morning/evening routine – shower, uniform, pack bag, breakfast and pack lunch.
- Parent to reply to SMS message.
- Check in with the HT Wellbeing or Deputy Principal.
- Develop a positive relationship with Roll Call Teacher, Aboriginal Education Officer or mentor.
- Is the level of work in class too easy or too hard?
- Assistance provided for uniform and or lunch from HT Wellbeing.



# Student Attendance Policy

## Toormina High School Attendance Plan

Student Details	
<b>Student Name:</b>	
<b>School Year:</b>	
<b>Attendance %:</b>	
<b>Participants:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Summary of concerns:</b>	
Support Plan <i>(click on the relevant tick boxes)</i>	
<p><b>ACADEMIC SUPPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Differentiated Curriculum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Disability Provisions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Homework</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In-Class/SLSO</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attendance Booklet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Class Change</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Assistance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organisational Support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alarm</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bag and equipment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast/Lunch</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Timetable</li> </ul> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>External Agency Referral:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>ALTERNATE ATTENDANCE PATTERN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer Drop-Off/Pick-Up</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partial Attendance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uniform Assistance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work Experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Life Skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>ALTERNATE PROGRAMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ACE</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Programs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fit 4 Life</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Key Employment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> LaST</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TAFE</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other:</b></li> </ul> <p>_____</p> <p><b>WELLBEING REFERRAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> AEO</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ARCO</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attendance Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Girls Advisor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Head Teacher Wellbeing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Headspace</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mentor Teacher</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School Counsellor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Year Advisor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Youth Worker</li> </ul>
<p>Identified Support People: _____</p>	

Attendance Plan Continued.... (Page 2)

### External Agency Referral

Name of Agency

### Additional Plan Details

COMMENTS:

### Plan Agreement

Carer/Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Plan Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Attendance Plan Review Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_