



Hoxton Park High School

Attendance Policy

Preface

Hoxton Park High School recognises that every day of attendance in school contributes towards a student's learning and that maximising school attendance enhances academic outcomes. Regular attendance at school is fundamental to student learning. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve educational success, and increase their career and life options.

Student attendance is a key priority for the NSW Department of Education and Training. A focus on improving and maintaining high attendance rates reflects the findings of international research that demonstrates a strong correlation between student learning, attendance at school and improved life outcomes.

Student attendance has been identified as an important aspect of a student's wellbeing and failure to receive an education has been identified as a risk of harm factor. Poor patterns of attendance place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential and disadvantage them in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations.

Communities benefit from students who regularly attend school and are achieving. These benefits include greater student safety, community wellbeing, and a sense of connectedness for all.

Schools, families, and communities can work together to send a strong collective message about the importance of attending school. Promoting the benefits of regular attendance to students, teachers, parents, and community groups will help create a culture where regular school attendance is the norm.

Attendance Policy and Procedure

The Department of Education requires that all students, once enrolled, are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. The Department of Education accepts the following as justified reasons for student absences:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral)

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide the school with a verbal or written explanation for your child's absence. However, if your child is absent for more than 2 consecutive days and the school has not received an explanation from you, the school may contact you to discuss their absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens you may call the school and the decision will be explained to you by a member of the executive team.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the Principal can record the absences as unjustified.

STUDENT LATE ARRIVAL

There is an expectation that all students will arrive at school on time, every day that school is open for students. We understand that there may be occasions when your child may be late for school. As per whole day absences, the Department of Education makes very few allowances to justify student lateness. These include:

- Unavoidable medical/specialist appointments (medical certificate to be provided)
- A major traffic incident, that has been reported and is affecting a large cohort of student and staff
- A major natural event, i.e. bushfire, flood, etc
- School bus is running late
- Case-by-case exceptions as approved by the Principals

Lateness is recorded as a 'partial absence' and must be explained by parents, however, may not be considered justified by Department of Education Attendance Guidelines, that is, the explanation provided may still be deemed as 'unjustified' and incur a school based consequence.

APPROVED LEAVE

As outlined in the **NSW Public Schools Attendance Policy**, family holidays and travel are no longer considered under the *Exemption from School - Procedures*. Travel outside of vacation period is now counted as an absence for statistical purposes.

- A principal should not accept a reason for travel during school term if it is not in the best interests of the student. Educational, social and participation reasons, which should be specified on the Application.
- Travel is considered to be domestic or international travel for the purpose of a family holiday, family business, bereavement or other reasons, which should be specified on the application.
- Principals should consult with parents about the intention of the travel and in the case of family holidays encourage parents to take holidays with their child during school vacation periods.
- Where a Principal considers that the travel is appropriate during school term, the Principal should issue the parent with an *Application for Extended Leave – Travel* for completion and inform the parent that if the Application is accepted, the absences will be recorded as "L" – Leave.
- Principals should request travel documentation, such as travel itinerary or e-ticket, and ensure this is attached to the Application.
- When travels period exceeds one school term access to Distance Education must be considered.
- If a student or students do not return on the date specified and contact is not established then the Principal should follow processes associated with an Application for Home School Liaison Program support.
- On accepting a parent's Application, a Certificate of Extended Leave - Travel must be issued. The original certificate will be provided to the parent and a copy of the certificate placed in each student's record.

Student Responsibilities

DAILY ATTENDANCE

- All students must proceed directly into the school grounds on arrival each morning. Once arrived, they cannot leave the grounds.
- Students are to attend school each day arriving before 8:50AM. They should attend every scheduled period that they have, on time.
- Parents will be notified via SMS on a daily basis if a student has been marked absent.
- Attendance at athletics carnivals and other whole school events is compulsory, as these are normal school days that are part of our regular schooling program. Failure to attend should be accompanied by a note explaining student absence.
- If a student is absent, an explanation by means such as a telephone call, written note or email to the school must be provided within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence. Absences of more than 2 consecutive days requires a doctor's certificate.
- If a student misses an assessment or examination they must provide a doctor's certificate or risk receiving a zero mark for that task. This is in line with the Hoxton Park High School Assessment Policy and procedures.
- All students must maintain an attendance rate above 90%. Attendance rate checks are completed throughout each term. Parents are notified in writing if the rate falls below this level.

LATENESS TO SCHOOL

- A student who arrives after 8:50AM is required to report to the front office (fees window) where they will be signed in to school. Late students who do not have a justified reason will be issued with a detention in Lab 3 during Break 1 (Break 2 on Friday's). Failure to attend this detention will result in an afternoon detention.
- Repeated late arrivals to school may result in further disciplinary action by the Senior Executive.
- Any late student who does not sign in at the front office will be marked absent for the whole day.
- Students who arrive late and do not have a late slip will not be admitted into class.

EARLY LEAVE

- Any student that requires an early leave from school should report to the front office prior to 8:50AM with a signed note from their parents or carers. Suitable reasons for an early leave are things such as doctors' or specialists' appointments, participation in special events or religious festivals.
- The following are NOT suitable reasons for early leave and will be rejected as they are not accepted by the Department of Education:
 - Physiotherapist appointment
 - Driver's Licence test
 - Student starts work early
 - It's raining and you don't want your child to do sport
 - Their friend, brother or cousin is also leaving early

TRUANCY

- Students are required to turn up to all classes on time. Failure to do so, without a satisfactory explanation or note from a teacher will be treated as truancy.
- Whole day truancy and partial truancy, including lateness to class and missing whole periods, will result in disciplinary action.

STUDY PERIODS (FLEXIBLE TIMETABLE – SENIOR STUDENTS)

Due to timetable requirements, some senior students may not be scheduled to start lessons at the start of the day or may have no timetabled lessons in the afternoon. In the case of senior students on occasions where:

- Students are not timetabled on a lesson at the beginning of the day (e.g. Period 1 and/or 2); they MUST arrive at school in time for their timetabled period.
- Students do not have a class during the last lesson (e.g. Period 5); they can continue their studies at home.
- Refer to the Stage 6 – Flexible Timetable Student Contract.

Parent Responsibilities (*as outlined in the NSW Public Schools Attendance Policy*)

Parents must ensure:

- Their children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a government or registered non-government school or, they are registered with the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) for Home Schooling.
- Their children who are enrolled at school attend every day the school is open for their instruction.
- They provide an explanation for absences by means such as a telephone call, written note or email to the school within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence.
- They work in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school, including communicating with the school if they are aware of issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with school.

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