

School Attendance Policy– April 2021 Next Review: April, 2022

Principal: Mr Drew Janetzki

Attendance Policy:

The Fern Bay PS Attendance Policy sets out the requirements for the attendance of students in NSW government schools and is aligned against the NSW Department of Education School Attendance Policy. Reference Number PD-2005-0259-V07 Last updated 11/08/2020)
<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy>
(Reference: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy>)

The updated Policy also aligns to the Attendance matters – resources for schools:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters-resources-for-schools>

Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures.

Objective:

- To improve attendance rates at Fern Bay PS to align with NSW Department of Education Targets.
- To minimise the number of students arriving late and leaving early.
- To develop proactive approaches to attending school in order to maximise learning opportunities for all students.
- To maximise student achievement of whole school goals through full attendance.
- To inform parents of their roles and responsibilities in relation to student attendance at a NSW Department of Education School.
- Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.
- While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part and whole day absences.

School staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- Providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of belonging to the school community
- Recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- Maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance

Student Attendance in Government Schools:
Procedures:

School Attendance Procedures:

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to record attendance on the NSW Department Sentral Portal at the commencement of the school day, collect notes for absences and follow up issues of non-attendance.

This includes letters for students who have an unexplained absence.

The office staff are only responsible for ensuring all rolls are marked daily in Sentral as well as any early leavers.

For classroom teachers: The roll needs to be marked daily by 9.10am within Sentral

For casual teaching staff not connected to the Sentral a hard copy roll will be available within the teachers casual folder. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure they have a

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casual folder with an up to date roll. All health, IEPs, PLP, and custody notes are also required to be placed within the casual folder

Fern Bay Public School Attendance Policy – effective 2021

The following is the procedures for casual teachers:

1. The roll is to be marked manually by the classroom casual teacher each day and it is sent to the office to ensure there is a record of student absences.
2. If a student arrives late (after the roll is marked) a late note is required from the front office. If the student presents without a late note, please send them back to the office.

Permanent/ Temp Contract Teaching staff procedures:

1. The roll is to be marked digitally by the classroom teacher in Sentral.
2. If a student arrives late (after the roll is marked) a late note is required from the front office. If the student presents without a late note, please send them back to the office. Upon the receipt of the late note the classroom teacher files and records the late notice in Sentral. (Best practice is for the teacher to keep the late note slip) Parents/carers of students who are absent will be notified via SMS.
3. If a student is absence then the parent is expected to provide an explanation for absences by means such as a telephone call, written note, text message, via the absence section of the SZapp App (Fern Bay PS) or email to the school within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence. Until information is shared or given the absence remains as unjustified. The information will be shared by the office staff to the classroom teacher. (Via email to ensure there is a trace)
4. Teachers are to make contact via phone call and SMS if a student is away without an explanation for more than 2 school days. If the parent does not answer the phone an SMS is a record that shows contact has been made. If more than 2 days have passed and no contact has been made then the teacher can make contact with the emergency contact to ensure the safety of the student via phone call & via SMS.
5. Teachers responsible for students attending whole or part day out of school activities, including sport, debating or other excursions will supply the names of the students participating to the office. On return to school the supervising teacher will supply an adjusted attendance record to the office (including teacher signature).
Early leavers from excursions and other variations of routine, e.g. those going home directly with parents, must be recorded including time and who has taken responsibility for the child. The record must also be signed by the teacher and returned to the office at the end of the day.
6. Part day exemptions from school eg; partial attendance program, negotiated between the parent and the school, where the student attends part of each school day, with the aim to return to full time attendance – must be approved by the School Education Director.
7. Special circumstances registers are to be used when there are part or full day industrial action involving teachers, approved school development days, days on which the school is inaccessible due to natural occurrences such as fire or flood. The special circumstance register should specify the date, times of the variation, the reason for the variation, list the students attending and be signed by the teacher maintaining the register. In the case of a partial day industrial action Attendance Sheets (Manual class roll) will only be used to indicate children attending during minimal supervision times and students who arrive after teachers are back on duty.

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8. An application for 'Exemption from Attendance at School' must only be granted 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. The code for exemption, 'M', should not be entered on the roll until the school has been notified that the exemption has been approved. Prior notification of intending absence must be received.

9. Special Circumstances registers will be kept on School Development Days, days involving industrial action, natural disaster and other significant variations – as per NSW Department of Education procedures.

10. NOTES/EXPLANATIONS FROM PARENTS/ CARERS: PROCEDURES:

The following steps are to be taken for parents/ carers who have not provided an explanation:

When a student returns to school from an absence and does not produce a note by their parent/caregiver, the classroom teacher will provide an absentee slip (below) and send it home with the student.

If an absence explanation note is not returned after 3 days then another unexplained note will be sent home.

When an absentee note comes back in, send it to the office in your plastic red folder marked absent note.

If there has been no attempt by the parent/ carer to return an absence note or any form of correspondence after 7 days a phone call from the teacher will be made. Records of this attempt can be made with a follow up text message to the parent. 7 days since any explanation: SMS Message stored in SMSTech:

Dear/ parent carer, thankyou for taking my call today. As discussed our records indicate that your child was absent in the last 7 school days without an explanation. There have been several absent note reminders sent home without any return. The absence will remain on our system as unjustified until we have any further correspondence.

7 days since any explanation: If it doesn't come back in after 7 days, teachers have still fulfilled their role of sending multiple absentee note home and keeping a record of what you have sent home. This is to be followed up with an SMS message stating:

Dear/ parent carer our records indicate that your child was absent in the last 7 school days without an explanation. There have been several absent note reminders sent home without any return as well as a phone call. The absence will remain on our system as unjustified until we have any further correspondence. (This can be called upon later in court as evidence (if required) Scattergrams are now emailed weekly to the Principal and emailed to all staff to ensure all staff can also

track any absences, errors and trends in attendance in their roll marking.

Students that are below 85% are to be flagged by the HSLO and Learning support team.

If there is already a mark in the roll please leave it as marked (Office has been notified by the parent/carer)

Documentation:

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This document supports the School Attendance Policy (2015) and applies to all NSW Government schools, excluding pre-schools. It replaces Student Attendance in Government Schools – Procedures 2010.

These procedures should be read in the context:

The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy (1997)

Memorandum DN/06/00168 Enhanced Enrolment Procedures (intranet only) Protecting and Supporting

Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.

Attendance matters – resources for schools:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters-resources-for-schools>