

ASHBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL

Student Attendance Policy

RATIONALE

Full and regular attendance at school is a critical factor in ensuring that students achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. When children attend school every day, learning becomes easier and they have more opportunities to build and maintain friendships with other children.

All students are expected to attend school every day that the school is open. In exceptional circumstances where the school is required to limit face to face teaching, the school will provide learning to be completed at home. In this case, students will be marked as present when they demonstrate engagement with the learning.

POLICY STATEMENT

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. The school staff, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

IMPLEMENTATION

Absences

If a student is absent from school, parents and carers should, as soon as practically possible, provide an explanation to the school. This can be done by filling in an Absentee Form on the School eNews app, by writing a written note or by phoning the office. If the school does not receive an explanation within 7 days of the absence, the absence is automatically marked as unexplained.

Partial Attendance

Wherever possible parents and carers should attempt to make appointments outside of school hours to reduce disruption to their child's education.

Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time. If a student is late, both the student and their parent are required to report to the office to collect a late slip which is given to the teacher.

Parents who collect their children before the end of the day are required to sign their child out at the office prior to taking their child from the school grounds.

Extended Absences

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with the principal. An Application for Extended Leave may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

Unsatisfactory Attendance

Principals and school staff, in consultation with students and their parents, will usually be able to resolve problems of non-attendance. While parents should be reminded of their legal obligations under the Education Act (1990) the benefits of attending school regularly should be the focus of this consultation.

A child is considered to have an unsatisfactory school attendance when they have regular or extended absences without explanation (despite follow up from the school) or explanations not accepted by the principal. An extended period of absence may be consecutive or irregular patterns of non-attendance.

Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, consultation with parents must occur regarding the health care needs of the child. The principal may request parents to produce medical certificates to support a reason for repeated absences.

If the principal is still not satisfied with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as unjustified and should consider whether the unsatisfactory attendance rate places the child at suspected risk of harm, in which case the principal will consult the Mandatory Reporter Guide to determine if a Child Wellbeing Unit or Communities and Justice referral is required.

For further information on the procedures that school staff should follow when dealing with unsatisfactory student attendance, see Appendix 1: School Attendance Procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents' and carers' roles are to:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly, every day the school is open for instruction.
- Explain absences of their children promptly, within 7 days from the first day of absence.
- Work with the school to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

The teacher's role is to:

- Provide a caring teaching and learning environment which aims to foster a sense of belonging by students to the school and community.
- Maintain accurate records of student attendance using approved procedures and record absences on the class roll promptly at the commencement of the school day.
- Seek and retain written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents and carers.
- Undertake reasonable measures to contact parents within two days of an absence being unexplained through a compulsory school attendance letter or by telephone. An absence is automatically recorded as unexplained if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days.
- Report chronic non-attendance, truancy, persistent partial attendance or any other attendance concerns to their Assistant Principal.
- Provide information to parents and students about attendance requirements.

The School Administration Staff's role is to:

- Assist parents by completing late arrival and early departure slips
- Archive written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents regarding student attendance for the required periods of time.

The Assistant Principals' role is to:

- Monitor attendance and roll marking by class teachers.
- Support classroom teachers and parents with attendance concerns.
- Refer attendance concerns to the Learning and Support Team and principal if the teacher's strategies for improvement have not been successful.

The Principal's role is to:

- Monitor and evaluate whole school attendance data through regular roll checks.
- Support staff and parents with attendance concerns
- Ensure attendance records are maintained in an approved format.

- Ensure that staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote attendance at school
- Liaise with the Home School Liaison Officer.
- Ensure any child protection concerns underlying school attendance issues (including educational neglect) are managed consistent with the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and Procedures; consult the Mandatory Reporter Guide to determine if Child Wellbeing Unit or Communities and Justice referrals are required, contact the NSW Police Force to request that a child safety check be undertaken when required and seek specialist advice and professional judgement, where there are concerns about suspected risk of harm.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- NSW Department of Education School Attendance Policy: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0259>
- Compulsory School Attendance - Information for Parents: https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/student-wellbeing/attendance-behaviour-and-engagement/media/documents/attendance/attendance_parents.pdf
- Attendance Matters - Resources for Schools: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters-resources-for-schools/resources-for-schools>

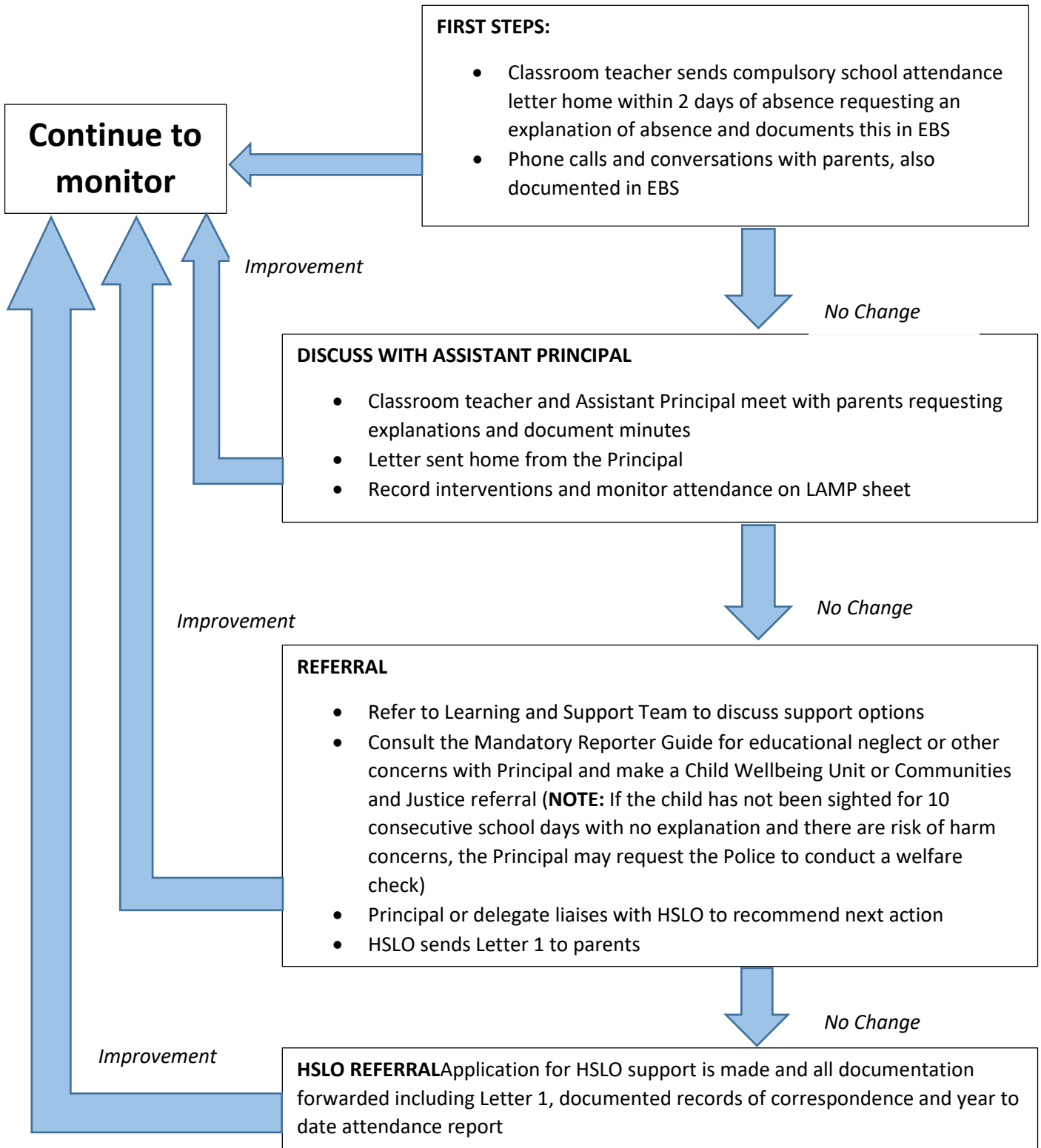


Appendix 1:

Ashbury Public School Attendance Procedures

Regular attendance at school is compulsory for children aged 6 and above, repeated absences, both partial and whole day, can have long term detrimental impact on student learning and wellbeing. Teachers are required to accurately mark the roll each day and request explanations for absences from parents and carers. When explanations are received, the teacher should initial and date the note, file it and update the class roll within 7 days of the absence.

If attendance rates are a concern for a student, school staff should take the following steps:



Attendance Register Codes
Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence

Symbol	Meaning
?	Pending explanation: use this symbol when an absence has not been explained (up to 7 days after the absence was first recorded). By default this symbol will change to an A after 7 days if no explanation is received.
A	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.
S	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.
L	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - misadventure or unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to the school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - travel in Australia and overseas - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.
B	The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange
E	The student was suspended from school
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
H	The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education



ASHBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL
STUDENT ABSENTEE NOTE

To (class teacher)

Student Name Class

Date(s) of Absence from School

Reason for Absence from School

.....
.....
.....

Signed (parent/carer) Date

Name (parent/carer)

Please note: If explanation for a student absence is received later than 7 days after absence, it will be marked as an 'unjustified' absence regardless of reason. This is Departmental Policy.



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Name (parent/carer)

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ASHBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Absentee Notice – Compulsory School Attendance

Dear _____

Regular attendance at school is essential if _____ is to achieve his/her educational best, social and psychological potential, and increase 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.

_____ was absent from school on _____ 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 as soon as possible.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the school on 9798 4509 to discuss your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Ben Heinecke
Principal

Date: _____

Absentee Notice

Please provide an explanation for the absence/s by returning this section or telephoning the school.

Name of Student _____ Year/Class _____

Date/s of absence _____

Reason for absence _____

Parent name _____ Signed _____