



Attendance Policy

Kindlehill School recognises that regular attendance at School is essential for students to achieve their educational best and is a key factor in their wellbeing. Kindlehill School is committed to supporting students to attend School regularly and to addressing issues that prevent students from doing so.

Kindlehill has high expectations of attendance. This is communicated to parents/carers, students and staff through various forums including: newsletters, the website, class meetings, teacher meetings and assemblies.

The Principal maintains a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school, which includes information for each student as required by Section 3.8 of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual.

The teachers/coordinators will monitor attendance and absences and identify and follow up student absences. The teachers/coordinators will notify parents when attendance is unsatisfactory and implement strategies to improve attendance.

Where the parents of a student of compulsory school age seeks an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the principal will process the parent's application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education.

The principal may exercise the Minister's delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act 1990 in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances. They will maintain records of the above delegation including copies of all certificates issued under the delegation.

Parents/carers are responsible for the regular attendance at School of their children. The School in consultation with parents/carers and students will implement intervention strategies to improve poor attendance. Kindlehill is committed to creating an educational environment that is engaging for all students.

This includes:

- quality curriculum
- engaging lessons
- quality teaching

- regular teacher professional development
- regular teacher meetings to discuss students
- child studies in teacher meetings
- regular excursions and camps
- outdoor education program
- creating special interest groups
- organising social events
- explicit teaching of social and well-being skills
- positive behaviour program
- developing strong teacher-student relationships
- learning support for struggling students
- inclusivity in class activities including games and play equipment
- gardening program
- animals such as chooks and guinea pigs on School grounds
- parent volunteers in classrooms and on excursions

Attendance Procedure

1. Register of Enrolments

1.1 Enrolling

The Principal maintains a register of enrolments for each student enrolled at the School and may delegate some tasks relating to this procedure. The Register of Enrolments is found in the School Management System- Edumate. The Edumate system is compliant with all the 3.8 NESA requirements.

A register of enrolments is retained by the School in the Edumate system for a minimum period of 5 years before archiving. When a student exits the School the information retained about the student is in accordance with the School's Privacy and Data Retention Policy.

When the parents/carers have filled out the enrolment forms the enrolment must be approved by the Principal. The Compliance Officer then enters student enrolment information into Edumate in a timely manner. Adjustments to the enrolment register, such as changes of address or phone number are made by the Administration Assistant. The information entered onto the enrolment register will include the following for each student:

- name, age and address;
- the name and contact telephone number of parents/carers;
- date of enrolment and where appropriate, the date of leaving the School and the student's destination;
- for students older than six years, their previous School or pre-enrolment situation
- where the destination of a student below seventeen (17) years of age is unknown, evidence that the Department of Education has been notified of the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents or student.

1.2 Ceasing Enrolment

On ceasing enrolment at the School, the parents/carers should notify the Principal in writing. A full term's notice should be given by the parents/carers of intention to cease enrolment. Parents/carers should notify the Principal of the next educational destination of the child. If the Principal is satisfied that this information is accurate then the Compliance Officer enters the destination and the last day of enrolment of the student into the Enrolment Register. If the parents/carers have not responded to the request for the student's destination the Principal will request this information via email, then by registered post if no response is received. Documentation of the request for information must be filed in the Attendance File on Teams. In the circumstance where educational destination is unknown see section 1.4.

Students who are not 17 years of age, are in Year 10 but have not completed the year and want to leave School and are not enrolling at another School, must satisfy the Principal that their next educational destination is a full-time traineeship, or an apprenticeship. The student's parents must apply to the school for an exemption from enrolment in advance of the time the apprenticeship/traineeship is to start. The Principal has the delegation to grant or cancel an Exemption from Enrolment for Special Circumstances (apprenticeship or traineeship). The school will inform the parent/carer in writing that the student must be enrolled in a school or registered for home schooling should the apprenticeship or traineeship cease prior to the student turning 17 years of age.

Students who are not 17 years of age and have completed Year 10, may cease enrolment from School if they wish to attend full time apprenticeship or traineeship or fulltime work or a combination of these; and the approved education/training/employment is for an average of 25 hours per week over a 4 week period. The Principal must be satisfied that their next educational destination is a full time traineeship, apprenticeship, work or a combination of these, for an average of 25 hours per week. The Principal will inform the parent/carer in writing that the student must be enrolled in a school or registered for home schooling should the education/ training/employment cease prior to the student turning 17 years of age.

1.3 Procedure for moving to Home Schooling

In the case of a student leaving to do Home Schooling, the Principal will communicate to the parents that they are required to produce a Home School Certificate. Home School Certificates can be applied for through NESA. Parents/carers will be advised by the Principal that the Education Act 1990, requires students to be enrolled at School until their application has been accepted and the certificate is produced.

1.4 Destination Unknown

Where the destination of a student below 17 years of age is unknown, or if a parent/carer has not produced a Home School Certificate when a student is moving to Home Schooling, evidence that the Department of Education has been notified (using the form Student Enrolment Destination Unknown, downloaded from RANGS, customised with the School's letterhead and emailed to attendance@det.nsw.edu.au). This form will be sent by the Compliance Officer to the Department of Education. A copy of this form will be placed in the Edumate system. The Compliance Officer will then enter 'destination unknown' and the date the above form was sent to the DoE, for the student into the Enrolment register. The Principal may seek AIS advice regarding unknown destinations.

The following details should be completed on the Destination unknown form:

- student's full name
- date of birth

- last known address
- last date of attendance
- parents' names and contact details
- an indication of possible destination
- what efforts the School has made to locate the child
- other information that may assist officers to locate the student
- any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents, carers or student

2. Register of daily attendance

2.1 Introduction

The register of daily attendance, maintained by the Principal and administered by the Administration Assistant, includes the following information for each student:

- daily attendance, using the common code approved by the Minister which may be recorded by noting daily absences (see Appendix);
- absences and partial absences;
- reason for absence ;
- documentation to substantiate reason for absence

Daily attendance is recorded in the *Mark Roll* section in the Edumate system, which all teachers/coordinators have a secure login access to.

Teachers/coordinators will record student attendance using the Minister's codes, in the class roll in a timely manner and record full or partial absences. Parents/Carers are required to give a reason for absence within 7 days of the absence. If the parent/carer does not provide a reason for absence within 7 days, the student will be recorded as unexplained.

The register of daily attendance is retained in the Edumate system for a minimum period of 7 years after the last entry was made.

2.2 Absences

Students may need to be absent from School for reasons that may include: illness, cultural or religious events, unavoidable medical appointments, public health order or urgent family circumstances. The reason for absence may be given in the form of a letter, email, text or phone message. Absences should be recorded using the Minister's codes in the *Mark Roll* section of Edumate and reasons for absences (including partial absences) should be noted.

If a student is absent from School, and if no reason has been given by the parent/carer the Administration Assistant will follow up with the parent/carer. If no reason is given by the parent/carer within 7 days of the absence, then the roll should be marked unexplained/unjustified absence for that day/s. The Administration Assistant keeps a record of requests for a reason in their email files. Any formal letters or emails are filed in the Students record in the Edumate system.

The Principal has the discretion to accept or refuse a reason for student absence. The Principal has the discretion to request documentation or more documentation to substantiate a reason for absence such as a medical certificate. It is at the Principal's discretion to determine the Minister's code that will be recorded in the attendance register. If the Principal does not accept the reason for absence, then the code for unjustified absence is recorded and the Principal will notify the parent/carer in writing about the reason for this.

When there are repeated unjustified absences, the Principal will notify the parent/carer. The Principal may remind the parent/care of their legal requirement under the Education Act 1990. Ongoing absences will be managed as per Attendance Concerns below.

2.3 Partial absences, late arrivals and early departures.

Partial absence, late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the teacher/coordinator, communicated to the Administration Assistant who updated the Enrolment Register; time of arrival/departure is recorded in the Edumate system. Students arriving late attend the Office where they are marked present in the Edumate system, and then go straight to their classroom unless a previous arrangement has been made between the teacher/coordinator and the parent/carer.

Parents/carers of students departing early should notify the teacher/coordinator or the Office the day before the early departure and an arrangement made for where the student will be picked up from the Office. Parents/carers should notify the teacher/coordinator of the Office for the reason for lateness/early departure, by email, text, phone, or note.

This will be documented by the teacher/coordinator and communicated to the Office. The Administration Assistant will update the Edumate system. Reasons for partial absences should be followed up by the Administration Assistant if not submitted by the parent/carer. If no reason is given by the parent/carer, then the roll should be marked partial unexplained absence for that day/s. If a parent/carer does not give a reason then the Administration Assistant keeps a record of the requests for a reason. If the Principal does not accept the reason for the partial absence then the code for unjustified absence is recorded and the Principal will notify the parent/carer in writing about the reason for this.

2.4 Request for Leave

A request for leave, except requests for leave for travel, may be given by the parent/carer in the form of a letter, email, text or phone message. The Principal may exercise their discretion to grant leave from

attendance for circumstances including misadventure, special events, religious and cultural events, and family necessity. The Principal may request more documentation to support the request. Leave may be granted retrospectively for absences less than a week.

Leave for travel may be requested by the parent/carer. The Principal, may exercise their discretion and to accept or not accept requests for leave. If the request for leave is accepted, the Principal will notify the parent/carer in writing including the applicable dates. The principal will also notify the parent/carer in writing if a request is refused and the reason for this. The student will be marked as unjustified absence. Reasons for leave, acceptance and non-acceptance of requests for leave should be recorded by the Administration Assistant in the Edumate system. Leave for travel may not be requested retrospectively.

2.5 Monitoring attendance data and absences

The Class teacher/coordinator monitors the attendance and absences of students in their class. This includes looking for repeated absences, patterns of absences, repeated late arrival or early departures both on an individual and class level. Where there are concerns, the teacher/coordinator should discuss these with the Principal and follow the procedure outlines in *section 4. Attendance Concerns*. Monitoring records are kept in the Edumate system, and are monitored by the teacher/coordinator.

3 Exemptions

3.1 In General

Under section 25 of the Education Act students may be eligible for an exemption from enrolment or attendance. To apply for an exemption, parents/carers must complete the applicable Exemption Attendance/Enrolment form in advance. All Exemption forms are available on request from the Office.

The Principal may request more documentation to support an exemption. All documentation should be filed in the student's class files and in Attendance (Exemptions) on College Teams. The Principal will then process the application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education. Exemptions cannot be requested retrospectively.

Procedural fairness must be accorded to an applicant for exemption. If the Principal is considering refusing granting an exemption, the parent should be given an opportunity to respond to the delegate's concerns before a final decision is made. This opportunity should be offered to the parent in writing. If an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision made by the Principal, the School's Complaints Policy and Procedures would apply and/or the applicant may appeal to the Minister's Delegate. If the Principal does not accept the request for exemption, then the applicant must be notified in writing.

The Principal may not delegate their authority to grant and cancel exemptions to other staff. The Certificate of Exemption granted by the Principal will include:

- any specific conditions that apply to the exemption
- state that the exemption may be cancelled if any such conditions are not met or cease to apply
- in the case of exemption from attendance, specify dates for which the exemption is valid, including hours of program participation if a part day exemption period applies

The original Certificate of Exemption will be given to the parent/carer. A copy of the Certificate of Exemption, requests for exemption and related correspondence should be filed in Attendance (Exemptions) on College Teams and in the student's class file.

The School will retain copies of all documentation relating to the exemption in the student file and the Attendance file until the student reaches the age of 25, or for 7 years, whichever is greater, and then destroy.

The AIS Exemption fact sheet can be found in the Attendance Policy and Procedures File on Teams.

3.2 Exemption from enrolment

An exemption from enrolment for a student may be requested by a parents/carer for in these circumstances:

- the student has completed Year 9 but not Year 10 and wish to enter a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship or a combination of work and apprenticeship or traineeship
- if the student has completed Year 9 and wishes to complete their education under special circumstances other than a traineeship or apprenticeship. In this circumstance the applicant must seek exemption through NESAs

At 17 years of age students cease to be of compulsory School age.

Before a certificate of exemption is granted, approval must be sought from the Commissioner for Vocational Education, State Training Services, to a student entering a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship.

If a student does not complete their apprenticeship or traineeship, have not completed Year 10 at School and are not 17, they will be legally required to complete Year 10 under another pathway of the Education Act (1990) for example returning to School or seeking enrolment at TAFE.

All documentation regarding an exemption application from enrolment are filed in the student's class file and in Attendance (Exemptions) on College Teams.

Support documentation for Exemptions can be found in the Attendance Policy and Procedure Folder. The Principal may also seek support from AIS.

3.3 Exemption from Attendance

A student may be exempt from attending School under the following conditions:

- participation in elite sports or an arts program
- employment in approved entertainment industry activities
- directions under the Public Health Act 2010
- exceptional circumstance

The Principal may exercise the Minister's delegation under Section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from attendance at School for 100 days or more in a twelve month period for any one student, including part day exemptions. The School will request assistance from the AIS Division Head, Education Regulations and Program Implementation AIS for this process. Exemption may not be given for travel. This should be requested as leave.

The Principal may cancel the Certificate of Exemption from Attendance where they identify circumstances that they believe warrants this action. For example, where the conditions attached to the exemption are not being met or cease to apply.

The parent/carer is not required to apply for an exemption from attending School because of a direction under the Public Health Act 2010.

The attendance register must indicate exemptions from attendance using the Minister's approved code. The Principal monitors Exemptions from Attendance.

4 Attendance Concerns

When there is a concern about a student's attendance, notes should be kept in the student's file by the teacher/coordinator. If an Attendance Improvement Plan is put in place, then all minutes, reports, plans and letters to parents/carers are to be filed in the relevant Attendance Folder (either in High School Teams for High School students or College Teams for Primary School students) and a dated note made in the student's Student Welfare Folder.

4.1 Intervention Strategies for poor attendance

When there is a concern about student attendance the Class Teacher or High School Coordinator should contact the parent/carer to arrange a meeting and review the pattern of attendance and discuss strategies to improve attendance. Indicators of a student at risk of attendance concerns can include: patterns of absence including habitual lateness, regularly arriving late or leaving School early, multiple single day absences over a term, absences that regularly occur on Mondays, after holidays, School camps or excursions, unexplained absences, tearfulness and clinginess on arrival, frequent complaints of illness at School.

Poor attendance can occur in the context of Child well-being and child protection concerns. If there is a concern about risk of significant harm, the School will follow its mandatory reporting procedures regardless of how many days the students has been absent.

Teachers may provide a report of attendance to parents/carers. Strategies for attendance improvement are developed in consultation with the parent and where appropriate, the student. They should be documented and shared with the parent/carer and filed in the teacher/coordinator's student file. Minutes from the meeting should also be kept in the teacher's student file. These strategies are proactive and are based on the individual needs of the student. They may include:

- identification of student's strengths and providing opportunities for student to demonstrate strengths
- identifying students interests and developing learning programs or projects work that incorporates those interests
- giving student responsibility in an area of interest
- encouraging students to join groups or ensembles e.g. Jazz Ensemble, Homework Club
- creating safe spaces
- identify a support person (peer and/or staff member)
- supervised arrival and check in with teacher
- modified learning program or other adjustments to curriculum
- consequences for late arrival
- counselling and professional support for family/students

The School may also

- use an AIS Consultant
- discuss student in Teacher meetings
- work with the student's counsellor

4.2 Ongoing concerns with poor attendance

If the Principal has ongoing concerns with a student's attendance, then a letter from the Principal is sent to the parents/carers identifying ongoing concerns and requesting a meeting to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan. This letter identifies the parent/carer's legal obligation under The Education Act (1990) to ensure that their child attends School. The Principal may also send the parent/carer a copy of AIS Compulsory School Attendance – Information for Parents.

The Attendance Improvement Plan sets out agreed actions and goals set to improve the student's attendance. Assistance with creating Attendance Plans or other student attendance issues can be provided by the AIS Students Support Team. The Principal should keep a record of student compliance to the Attendance Plan.

If the student is unable to follow the Attendance Plan and the student's attendance remains of serious concern to the Principal, then the Principal can arrange a Secretary's Compulsory School Conference. This can be arranged by contacting the AIS students Services Team. The parent/carer is notified in writing by the Principal of their need to attend this conference. The conference will help the family identify the supports the family may need to improve attendance. This letter also advises the parent/carer that the Department of Education must consider further action specified in the Education Act such that an application to the Court of Court Ordered Compulsory Schooling Orders or prosecution in the local court with the possible imposition of a fine (with a maximum penalty of \$11 000).

The letter from the Principal to the parent/carer should be filled in Attendance Folder on Teams and a note made in the Student Welfare File.

4.3 Failure to attend to Secretary's Compulsory School Conference

If the parent/carer fails to attend the Secretary's Compulsory School Conference and Attendance Plans have failed then NSW legislation requires that consideration is given to legal action against the parent or student. School's are supported in this process through the Department of Education's legal branch and assistance in this process can be obtained from the AIS Education regulations and Program Implementation team. A letter from the Principal outlining these considerations must be written to the parent/carer. These considerations may include an application to the Children's Court for a Court Ordered Compulsory Schooling and/or Compulsory Schooling Orders, or prosecution in the local court with the possible imposition of a fine (with a maximum penalty of \$11 000). The Principal will send a letter to the parent/carer outlining the above.

If a Compulsory Schooling Order is issued by the magistrate then the parents/carers may be required to attend a Court Ordered Compulsory Schooling Conference. The Principal may then send a letter to the parent/carer outlining the requirement for the parent/carer to attend with the date, time and venue.



School Attendance Register Codes

Schools are required to have policy and procedures to monitor regular attendance and to ensure that records are current, accurate and accessible. The procedures should reflect how attendance is marked, followed up and records maintained at that particular School.

The tables on the following pages indicate:

- Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence
- Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

The symbol 'X' is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

Schools must use the following symbols to record an absence or variation in attendance, *in addition to* the appropriate attendance register code shown on the following pages.

Symbol	Meaning
a	The student was absent for the whole day
Pa	The students was late or was absent for part of the day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

NESA requires that the register of enrolments must be retained for a minimum of five (5) years before archiving.

The register of daily attendance must be retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.

Appendix

Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence

The following attendance register codes are to be used to record the explanation of student absence and **are counted** for statistical purposes.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
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.	To be also used if the principal does not accept that an absence (e.g. for extended leave/travel during School term) is in the student's best interests and that the reason is unjustified.
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. 	Note that this code is to be used if the reason for the absence (e.g. extended leave/travel) is accepted by the principal. The principal may consider an Application for Extended Leave/Travel from parents, and provide a Certificate for Extended Leave/Travel, if approved.
E	The student was suspended from School	

Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

Only the following attendance register codes must be used to record a variation in attendance – they are **not** counted as an absence for statistical purposes. In addition to recording the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the variation must be recorded.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
M	The student was exempted from attending School and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.	
F	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses 	<p>The “F” code is no longer only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable.</p> <p>The code should also be used in independent Schools for students attending external tutorial centres and other programs that are School authorised.</p>
B	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - School sport (representative events) - School excursions - student exchange 	<p>The ‘B’ code is used for sport when the student has been selected to represent the School at an event.</p> <p>If the student is participating at an elite level (state or national squads), consideration may be given to an Exemption from Attendance (Elite Sports/Arts)</p>

<p>H</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream School such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour Schools - juvenile justice - hospital Schools - distance education 	<p>In most cases this code will only be used by government Schools, with the exception of students from non-government Schools attending hospital Schools.</p> <p>The “F” code, not the “H” code is to be used by independent Schools for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are School authorised.</p>
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