



EASTERN HILLS
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Student Attendance Information for Parents

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The School is committed to providing each student the opportunity to gain an education and achieve their full potential. Attending school is critical for unlocking this opportunity. Students who attend school regularly generally do better at school and in life. Every day that a student does not attend school can have a negative impact on their learning. At school many concepts such as numeracy and literacy are taught in sequence and missing school means missing out on learning which can often make it difficult to catch up later.

Student Attendance

The [School Education Act 1999](#) requires a student to attend school every day the school is open for instruction to the end of the year they turn 17 and six months or 18 years whichever comes first unless they are exempt from school; have full time employment approved by the Department of Education; are enrolled at TAFE or an approved training program; or in some combination of these options.

A student is considered to be in attendance when present for, or participating in the school's formal instructional program. Typically this will be on the school site but also includes off-site arrangements that respond to the student's learning needs and circumstances.

Recording Student Attendance

Student attendance is recorded in [Compass](#) and class rolls are completed within the first **five minutes** of each timetabled period including Form. A *P* (present) or an *NP* (not present) is entered for each student. Students on an organised school activity are automatically marked as *Present* unless otherwise advised.

Students Arriving Late to School

Students arriving late to class interrupts the teaching and learning program not only for the latecomers but also for the teacher and the rest of the class. While the school understands that there are occasions where there are valid reasons for students to arrive late and that often these reasons are beyond their control, often late arrival is through student tardiness or poor preparation and both of these reasons are preventable.

All students must be present on campus before 8.45 am. The warning bell for Form is rung at 8.41 am and Form commences at 8.45 am. **Any student who is not in Form class by 8.45 am, is considered to be late to school.**

The school gate for student entry is closed at 8.45 am. Students who arrive to school after this time are required to enter through the front door of the school and sign in at the Student Services Centre.

- if Form is still in progress, students will be directed to proceed promptly to Form.
- if Form is over, students will be provided with a late note and directed to proceed quickly to class and provide the late note to the classroom teacher.

Students who are late **with a valid reason** and provide **evidence** (medical note, appointment card, email, text or written communication from a parent/carer) at the time of signing in at the Student Services Centre will be marked as **absent with reasonable cause** for the day.

Students who arrive **without a valid reason** will be marked as **late unexplained** and automatically included on the **detention register** for the day. Parents will be notified by text that the student has arrived late and no reason has been provided.

Students Leaving School Early

Any student who needs to leave school early must report to the Attendance Officer in Student Services to record the early departure on the touch screen of the **Compass Kiosk**. A pass will be printed for the student and the arrival and departure times will be shown on the **Attendance** information for the day.

Students leaving early must be collected from the front office by a responsible adult who must be sighted by office staff. Students not collected by a parent/carer must provide the Attendance Officer with suitable written permission.

Student Absences

An SMS notification of absent students is sent to the parent/carer once the morning attendance check has been completed and again at the end of the school day. The *School Education Act 1999* requires that an explanation of any student absence is provided by the parent/carer **within three school days** from return to school. A medical certificate is required for prolonged absences that are due to sickness or injury.

Where a student has been marked absent at any time during the day other than due to a school organised activity, the absence must be explained either with a note from the parent/carer, an SMS message, a phone call, an email, or the lodgment of an *attendance note* directly into **Compass** via the parent portal. The school attendance record is then amended to explain the absence.

Student arrivals and departures recorded on the **Compass Kiosk** do not provide an automatic explanation of absence. Students arriving late or leaving school early require written permission from a parent/carer. If a parent comes into the school to drop off or collect the student, they can complete the *Late Arrival* or *Early Departure* process on the **Compass Kiosk** to provide the required explanation for the absence.

Authorised and Unauthorised Student Absences

An explanation of an absence from school by a parent/carer is recorded as either an authorised or unauthorised absence. An authorised absence is where the reason provided by the parent/carer is considered to be legitimate and deemed acceptable by the Principal. An authorised absence includes a student being sick or unwell, a necessary family commitment or an unavoidable medical appointment.

An unauthorised absence is where the reason provided by the parent/carer is not deemed acceptable by the Principal. It includes reasons such as:

- sleeping in as a result of a *big* weekend
- participating in casual employment
- celebrating a birthday
- looking after other children
- attending sport or other recreational activities that have not been approved by the school
- routine medical appointments that can be made before or after school or during school holidays
- going on a family holiday

Going on a family holiday is not considered to be a valid or authorised absence. The Education Department provides term breaks for family holidays and. Therefore, Principals cannot give permission for families to take holidays during term time.

Monitoring Student Attendance

Schools must be able to satisfactorily explain each student absence so monitoring student attendance is an essential aspect of attendance record-keeping. Where no explanation for absence has been provided by the parent or carer a request will be communicated by the school using the following:

- an **Attendance Notification** where no explanation is received within three days of return to school
- a **Further Request for Explanation of Student Absence** where no response has been received following a number of attempts to confirm absences
- a **Frequent Student Absence Due to Illness** where a significant number of long term absences have been explained as *sick*, but no medical certificates have been provided

Where the parent/carers cannot be contacted by phone, text, letter or email, the Year Coordinator may make a home visit to address student absence.

Severe Attendance Concerns

The Department of Education considers that an attendance rate of less than 90% puts a student at risk of not achieving their full potential.

In its tracking of student absences, the school will communicate to the parent/carers when a student is at risk of meeting the required target using a **Student Attendance Below 90%** email and again with a **Student Attendance Below 90%** email. At each stage, the parent/carers will be requested to attend a meeting to determine why the student is not attending school and to provide support for the student to re-engage with education.

Where there is no response from the parent/carers, the student may lose their *good standing status* which includes their right to participate in extra-curricular school activities and events.

Persistent Student Absences

Where after several attempts to engage the parent/carers to resolve severe attendance concerns, there is still no response, the school may access the following options:

- a **Formal Meeting to Address Attendance** letter to provide the opportunity for the parent/carers to enter into a *Responsible Parenting Agreement* to support student attendance at school
- referral to an **Attendance Advisory Panel** aimed at providing an independent view on why students are absent from school. This panel has the authority to commence prosecution for breaching attendance compliance
- referral to a **Regional Participation Officer** for students in Year 11 and 12 for possible inclusion on the *Participation List*
- recording a student with the Department of Education as a **Student Whose Whereabouts are Unknown**

Alternative Schooling Arrangements

Students can participate, with appropriate approval, in activities other than full-time attendance at school. The school can review alternative schooling arrangements with the parent/carers in cases of persistent student absences including:

- a **Section 24 Arrangement** for a student in Year 10 or younger to temporarily attend another school or off-site educational program including TAFE and Registered Training Providers. This arrangement is entered into only where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the student allowing them to maintain their current school enrolment on return from the short-term program

- an **Exemption from Fulltime Schooling** for a student up until the year in which they turn 15, enabling a child to participate in employment or an alternative pathway of education. Approving exemption is a significant decision, which must be made for the best interests of the student e.g. a student granted an exemption for full time employment or training purposes usually needs some confirmation that the employment, apprenticeship or traineeship is likely to be long term
- a **Notice of Arrangement (NOA)** for young people in the final years of compulsory education to participate in other approved forms of education, training or employment that equate to full-time participation in schooling

Students with Mental or Physical Illness and/or Health Care Needs

Where a student has a mental or physical illness and/or health care needs which may impact on their ability to attend the usual school site, the school can support the student with an arrangement of access to an educational program provided by:

Home Schooling Arrangements

This can be organised for students who have been absent for a very long period of time due to sickness or mental health with no decision for them to return to school in the near future.

School of Special Education Needs: Medical and Mental Health

SSEN: MMH teachers can provide in-home educational support to students in the metropolitan area who cannot attend school for medical reasons. The program targets students with a medical certificate likely to be absent from school for more than 10 days.

School of Isolated and Distance Education

For longer-term health conditions that preclude school attendance, SIDE teachers may be the best way for a student to access an appropriate communicates with the parent of a student under the age of 18 regarding the nature of a health-educational program.