

CREATING OUR FUTURE

Attendance Procedures

Revised 2021



Contents

Purpose	4
Broad Guidelines	4
Legal Requirements	
Attendance Procedures	5
Roll Call Teachers	5
Teachers	6
Head Teachers	6
Year Advisers	6
Attendance Officer	7
Attendance Team	7
Head Teacher Wellbeing	10
Deputy Principal	10
Principal	11
Office Staff	13
Parents	14
Late Students	14
Leave Passes	14
Suspension of students	15
Flexible Attendance for Senior Students	15
Appendix 1 - Attendance Checklist	16
Appendix 2 - Attendance Plan Letter	17
Appendix 3 - Example Letter Referral to HSLP	18
Appendix 4 - Attendance Plan	19



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.

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.

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, email to school email address and Parent Portal.
- 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. <u>https://toormina-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/</u> under 'About Us / Rules and Policies'.

Attendance Procedures

1.1 Roll Call Teachers

- Rolls are to be marked and submitted via Sentral at 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 Attendance Officer

- Leads the Attendance Team
- 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 90% without a justified explanation. To be discussed at Attendance Meetings.
- Complete attendance monitoring table for at risk students for fortnightly attendance meetings.
- Attendance Team Meeting once per fortnight chaired by Attendance Officer.
 - o This meeting is Inclusive of HT Wellbeing, Deputy Principals, Aboriginal Education Officer, Careers and Transition Advisers.
 - o 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 Attendance Team

What makes an effective Attendance Team?

Attendance Teams are successful when they involve a range of staff from across the school community. The Team coordinates the Toormina High School Attendance Procedures in line with mandated Department Of Education policies and processes.



Team Composition

Toormina High School's Attendance Team comprises of

- Principal
- Senior Executive
- Attendance Officer
- HT Wellbeing
- HT Support
- Senior Executive's Administrative Support Officer
- Careers/Transition
- School Support Officer
- Aboriginal Education Officer
- Parents/Students as required

What are the responsibilities of the Attendance Team?

The Toormina High School Team meets fortnightly. Attendance data is collated and analysed by the Team. This allows the Team to monitor individual student and cohort/school trends. Minutes and data from each fortnightly meeting are shared on Sentral for all staff.

The Toormina High School Attendance Team has two primary responsibilities-

Firstly, they are charged with looking at individual students whose attendance pattern is of concern.

At the individual student level, they:

- Examine every fortnight the list of students with attendance issues to ensure that each student receives appropriate support. (Tier 2 and 3). A case manager may be allocated to students at a Tier 2 level.
- Look at other data as found on Sentral, SCOUT, school counsellor and school files to develop a full picture of what is happening in a student's life, especially for those with more severe attendance problems.
- Use data on attendance and chronic absence to determine the nature and intensity of support. Support can range from parent/student contact for an initial investigation to more intensive interventions and case management. This process includes completing attendance plans, Child Wellbeing and Home School Liaison Program referrals through to court-ordered interventions.



Secondly, at a school systems level the Team monitors what is happening for all students and student cohorts at Toormina High School. A strong focus of this is to monitor and reinforce the importance of regular student attendance with students and the wider school community. These interventions support the Affirmation and Proactive tiers of the NSW DoE Attendance Policy.

At a whole-school level, the Team -

- Review outcomes of prior interventions to determine if supports were effective.
- Help communicate the importance of attendance to the entire school community by-
- by providing professional learning to staff on the use of systems and processes such as SCOUT, Sentral, roll marking, referral of concerns
- collaborate with the Positive Behaviour for Learning Team to establish positive expectations and rewards for good attendance with students and their families.
- Ensuring parents/carers are aware of the systems for reporting all absences. Parents are regularly informed of unexplained student absences via fortnightly mail-out and daily SMS messages. The school provides regular "how-to" information to parents for ease of access to the Sentral Parent Portal.
- Examine trend information and report these to staff and students, inclusive of student voice via survey and Student Leadership Team.
- Compile data across individual students and multiple data sources to unpack common barriers to attendance and then forge partnerships to address those challenges as reflected in the Toormina High School "Attendance Directions" document.
- Assess the impact of attendance procedures and/or strategies such as attendance incentives on reducing rates of absence, adjusting as required.

Linked Documents

- Attendance Intervention (Dept of Ed tiers)
- <u>Toormina High School Attendance Directions document</u>



4.7 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.

4.8 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 Program(HSLP).
- Complete Home School Liaison Program (HSLP) referrals.
- Letter 1 and Destination Unknown (DESU) Letter will be sent by Deputy or delegate only.
 - Letter 1 Informs parents of impending action with HSLP.
 - 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.
- Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school. An explanation for absence must be provided to the school within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence.



4.9 Principal

- Must provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- Must ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences.
- Their delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an absence being unexplained, if contact has not already been made. An absence is unexplained if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days.
- Are responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.
- Must ensure that for students with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are addressed in consultation with parents.
- Are responsible for ensuring that when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness that:
 - Consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of the student
 - Medical certificates are sought for the absences
 - Where there are ongoing concerns, approval is sought from parents to contact the student's doctor so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health car needs
 - Strategies are developed to ensure regular attendance at school.
- must ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.
- must ensure that any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student:
 - consideration is given to the requirements of the <u>Protecting and</u> <u>Supporting Children and Young People Policy</u>
 - all required reports are made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or contact made with the Child Wellbeing unit (as required by the <u>Mandatory Reporter Guide</u>).



have the authority to:

- grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- accept other explanations for absence and record the absence as 'L'
- decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
- grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (see the <u>Exemption from</u> <u>School - Procedures</u>)
- grant part-day exemptions from school for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period (see the <u>Exemption from School -</u> <u>Procedures</u>)
- grant exemption from enrolment for students who have completed Year 9 and have the required approval to complete their education in special circumstances through an apprenticeship or traineeship (see the <u>Exemption from School -</u> <u>Procedures</u>).

4.9.1 Directors, Educational Leadership

- have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from attendance at school under Section 25 of the <u>Education Act (1990)</u> totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period.
- support schools to maintain accurate records of student attendance in a form approved by the Minister.
- approve the participation of a student in an alternative school-based program, leading to full-time attendance, prior to part-day exemption from attendance at school being granted by the school principal (see the <u>Exemption from School - Procedures</u>).

4.9.2 Executive Directors, School Performance

- have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from attendance at school under Section 25 of the <u>Education Act (1990)</u> totalling more than 100 days in a 12-month period.
- have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from enrolment at school under Section 25 of the <u>Education Act (1990</u>), provided certain conditions are met.



4.9.3 Director, Child Protection Services

 has the delegated authority to grant exemptions from school attendance for any period of time, for students wishing to participate in employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite arts or sporting events. Principals are also able to consider applications for exemption in these circumstances.
 Principals should contact the Director, Child Protection Services if advice is needed on compliance with employment regulation of the Children's Guardian or exemption is sought for participation in a large scale production

4.9.4 Monitoring and review

• Schools, with support from attendance officers (home school liaison officers and Aboriginal student liaison officers), monitor the regular attendance of students and develop and implement strategies to support students with identified attendance issues.

The Director, Child Protection Services is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reviewing its effectiveness every three years.

4.9.5 Policy contact officer

Student Attendance and Educational Neglect Advisor 02 7814 2937

4.10 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.



4.11 Parents

- It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to cause the child:
- to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
- to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.
- Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school. An explanation for absence must be provided to the school within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence.

4.12 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.

4.13 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.



4.14 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.

Flexible Attendance for Senior Students

5.1 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.

5.2 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.



Г

Student Attendance Procedures

٦

Attendance Checklist

ATTENDANCE CHECKLIST					
	INVENTION STRATEGY	WHO	YES/NO	DATE	COMMENT/ACTIONS
95% +	SMS Messages sent for unexplained absence	Front Office			Daily
Proactive 90-94% Attendance	Absentee Notice1 School/Compulsory. School Attendance note sent to Parent/Caregiver after unexplained student lateness/absence, generated Monday Week A.	Attendance Officer/Front Office			Letter in file
Proactive 94% Attenda	RC Teacher 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 and notify Year Advisor
5-06	YA to contact parent to discuss ongoing sporadic attendance of 5 days of more.	Year Adviser			Data record on Sentral - notify Attendance Officer if concerned
	FURTHER ACTION RE	QUIRED - REF	ERRAL TO) ATTENDAN	ICE OFFICER
dance	Identify students' number of days absent (including the counting of partial absences and truancies in total) totals less than 80-89%	Attendance Officer			Copy of attendance print out to attendance meeting fortnightly. Complete action checklist sheet during the meeting if required.
TIER 1 Attend	Student interview with HT Wellbeing/Attendance Officer/delegate to identify reason for absences	Attendance Officer/ delegate			Record of interview, noted on Sentral
TIER 1 80-89% Attendance	Contact parent/caregivers by phone or letter to involve them in resolving the attendance issue. May request eg medical certificates/Exemption. Appoint case manager if necessary.	Attendance Officer			Record of interview, noted on Sentral - Parent Contact. Commence Attendance Interview Record.
		ase manag	ER APPC	DINTED	
υ	Student placed on attendance plan if attendance does not improve within the fortnight - copies sent to parent, CTs and HTs.	Case Manager			Copy on Sentral - Attendance
danc	Action to date noted at Wellbeing/LST meeting if support required.	Case Manager			Noted on Sentral - Wellbeing/LST MInutes
TIER 2 Attene	Organise attendance meeting with parent/caregiver. Revisit Attendance Plan and DoE Policy.	Case Manager			Meeting minutes recorded on Sentral - Attendance
TIER 2 50-79% Attendance	Referral to DP, Senior Executive or delegate if attendance does not improve. Chosen delegate to contact parent. Referral to DoE policy/CWU	Case Manager/ HT Wellbeing/ Year DP			Data record entry Sentral
	Letter 1 - intent to initiate HSLP referral. Notify HSLP of impending referral	Attendance Officer or delegate			Copy of letter attached. This must be sent at least 2 weeks referral to HSLP
FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED - REFERRAL TO HSLP					
TIER 3 Below 50% Attendance	HSLP referral completed	Senior Executive, Attendance Officer or delegate			Note in Sentral - Attendance meeting minutes
	Involvement of regional support staff as appropriate	Senior Executive or delegate			Noted in Sentral - Attendance meeting minutes
<	Outside agencies involved eg DCJ, JJ etc, and/or Student Wellbeing Unit referral made	Senior Executive/ delegate			Noted in Sentral - Data Record and Attendance meeting minutes



Student Attendance Procedures

Attendance Checklist - continued

EXTERNAL AGENCY REFERRA	L			
NAME OF AGENCY:				
ADDITIONAL PLAN DETAILS				
COMMENTS:				
PLAN AGREEMENT				
Case Manager Signature	Date			
Deputy Principal, Senior Executive/Delegate Signature	Date			



Appendix 1 - Attendance Plan Letter

HT Wellbeing to parent advising of Attendance Plan



Mr Paul Humphrey B Ed M Ed JP Principal Armstrong Drive Toormina NSW 2452 T 02 6653 307

Dr K Jones 72 Sydney Street DARLINGHURST NSW 210

Dear Mr Jones

I am writing in regard to the school absences of your child John Crosby, date of birth

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. 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.

Consistent with the Department of Education's School Attendance Policy '**Principals may** request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged' and '**Principals may decline to accept as satisfactory** an explanation for an absence'.

The Department may also obtain information about children of compulsory school-age from any relevant institution or other person under **Section 22A** of the **Education Act (1990)** including your child's GP. The information given to the Department is solely for the purpose of ascertaining the reasons why the child is not receiving compulsory schooling or not participating.

John's attendance has been erratic of late and as a consequence there are concerns regarding his/her academic progress. I would like to discuss John's frequent sick days with you and/or his treating Dr _____

This letter is also informing you that any future absences will require a medical certificate or verifiable evidence to support John's absence. Without this documentation all future absences will be recorded as unjustified.

Please contact me on 6653 3077 so an appointment time can be scheduled.

Yours sincerely, Paul Humphrey Principal Toormina High School



Appendix 2 – Example Letter Referral to HSLP

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



Mr Paul Humphrey B Ed M Ed JP Principal Armstrong Drive Toormina NSW 2452 T 02 6653 3077

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

Dear Mr and Ms Crosby

I refer to the attendance of your son, John at school. Your child's attendance is at %

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



Student Attendance Procedures

Toormina High School - Attendance Plan

ATTENDANCE PLAN					
STUDENT DETAILS					
Student Name:					
School Year:					
Attendance %:					
Participants:					
Date:					
Summary of concerns:					

SUPPORT PLAN (tick the relevant boxes)						
INTERNAL SUPPORT	Anti-racism Contact Officer (ARCO)					
Differentiated Curriculum	Girls Advisor					
Homework	HT Wellbeing					
In-Class-SLSO	Mentor Teacher					
	School Counsellor					
Monitoring Card	Year Advisor					
Class Change	Youth Worker					
Equipment/Uniform Assistance	Student Support Officer (SSO)					
Organisational Support	Intergrated Funding Support (IFS) if eligible					
Breakfast/Lunch	EXTERNAL SUPPORT					
Breakfast/Lunch Timetable	EXTERNAL SUPPORT KEY Employment					
-	I					
Timetable Parent/Carer Drop-Off/Pick Up	KEY Employment TAFE					
 Timetable Parent/Carer Drop-Off/Pick Up Attendance Plan (Partial Attendance) 	KEY Employment TAFE Work Experience					
 Timetable Parent/Carer Drop-Off/Pick Up Attendance Plan (Partial Attendance) Life Skills 	KEY Employment TAFE Work Experience General Practioner (GP)					
 Timetable Parent/Carer Drop-Off/Pick Up Attendance Plan (Partial Attendance) Life Skills Distance Education (DE) 	KEY Employment TAFE Work Experience General Practioner (GP) Psychologist					
 Timetable Parent/Carer Drop-Off/Pick Up Attendance Plan (Partial Attendance) Life Skills Distance Education (DE) Fit For Life 	KEY Employment TAFE Work Experience General Practioner (GP) Psychologist Paediatrician					

IDENTIFIED SUPPORT PEOPLE (Internal)		IDENTIFIED SUPPORT PEOPLE (External)			
Carer/Parent Signature:	Date:	/	/		
Student Signature:	Date:	/	/		
Plan Manager Signature:	Date:	/	/		
Attendance Plan Review Date: / /					