



ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools in partnerships with parents and carers 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 (2025) 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 or carer 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:

- set high expectations for student attendance within their school
- ensure all staff understand their obligations under the policy
- promote regular attendance at school through teaching and learning opportunities that support the needs of all students
- have systems in place to maintain all attendance records
- regularly inform students, parents and carers, and the school community of the importance of attending school
- follow procedures for reporting child protection concerns underlying school attendance issues

School Staff:

- promote regular attendance at school through teaching and learning activities that support the needs of all students
- maintain accurate records of student attendance including roll marking using appropriate codes and recording absence explanations
- alert the Principal or supervisor when there are concerns about student attendance
- liaise with external agencies working with students where relevant

Parents/Carers:

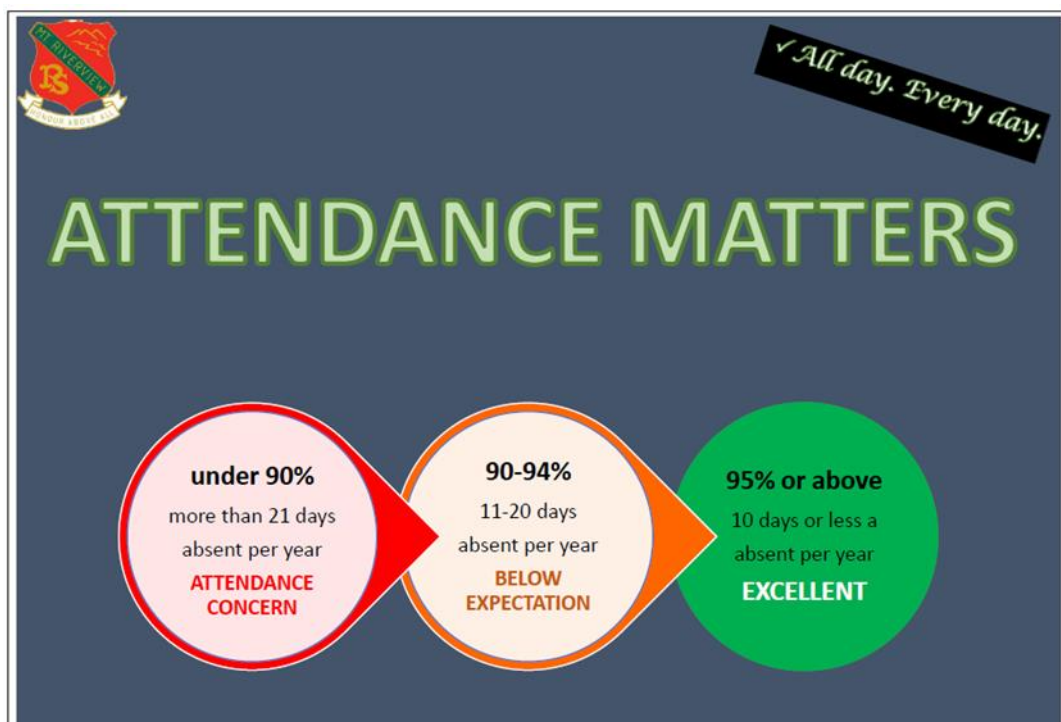
- ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled in school or registered for home schooling
- ensure their children who are enrolled in school attend every day the school is open for instruction
- provide an explanation for absences (in School Bytes Parent Portal or by email) within 7 days of each individual absence
- 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

Students:

- be prepared for learning each day
- arrive at school before 9.00am when the school day begins
- 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
- communicate with their class teacher or an executive about any matters causing concern and impacting on their attendance at school

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PLANNING

School attendance is a shared responsibility and school executive have an important role in ensuring attendance is an area of focus for their community. School attendance features as a priority area of ongoing improvement in the School Excellence Plan (SEP). Progress measures are identified and reviewed annually, providing the goal and the basis for developing and implementing processes and strategies aimed at achieving positive student attendance.



REQUIREMENTS FOR RECORDING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Student attendance records are recorded in the School Bytes digital system, which is a department approved third-party system. On some occasions, it is necessary for a paper roll may be marked and transferred to the digital system by administration staff.

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 (9.00am)
- use only the approved codes (listed in Appendix A)
- be submitted by the staff member marking the roll (or signed if a paper copy)



School Bytes

LATE ARRIVALS OR 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.

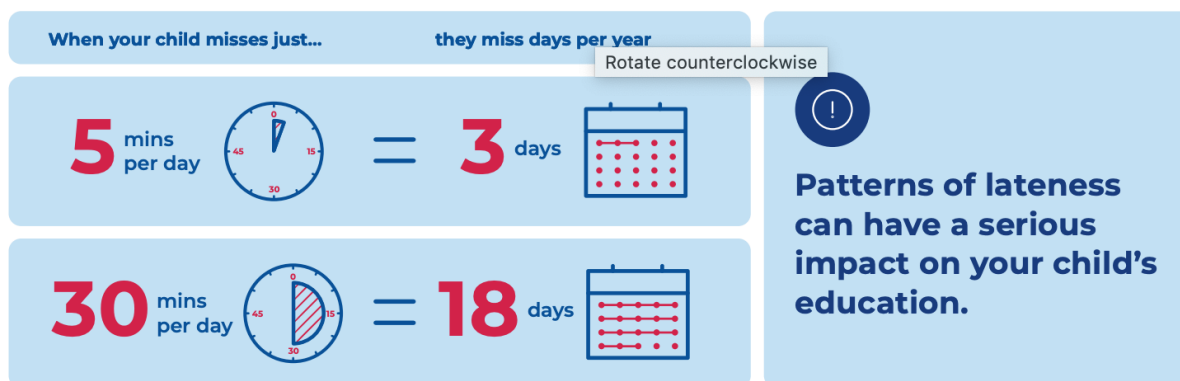
Upon arriving late at school, the parent/carer dropping the child off should go with them to the office to give a reason for their lateness and collect a late note. If a child arrives late without parent/carer explanation, this partial absence will be recorded as 'unjustified'. If the reason for lateness is given as "running late", this will also 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 the 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...



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EXTENDED LEAVE

Student absences for extended leave purposes outside vacation periods are counted as absences. This includes when absent for family holidays or travel. Exemption from school attendance cannot be granted for absence due to this reason.

Parents or carers can apply for extended leave, which involves a specific application. The Principal should not accept a reason for travel during the school term if it is not in the best interests of the student. Educational, social and participation reasons should be considered.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING ABSENCES

Schools must contact the parent or carer of any student absent without an explanation by the next school day. This will be done by an automatically generated SMS. Parents or carers are prompted to provide an absence explanation in the School Bytes Parent Portal.

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 their parents or carers to resolve them.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

When concerning patterns of attendance are identified, staff are required to adopt whatever measures are necessary to re-establish an acceptable attendance record. A number of strategies may be implemented:

- letter or email to request explanation of absences
- letter or email to give notice of attendance concerns
- phone contact with parents or carers
- student and/or parent/carer meeting with school executive 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)

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 option for providing absence explanations is through the School Bytes Parent Portal. If this is not possible, parents/cares may submit their absence explanation to the school email.

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 School Bytes 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').

The Principal may decline to accept an explanation that has been provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of the 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

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Attendance Register Codes		
Code	Meaning	Use
A	Unjustified	The reason provided for a student's absence is not accepted by the Principal. An unexplained absence becomes unjustified when an explanation has not been received within 7 days.
S	Sick	The student's absence is due to sickness, injury 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 unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - 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 at school because they are not required to be there. This could include participation in Best Start Assessments or when a school is non-operational.
B	School Business	The student is not on the school site and is 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 accessing education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: - hospital school - distance education - behaviour support setting