



Purpose

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential and increase their career and life options. While parents and carers are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, Oatley West PS is responsible for supporting regular attendance by;

- creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging
- creating optimal opportunities for all learners to promote student engagement
- recognising and rewarding excellent and/or improved student attendance
- maintaining accurate attendance records
- working in partnership with parents/carers and providing clear information to students and parents/carers regarding attendance requirements
- establishing and maintaining clear and consistent school wide attendance procedures

Oatley West Ps follows the [Department of Education's Student Attendance in Government Schools Procedures \(2015\)](#)

Responsibilities

Students will:

- recognise the importance of regular attendance
- understand there is no playground supervision before 8:55am
- be on time to school each day
- line up in the morning when the bell goes at 9:25am ready to listen and learn
- hand in absence notes to classroom teachers
- present at the school office if they arrive after the 9:25am bell to collect a late slip and give to the classroom teacher
- be supported to improve their attendance

Parents/carers will:

- enrol their children in school when they are of compulsory school age
- understand the legal requirements and the importance of regular school attendance
- ensure their child attends school every day and on time
- provide written or verbal explanation for student absences within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence, by means of absence notes, telephone messages, email or other methods
- be encouraged to provide a medical certificate for their child for consecutive absences of 3 days or more
- escort their child to the front office to be signed in, and to provide reason if they arrive late to school, and understand this will be recorded as a *Partial Absence*
- obtain an early slip from the front office for their child if they wish to collect them from school before 3:25pm, understanding this will be recorded as a *Partial Absence*
- ensure that any travel/leave required will be planned for in the school holidays and not during the school term, where possible
- complete an *Application for Extended Leave- Travel* prior to your child's leave and provide this to the school office to be processed by the school principal. The leave will only be supported for short, exceptional circumstances and where your child's attendance is satisfactory (at least 85% or above for overall attendance). If this application is supported by the principal, your child's absences will be recorded as *Leave*. If your application is not supported by the principal, your child's absences will be recorded as *Unjustified*.

Message from the Principal

Regular attendance at school is a defining factor for students maintaining progress with learning. All NSW Public Schools have specific targets in student attendance they are working towards meeting. Part of meeting these targets is having comprehensive systems in place to monitor student attendance.

The details of each *Application for Extended Leave – Travel* are carefully reviewed by the school and the circumstances included given due consideration. However, it is important all families understand that a student's overall attendance percentage for the current school year and previous school years are also closely considered, as part of this application process. For all NSW Public Schools, once a student's attendance percentage falls below 85% overall attendance, the school enacts a number of strategies to support the return to regular attendance for that student.

By supporting an *Application for Extended Leave – Travel* where the students listed on the application are already at or below this 85% overall attendance, I would be consciously endorsing the student's attendance to fall even further below the NSW Department of Education and school expectations. It is for this reason that these applications will not be supported by the school. This is also a consideration for families lodging an application for long term extended travel that will bring the student's attendance percentage to a level well below 85% overall attendance.

I once again urge all families to ensure due consideration is given when organising or booking travel during school terms. We encourage all families to limit travel where possible to school holiday periods so it limits the significant disruption to student learning. I thank you for your ongoing support with this matter.

Staff will;

- create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments to encourage and promote students' regular school attendance
- engage with and implement the school's attendance policy, in line with departmental attendance policies and procedures
- understand the importance of accurately recording and carefully monitoring students' attendance
- ensure the class roll is marked promptly each morning by 9:40am
- take all reasonable measures to follow up unexplained absences with parents/carers on the same day or following day of an absence where parents have not contacted the school
- notify the office if a child has been absent for more than 2 days, with no reason provided, so contact with the parents/carers can be made
- only accept explanations for student absences from parents/carers
- ensure absence notifications are entered accurately on Sentral, referring to the School Attendance Register Codes (Appendix 1)
- encourage parents/carers to provide a medical certificate for student absences of more than 2 consecutive days
- send any student who arrives late to school to the office to collect a late slip
- send any student who is being collected early by parents/carers to the office
- regularly look for patterns of absences and lateness
- recognise and reward students for excellent and/or improved student attendance
- include accurate attendance data in Semester Reports and comment on any students of concern

- discuss students with attendance concerns with your supervisor or Deputy Principal and refer at risk students to the Learning and Support Team
- utilise the Attendance Flowchart for Teachers (Appendix 2) to support their management of student attendance
- work in partnership with students and parents/carers to support student attendance.

Supervisors (Assistant Principal) will:

- support teachers in monitoring student attendance
- discuss student attendance at weekly team meetings
- liaise with the School Attendance Supervisor and the Learning and Support Team to discuss students of concern
- work in partnership with students, parents/carers and teachers to support student attendance

School Attendance Supervisor (Deputy Principal) will:

- ensure systematic whole school processes for monitoring and managing student attendance are in place
- monitor and promote regular attendance at school
- provide professional learning to all staff on attendance
- liaise with the principal, supervisors, teachers and the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) to support student attendance
- monitor rolls at 2 weekly intervals, obtain and analyse data and bring any concerns to the attention of the class teacher, supervisor, Learning and Support Team and the Principal
- follow up on students with attendance concerns and refer to the HSLO when necessary
- maintain attendance records so that they are easily accessible for all staff, including the HSLO
- distribute the Compulsory School Attendance – Information for Parents (Appendix 4) regarding student attendance to all newly enrolled students
- communicate attendance updates via the Oatley West Lantern Newsletter for parents/carers
- work in partnership with the administrative staff to ensure accurate attendance records are kept
- facilitate attendance team meetings
- use the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) for students with significant attendance concerns to help decide whether a child is suspected to be at risk of significant harm and a report to the Child Protection Helpline should be made
- regularly evaluate and address school attendance through the school plan
- work in partnership with students, parents/carers, teachers and supervisors to support student attendance

Learning and Support Team will:

- allocate time each term to discuss attendance at Learning and Support Team meetings
- work in partnership with students, parents/carers, teachers, supervisors and the School Attendance Supervisor to identify and implement strategies that address the learning and support needs of students with attendance concerns

Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) will:

- work in partnership with the school to support whole school attendance policies and procedures
- assist with school-based attendance strategies
- interview students and parents to identify contributing factors in relation to attendance concerns and to suggest strategies to improve attendance

- convene Attendance Improvement Plan meetings to assist with the resolution of attendance concerns
- organise Compulsory Schooling Conferences
- conduct periodic roll checks
- collaborate with other Department of Education personnel and external agencies to support student attendance

Administrative Staff will:

- check rolls are marked by 9:45am each day and follow up outstanding rolls with classroom teachers
- telephone parents/carers of students who have been absent more than two days with no reason provided
- Email digital absence notifications to parents/carers, weekly, where reason for absence has not been provided
- accurately enter all verbal/phone/email and School Bytes absence notifications referring to the School Attendance Register Codes (Appendix 1)
- enter late arrivals on Sentral and provide students with late slips
- record early departures in Sentral ensuring additional fields including *Communication Method, Source of Information and/or Comment fields* are populated in Sentral
- notify the classroom teacher if a student has left the school early during breaks- recess and lunch
- upload to Sentral and forward all supporting medical documentation received digitally to teachers so they are kept informed of reasons why student has been absent
- liaise with the Attendance Supervisor

Principal will:

- ensure the school's attendance policy is implemented
- follow departmental attendance policies and procedures
- ensure that accurate student attendance records are maintained
- process applications for *Extended Leave- Travel* (Appendix 3) and communicate outcome with parents/carers
- regularly evaluate and address school attendance through the Strategic Improvement Plan

Roll Marking Procedures:

- teachers are to mark rolls accurately on Sentral by 9:40am each morning, referring to the *School Attendance Register Codes* (Appendix 1)
- RFF and library teachers who have a class at 9:25am are responsible for marking the roll
- casual teachers who do not have access to Sentral are responsible for marking a paper roll and sending it to the office by 9:35am to be entered into Sentral
- if classes are split, alternative arrangement will be made to ensure student absences are recorded

Tiers of Intervention and Strategies to Support Improved Attendance

Universal Preventions: Proactive (90-100% Attendance rate)

The school will:

- promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance in school communications, such as the website, Oatley West Lantern Newsletter for parents and carers and through regular meetings with staff
- create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments to encourage and promote students' regular school attendance
- engage with and implement the Oatley West PS attendance policy, in line with departmental attendance policies and procedures
- understand the importance of accurately recording and carefully monitoring students' attendance
- recognise and reward students for excellent and/or improved student attendance
- discuss student attendance at weekly stage meetings
- provide professional learning to all staff on attendance

Targeted Interventions: Tier 1 (80-89% Attendance Rate)

The school will:

- allocate time each term to discuss attendance at Learning and Support Team meetings
- identify students with attendance concerns and support them to participate in wellbeing programs at school, such as extra-curricular lunch time activities and Peaceful Kids
- issue communications to individual families using *NSW Department of Education Attendance Matters* resources regarding student attendance
- implement the Peer Support program where students are buddied with other students across K-6 to form connections and to develop a sense of belonging
- hold parent/carers meetings to discuss attendance concerns and identify strategies to support improved attendance
- provide parents/carers with information about relevant assistance, such as financial assistance, school counselling or local community support services
- recognise and reward targeted students for excellent and/or improved student attendance

Individual Interventions: Tier 2 (50-79% Attendance rate) / Tier 3 (0-49% Attendance Rate)

The school will:

- create individualised attendance plans to support improved student attendance
- support students with attendance concerns to participate in wellbeing programs at school, extra-curricular lunch time activities and Peaceful Kids
- interview students and parents/carers, with support from the HSLO to identify contributing factors in relation to attendance concerns and to suggest strategies to improve attendance
- work with parents/carers of students with attendance concerns to participate and be included in decision-making
- assist students to develop explicit learning goals, with clear and consistent expectations about what the students are to do and how they are to do it
- recognise and reward targeted students for excellent and/or improved student attendance
- create individualised reward charts/incentives to support improved student attendance
- provide parents/carers with information about relevant assistance, such as financial assistance, school counselling or local community support services
- engage with external support services to improve individual student attendance

Appendices

- Appendix 1: School Attendance Register Codes
- Appendix 2: Attendance Flowchart for Teachers
- Appendix 3: Application for Extended leave- Travel
- Appendix 4: Compulsory School Attendance- Information for Parents
- Appendix 5: Attendance Flowchart for Parents/Carers



Education &
Communities

Public Schools NSW

School Attendance Register Codes

Changes to the codes commencing 2015

Changes from 2015

The Minister for Education has approved changes to the use of the Attendance Register codes for 2015.

The changes implement the *ACARA National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting*. ACARA developed the National Standards to establish nationally consistent parameters for the collection and reporting of student attendance data.

Holidays

As part of the implementation of the National Standards, holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods will now be included as absences. **A Certificate of Exemption can no longer be granted for this purpose.**

Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. If travel outside of school vacation periods is necessary, the following considerations apply:

- If the principal **accepts** the reason for the absence, the absence will be marked as “L” and a Certificate of Extended Leave – Holiday issued.
- If the principal does not believe the absence is in the student’s best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence will be recorded as “A”. A Certificate of Extended Leave – Holiday **will not** be issued.

- If the period of absence is in excess of 50 days, the student may be eligible to enrol in Distance Education. See [Distance Education - Revised Enrolment Procedures 2014](#).

For that period the student’s enrolment transfers to the distance education school.

Leave

The revised use of the “L” code relating to holidays means the 15 day limit on its use has been removed.

Other codes

The recent changes to the Attendance Register Codes include the redefinition of some codes:

- The “F” code is no longer used only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable. The code will now also be used for students participating in HSC Pathways Programs, Best Start Assessments, trial or HSC exams or VET courses.
- The “B” code includes student exchange and allows for some additional flexibility around its use.

- The “H” code is used when a student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to attend an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis.

Accepting explanations

- The “A” code is to 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 the explanation provided.
- If a student’s absence is due to sickness the “S” code is used. The principal may request a medical certificate in addition to an explanation if the explanation provided is doubted or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.

Further information

Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships

Learning and Engagement

1 Oxford St, Darlinghurst NSW 2010
02 9244 5345

School Attendance Register Codes 2015

2015 Attendance Register Codes

Definitions

Only the following attendance register codes **must** be used to record the:

- explanation of student absence, and/or
- variation in student attendance.

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence	
Symbol	Meaning
A	<p>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.</p>
S	<p>The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. <p>Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.</p>
L	<p>An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to:</p> <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.
E	The student was suspended from school

School Attendance Register Codes 2015

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used to record a variation in attendance (not counted as an absence for statistical purposes)	
Symbol	Meaning
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
F	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses
B	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange
H¹	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. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education

¹ Note: In most cases this code will only be used by Department of Education and Communities schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools.

School Attendance Register Codes 2015

Recording the duration of an absence or variation in attendance

In addition to recording the reason for an absence or the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the absence or variation must be recorded.

Manual Attendance Registers

Department of Education and Communities schools that maintain manual attendance registers and do not use electronic means for maintaining student attendance must use the following symbols with the appropriate attendance register code for recording the reason for absence or a variation in attendance:

- a** - The student was absent on that day.
- Pa** - The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

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

Electronic Attendance Registers²

For Department of Education and Communities schools using electronic means for maintaining student attendance (OASIS, ebs4 or compliant third party systems), when recording a partial absence, the precise time of arrival and/or departure must be documented.

When information is transferred to OASIS from other compliant electronic systems, or from manual attendance registers, whole day absence (a) will be shown as W and partial absence (Pa) will be shown as P.

² Note: This only applies to Department of Education and Communities Schools.

Attendance Flowchart for Teachers



Mark and submit roll each day by 9:40am

Enter absence notifications/notes provided to the teacher accurately on Sentral referring to the Attendance Register Codes

Take all reasonable measures to follow up unexplained absences with parents/carers on the same day or following day of an absence where parents have not contacted the school

Regularly monitor patterns of attendance on Sentral

Notify the office if a child has been absent for more than 2 days, with no reason provided, so contact with the parents/carers can be made

Discuss student attendance concerns with your Assistant Principal

Work in partnership with students and parents/carers to support improved attendance

If student absence continues, Assistant Principal to discuss with School Attendance Supervisor (Deputy Principal)

Work in partnership with student, parents/carers, Assistant Principal and School Attendance Supervisor to support improved attendance

If absence continues, School Attendance Supervisor (Deputy Principal) refers to Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO)

Application for extended leave - travel

Note: Part A is to be completed by the student's parent and returned to their child's school principal. Separate applications are to be completed for each school if siblings do not attend the same school.

Part A: Student details

Please complete table below with details of all students associated with the period of travel:

Family name	Given name	DOB	Age	Grade	SRN

Student address:

Postcode:

School name

Dates of extended leave applied for: From to

Number of school days:

Reason for travel

Relevant travel documentation such as an e ticket or itinerary (in the case of non flight bound travel within Australia only) must be attached to this application.

Details of prior exemptions/extended leave – travel (if applicable)

Date of prior exemption/extended leave: From to

Number of school days:

Copy of Certificate of Exemption/Extended Leave - Travel attached: Yes No

Parent details (applicant)

Family name:

Given name:

Student address:

Postcode:

Phone number:

Relationship to student:

As the parent and applicant, I hereby apply for a Certificate of Extended Leave-Travel and understand my child will be granted a period of extended leave upon acceptance by the principal of the reason provided.

I understand that if the application is accepted:

- I am responsible for his/her supervision during the period of extended leave
- The provided period of extended leave is limited to the period indicated
- The provided period of extended leave is subject to the conditions listed on the *Certificate of Extended Leave - Travel*
- The period of extended leave will count towards my child's absences from school

I declare the information provided in this application is to the best of my knowledge and belief; accurate and complete. I recognise that should statements in this application later prove to be false or misleading any decision made as a result of this application may be reversed. I further recognise that a failure to comply with any condition set out in the *Application for Extended Leave - Travel* may result in the provided period of extended leave being cancelled.

Signature of parent/s:

Date:

Privacy statement

The Department of Education is subject to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. The information that you provide will be used to process your child's *Application for Extended Leave - Travel* during the period indicated.

It will only be used or disclosed for the following purposes.

- General student administration relating to the education and welfare of the student
- Communication with students and parents
- To ensure the health, safety and welfare of students, staff and visitors to the school
- State and National reporting purposes
- For any other purpose required by law.

The information will be stored securely. You may access or correct any personal information by contacting the school. If you have a concern or complaint about the way your personal information has been collected, used, or disclosed, you should contact the school.

Part B: To be completed by the principal

I accept this *Application for Extended Leave - Travel*: Yes No

Please provide more detail here (if required):

Principal's name:

Phone number:

Signature of principal:

Date:

Note: Please complete the Certificate of Extended Leave - Travel if requested leave is to be provided.

Certificate of extended leave – travel

The student/s whose details appear below has been provided a period as indicated, of extended leave from school for the purpose of travel.

Where an application is made by a parent with more than one child a separate copy of this Certificate should be placed in each student’s file.

Student details

Please complete table below with details of all students associated with the period of travel:

Family name	Given name	DOB	Age	Grade	SRN

Student address: Postcode:

School name

Dates of extended leave applied for: From to

Reason for providing the period of extended leave:

Conditions applicable to providing the period of extended leave:

It has been explained to the parent of the above mentioned student/s that they are responsible for his/her supervision during the provided period of extended leave.

The parent understands that the period of extended leave is limited to the period indicated and acknowledges that the provided period of extended leave is subject to the conditions listed.

Principal’s name:

Signature of principal: Date:

This certificate has been issued without alteration and must be produced when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers.





Compulsory school attendance

Information for parents and carers

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. NSW public schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

What are my legal responsibilities?

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age of 17 years. The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority for home schooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

The importance of arriving on time

Arriving at school and class on time:

- ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- gives students time to greet their friends before class
- reduces classroom disruption.

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

What if my child had to be away from school?

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.

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the 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 the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

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.

Travel

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. An Application for Extended Leave may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.

My child won't go to school, what should I do?

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The principal may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?

It is important to understand that the Department of Education may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- **Compulsory Schooling Conferences**

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

- **Application to the Children's Court – Compulsory Schooling Order**

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

- **Prosecution in the Local Court**

School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

What age can my child leave school?

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling.

Working in partnership

The NSW Department of Education recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

Telephone interpreter service

Please contact the school if you would like more information. If you need interpreter assistance to contact the school, please call 131 450, tell them what language you need and ask the operator to phone the school. The operator will get an interpreter on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART FOR PARENTS/CARERS

