MOUNT RIVERVIEW PUBLIC SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential, and increase their career and life options. Schools in partnerships 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, record and monitor part and whole day absences. Schools, in providing a caring teaching and learning environment, which addresses the learning and support needs of students, including those with additional learning and support needs or complex health conditions, foster students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.

The Mount Riverview PS 'Attendance Procedures' follows the guidelines documented in the NSW Department of Education's *"School Attendance Policy"* (2020) and *"Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures"* (2015).

The *"Education Act 1990"* outlines the legal requirements for compulsory schooling. In particular, the Act states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school age to enrol their child at school and ensure their attendance at school or to register for home schooling. All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal:

- provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences
- organise reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an absence being unexplained, if contact has not already been made
- ensure that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students
- ensure that for students with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are addressed in consultation with parents
- have the authority to grant leave, consider part day exemptions from school, accept or decline absence explanations
- ensure 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 care needs

> ➤ strategies are developed to ensure regular attendance at school

- ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school
- ensure that any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student are responded to according to the "*Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy*"
- communicate with parents/carers and students about the importance of regular and prompt attendance at school
- conduct regular roll checks in consultation with Executive and the Attendance Support Officer
- collect school-based attendance data and consult with Executive and other relevant staff about strategies for improving any areas of concern

School Staff:
- provide a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community
- promote regular attendance at school through teaching and learning activities that acknowledge the learning and support needs of students
- maintain accurate records of student attendance
- contact parents in response to recurring absence or lateness
- ensure absence explanations provided by parents are entered into the roll on the date of receipt
- alert the principal, or staff member responsible for monitoring attendance, when a student's pattern of attendance is of concern, or if no explanation is received from the parent or carer within required timeframes
- liaise with external agencies, arrange referrals and coordinate involvement of the school with other services and agencies working with students, providing feedback about outcomes to the Principal
- report any concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child to the Principal

Parents/Carers:
- ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled in school or registered for home schooling
- ensure their children who are enrolled in school attend every day the school is open for instruction
- provide an explanation for absences (Skoolbag form, written note, email) within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence
- ensure their children arrive at school before 9am when the school day begins
- endeavour to schedule appointments outside of school hours
- work in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school
- communicate with the school about any issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with school

Students:
- be prepared for learning each day
- arrive at school before 9am when the school day begins
- submit any written absence explanation notes from parents to their class teacher
- if late to school (after the morning bell), present to the office upon arrival for a 'late note' then pass this onto their class teacher

REQUIREMENTS FOR RECORDING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
School attendance records must include:
- a register of admission which is to be permanently retained (currently on the Enrolment Registration Number (ERN) system)
- written notes, records of verbal explanations and records of electronic explanations from parents/carers (for 2 years from date of receipt)
- an attendance register (roll) to be retained for 3 years
- information detailing student's absences each year, retained on the student's file until 7 years after they have left the school

School rolls must:
- be marked on all days on which the school is open for instruction, including when excursions, sport days and special events occur
- be marked by the supervising teacher at the beginning of the school day
- be marked using the Sentral attendance module (or using a paper-based class list if Sentral is unavailable)
- use only the approved codes (listed in Appendix A)
- be submitted/signed by the staff member marking the roll

ATTENDANCE MONITORING
School Executive regularly check attendance rates and patterns for all students across the school. This process helps us identify any concerns and to work with students and parents/carers to resolve them.

When concerning patterns of attendance are identified, a number of strategies may be implemented:
- phone contact with parents/carers
- letter to request explanation of absences
- student and/or parent/carer meeting with Principal to discuss concerns and develop a plan for resolving them
- check in – check out system for the student
- provide adjusted curriculum
- provide support programs
- referral to the school's Learning Support Team
- advice from Attendance Support Officer
- referral to the School Counsellor

- referral to external services
- referral to Attendance Support Officer
- request Police welfare check
- compulsory schooling conference
- compulsory schooling order (through Children's Court)

LATE ARRIVALS/EARLY DEPARTURES

At our school, we believe it is vitally important that all students and staff are prompt and punctual each day. The school has a formal sign in and sign out procedure for students who arrive late or who are leaving early.
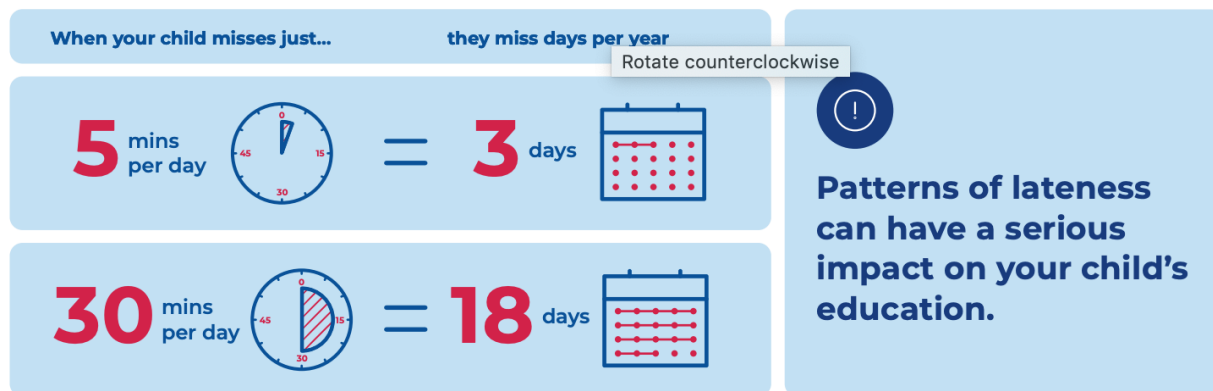
Upon arriving late at school, the parent/carer dropping the child off should go with them to the office to give a reason for their lateness and collect a late note. If a child arrives late without parent/carer explanation, this partial absence will be recorded as 'unjustified'.

When arriving to collect a child early from school, the parent/carer should go to the office to give a reason for their early departure. The child will then be called to office to go home.

If a child is taken from school and then returned on the same day, the parent/carer must go to the office twice, for the early departure and then again for the return.

Minutes lost = days lost per year

A couple of minutes here and there doesn't seem like much, but...

When your child misses just... they miss days per year

5 mins per day = **3** days

30 mins per day = **18** days

Patterns of lateness can have a serious impact on your child's education.

education.nsw.gov.au

ABSENCE EXPLANATIONS

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- 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)

Parents/carers must provide an explanation of absence within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence. The preferred options for providing absence explanations are in written form including the Skoolbag eform, a written note or email. These written explanations are passed onto the class teacher who enters the absence information on the Sentral system on the day they are received.

If an absence explanation is provided verbally, either in person at the school office or by telephone, all details must be immediately recorded on the Sentral system by the staff member accepting the explanation.

When explaining the reason for absence, it is advised that parents/carers give a specific reason rather than a broad/general reason eg; 'appointment with orthodontist' (instead of 'appointment') or 'sick with ear infection' (instead of 'sick').

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'.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness.

NSW Department of Education

Why attendance matters

When your child misses school they miss important opportunities to...

Learn   Make friends   Build skills through fun

education.nsw.gov.au

Attendance Register Codes		
Code	Meaning	Use
A	Unexplained or Unjustified	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents/carers within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the Principal.
S	Sick	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the Principal accepts this explanation. The Principal may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations.
L	Leave	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the Principal. This may be due to: - misadventure or unforseen event participation in special events not related to school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - travel in Australia or overseas - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.
E	Suspension	The student was suspended from school.
M	Exempt	The student was exempt from attending school and a certificate of exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
F	Flexible	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in Best Start Assessments.
B	School Business	The student is absent frm school on official business. This symbol is recorded where the Principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake business such as: - school sport representation - excursion - education event
H	Shared Enrolment	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 such as: - hospital school - distance education - behaviour support setting

Attendance Procedures Flowchart

Office Staff	Accurately mark partial absences (late arrivals and early leavers) on the roll when they occur. Generate SMS absence notice via Sentral daily when a student is absent without explanation. Record any explanation responses on Sentral. Securely file all written explanations. Generate parent notification letters (weekly) and provide to class teachers with envelopes. Record any 'explained' but 'unjustified' absences on Sentral on the day the explanations are received.
Class or Supervising Teacher	Accurately mark the roll at the start of each school day (9.00am). Record any absence explanations on Sentral on the day they are received. Securely file all written explanations. Send home parent notification letters (weekly) in envelopes when provided by office staff. Contact parents by phone or email when a student is 'late' more than 3 times in a term. Record details of conversations in Sentral 'Notes'. Notify Principal if parents are unresponsive to phone or email contact or if a students' pattern of attendance causes concern. Notify Principal if there are any concerns for a child's safety or wellbeing.
Principal	Monitor Sentral attendance records for any concerns. Tag relevant students as 'attendance concern' in Sentral. Provide mid and end term updates on any attendance concerns at Learning Support Team meetings. Contact parents by phone/email to highlight and discuss initial attendance concerns. Contact parents by letter to arrange an attendance meeting. Hold attendance meetings and develop attendance support plans. Consult with Attendance Support Officer and Learning Support Team about possible attendance support strategies. Submit application for Attendance Support Officer intervention (if required). Request NSW Police Welfare Check (if required). Report to Child Protection or Child Wellbeing Unit (if required).