

KATOOMBA HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE

OF

STUDENTS

Policy and Procedures

**Approved by Katoomba High School Executive
December 2003
For implementation in 2004**

Preamble

Katoomba High School is a comprehensive public school that serves its local community. It recognises that attendance is central to all academic and welfare issues.

The responsibility for encouraging and monitoring high standards of attendance and punctuality is shared amongst the whole school community including staff, students and care providers.

The legal basis for compulsory school attendance is located specifically within the principles established in the Education Act 1990, that states that all children between the ages of 6 and 15 must attend school each day that school is open, unless specific exemptions apply. The Act also applies principles in terms of attendance registers that are to be marked accurately on a daily basis.

There are two other issues relating to school attendance. The first is that schools have a duty of care to their students. The maintenance, monitoring and communication of attendance information to the relevant persons form part of that duty. The second is that good attendance links directly to good learning.

This policy also needs to be read in conjunction with Katoomba High School Enrolment of Students Policy and the Department of Education and Training document – School Attendance: Policies and Procedures, 1991.

Rationale

- The attendance policy is mandatory and is a part of the school’s Student Welfare Policy.
- This policy recognises that maximum attendance supports the achievement of our whole school goals by all students. That is, that all students will become:
 - participating community members
 - self-sufficient individuals
 - ready for life and work
 - effective communicators
 - life long learners and
 - environmentally aware
- Katoomba High has a responsibility for improving student attendance rates in terms of both full day and fractional attendance.

Objectives

- To improve student attendance rates
- To decrease the incidence of fractional truancy
- To minimize the number of students arriving late
- To develop proactive approaches to attending school in order to maximize learning opportunities for our students
- To maximise student achievement of whole school goals through full attendance

Implementation

Teacher responsibilities:

- Communicating high expectations for, and acknowledging, good attendance
- Responding to lateness and truancy for their own classes
- Maintaining a positive and attractive classroom environment
- Accurately marking school, class, and sport rolls
- Supporting the Welfare Team in attendance initiatives
- Consistently implementing the Katoomba High School’s attendance policy

Student Responsibilities:

- Attending school punctually on each day that instruction is provided
- Attending all lessons punctually
- Remaining in class at all times unless given permission to leave
- Bringing notes from parents/caregivers to explain absences
- Co operating with school attendance policy

Care Provider Responsibilities:

- Sending students to school on every day instruction is provided
- Promoting a positive attitude towards school attendance
- Providing written or verbal explanations for each absence from school
- Cooperating with school attendance policy

Head Teacher Welfare Responsibilities:

- Promote and clarify KHS expectations for attendance
- Supervise accurate roll marking
- Monitor student attendance patterns
- Maintain effective communication with members of the school community
- Referrals to the Home School Liaison team
- Implement strategies to correct absenteeism and truancy
- Liaise with the Welfare Team to develop individual attendance remediation programs
- Provide recognition for outstanding attendance
- Conduct Phone Intervention Program
- Ensuring that the Principal receives a Periodic Absence Report on the Wednesday of week 2
- Ensuring the Principal signs the record of Phone Intervention contacts on at least a fortnightly basis

Principal Responsibilities:

- Promote and clarify KHS expectations for attendance
- Ensure there is a policy for school attendance as part of the school Student Welfare Policy
- Establish procedures and structures to support teachers dealing with attendance problems and to promote and recognise good attendance
- Authorise school interventions when attendance has been unsatisfactory
- Ensure attendance records are accessible
- Authorise generation of automatic OASIS absence notices to parent/caregiver

Strategies to Encourage Attendance

- Counselling of students with poor attendance by Head Teacher Welfare, Welfare Team, HSLO, School Counsellor, and outside agencies where appropriate
- Raising the profile of attendance through, teachers marking class rolls in a public way, acknowledgement of good/improved attendance, verbal encouragement by all school personnel and correction of absenteeism and truancy
- Revise expectations on a regular basis through articles in the newsletter, messages on assembly and via the daily bulletin
- Acknowledge good attendance through the recognition certificate system and special certificates each semester for students with outstanding attendance
- Correct absenteeism and truancy through:
 - Phone intervention program – following 3 unexplained partials
 - For all fractional truants (within 24 hours)
 - Accurate roll marking and consistent follow-up
 - Regular spot attendance checks of students of concern
 - Random checks of whole year groups on a regular basis
 - Follow-up of lateness and truancy at classroom level
 - Counselling of poor attenders and referral to HSLO team, Welfare Team or outside agencies

Evaluation

The attendance policy will be evaluated in terms of agreed indicators on the School Plan.

Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Attendance procedures work most effectively when students are aware that we care, we will monitor their attendance and we will follow up on absences.

Procedures need to ensure that we:

- make our expectation of maximum attendance in all lessons very clear
- have procedures for acknowledging good attendance
- have strategies for correcting truancy and unnecessary absence

Procedures and Practice

Roll Call occurs before 1st period and is conducted in association with either the assembly or RATS (Reading Across The School). Roll classes are organised vertically and on a house basis. Two Head Teachers are allocated to each House Group to assist with issues such as uniform, lateness, reading and Head Teacher Monitoring.

The roll is to be marked on the hard copy of the OASIS roll prepared by the SAS staff. Initially, this hard copy will be for 6 weeks only. A roll book will be prepared when enrolments have stabilised and the reading group rolls finalised.

Roll teachers should use the exception method and associated symbols described in the roll book. This will enable casual staff, SAS staff and non-school based personnel to accurately complete and/or interpret the roll.

Roll teachers should record all students who are absent from roll call on the absentee slip. Roll teachers should also do a head count of students present to ensure that the list of students listed as absent is accurate. Variations to previously submitted absentee slips should also be recorded.

Written explanations provided by parents are to be given to roll teachers who will record the details on the Absentee Slip for entry into OASIS by the SAS staff. The note shall then be sent to the Office to filing. Where verbal explanations are given to a member of the Executive or Welfare Team, they shall be noted on an absence explanation form which will be forwarded to the appropriate SAS staff member for entry into OASIS and filing. Where verbal explanations are given to the Head Teacher Welfare they shall be recorded into OASIS and noted as part of the Phone Intervention Program records.

Daily Absentee Sheet

The Daily Absentee Sheet is generated by a member of the SAS staff and includes partial and whole day absences lists for students, staff absences, student messengers, students on levels 2 or 3 or suspension and known variations to routine. Prior to publication the Head Teacher Welfare checks the absentee sheet. The absentee sheet is then distributed to staff rooms and offices by the office messengers or SAS Staff before recess.

Staff are required to check their class rolls each lesson against the absentee sheet and report any discrepancies to the Head Teacher Welfare at the end of the day. The sheets are then checked and actioned by the Head Teacher Welfare with OASIS records adjusted as appropriate. Staff will advise applicable parent contact made as appropriate.

Students who are identified as present at school but not in roll call on a regular basis will be interviewed by the Head Teacher Welfare or a member of the Senior Executive and parents contacted either by phone or via the appropriate RISC letter.

Late Arrival Procedures

This is recorded on phone intervention of RISC records as appropriate.

Students who arrive after the second bell are to report to the Front Office where their time of arrival will be recorded on OASIS. Students are not admitted to roll call after the second bell. They are to report directly to the Front Office. If the student has a note explaining their late arrival, or the caregiver has provided a verbal reason, the student will then be given a pass to enable them to enter class. If the lateness is unexplained, the student will be issued with an Unexplained Lateness Pass, which must be initialed by each of the student's teachers for the day, this pass will be collected by the office runner during the last teaching period. If the pass is not collected, it is the student's responsibility to return it to the front office at the end of the day. Failure to return the slip may result in detention.

The Head Teacher Welfare will closely monitor the unexplained partial absence reports to ensure that students are fulfilling their requirements. When a pattern of lateness appears and/or when the student fails to follow procedures, parents will be contacted and a formal interview arranged where appropriate.

If a student persistently fails to complete their obligations, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Principal, to be dealt with within welfare procedures.

Early Leavers Procedures

Students who need to leave school early must submit their request to the Office before school where a member of the SAS staff will complete the appropriate pass and record the details of the early leave pass on OASIS.

All requests for early leave passes must be signed by the Head Teacher Welfare, or their nominee, before being submitted to the Office.

Excursions

Staff who organise excursions, sporting trips, etc. are responsible for ensuring that accurate attendance data is submitted to the Office.

Two days prior to the excursion a list of students attending is to be submitted to the Office and published in the daily notices. Following the excursion any variation to the submitted list is to be advised to the Office.

Students who are on excursions, sporting trips, etc. and who miss Roll Call are to be marked absent by Roll Teachers and entered into OASIS as absent prior to the publication of the absentee sheet. Following the publication of the absentee sheet, the relevant absences will be deleted. This procedure will eliminate the need for excursion lists to be included on the absentee sheet.

School Carnivals

School carnivals are normal school days and rolls will be marked at the beginning and end of the carnival. Where necessary special rolls will be prepared from OASIS for the day and the SAS staff will enter the absence data as normal. The specially prepared rolls will be filed with the absentee slips.

Regular Absences: Work Experience, PAC, Sport, etc.

Staff are responsible for advising the Office if students are to be absent from school due to school related activities on a regular basis. SAS staff will maintain a register of such students to ensure that absences are not recorded in OASIS.

Student leave from scheduled classes

Students should not be out of class without the permission/knowledge of their class teacher and must have in their possession an Out of Class Pass signed by the appropriate member of staff dated and timed at all times.

Senior Students with no scheduled classes

Senior students who are not timetabled for classes are not required to attend in the afternoon if they have no further timetabled classes. These students are required to complete a blue timetable card, which will be stamped, signed by the Head Teacher Welfare and then laminated. This timetable will constitute a valid leave pass.

Sport Organisation

Attendance at sport is a mandatory requirement for the awarding of any certificate by the Board of Studied. The attendance records for sport will be maintained in OASIS including what sport the student has chosen and any unauthorised absences. The Head Teacher Welfare, the Sports Organiser(s) and the SAS staff will liaise closely to ensure that the OASIS information is accurate and up to date. Procedures for following up students who do not attend sport and the roll of all staff in ensuring that attendance at sport is maximised are outlined in the Katoomba High School Sport Policy.