



Attendance Policy

Implemented 2018

Policy Statement

1.1 Section 22 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of [compulsory school-age](#) to cause the child:

- (a) to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
- (b) to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential, and increase their career and life options.

At Jasper Road Public School we provide 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.

1.2 All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.

Schools in partnerships with parents are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

Jasper Road Public promotes regular attendance which is essential to ensure that effective learning occurs. Non-attendance is only justifiable on grounds of "sickness, danger of infection, infirmity or unforeseen event". Regular attendance will be encouraged at all times with students and their parents/care-givers.

1.3 Section 24 of the Act requires principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister. Attendance registers must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board Inspector or by any authorised person

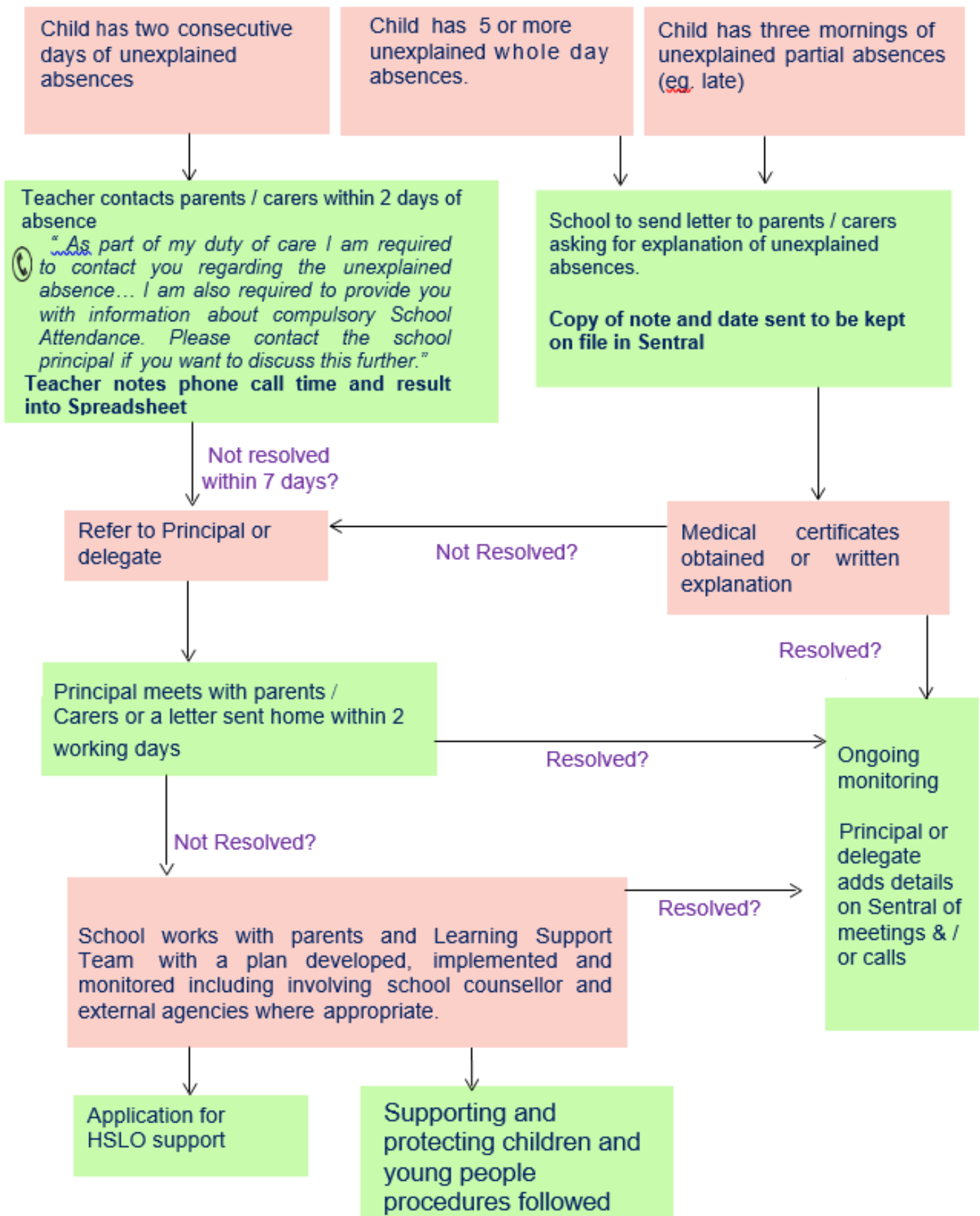
The school staff using SENTRAL (and in 2019) EBS4 will mark rolls daily and keep records of student attendance both on Sentral and on Student Record Cards

Teachers at JRPS need to have the rolls marked by 10:00am. If a casual is on the class a paper roll is to be marked and sent to the office. During summer when PSSA is in the morning it is necessary for rolls to be marked prior to leaving on buses and sent up to the office. It is a school requirement that this is done as well as the PSSA rolls are to be marked.

All staff are expected to be aware of this policy by:

- *reinforcing that regular attendance is necessary and that notes are required.*
- *closely monitoring attendance patterns – absences and lateness.*
- *reminding students, and if possible their parents, that explanatory notes are required if the note is overdue (i.e. if the note has not been received within seven school days).*
- *recording the category of absence*
- *referring attendance patterns causing concern or unexplained absences (within two days of the absence becoming unexplained) to the Deputy Principal.*
- *informing their Supervisor when a student has been absent for three days or more for any reason*

Attendance Flow Chart



Attendance Flow Chart

2.1 This policy applies to all NSW government schools, excluding preschools.

This policy is for all staff who are onsite.

At Jasper Road Public School copies of relevant parts of this document will be included into the staff and casual induction booklets.

3.1 Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

A student's regular attendance at school is vital in order for them to obtain the greatest educational opportunities that school can offer. Students with irregular attendance:

- **Fail to obtain the continuity in their education that is desirable and necessary for them to succeed and achieve.**
- **Don't develop the social networks amongst their peers that is part of healthy school experience – they are often ostracised by their peers because of their poor attendance.**
- **Often miss vital concepts and building blocks in their education creating difficulties for the student in their future years. This undermines their confidence and their ability to achieve in their school work.**
- **Create difficulties for the teachers in terms that missed work needs to be revised with the student concerned, assigned work is often late for marking and students may become behaviour problems. They often also create difficulties for the effective organisation of class activities, excursions, assessment tasks, reporting procedures etc.**
- **May also be children who are being abused or are at risk of being abused.**

Jasper Road Public School staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised. The school regularly evaluates and addresses school attendance through the school plan.

3.2 Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility.

The Deputy Principals will monitor all rolls five times a term to ensure that:

- **the rolls are marked in accordance with policy.**
- **the monitoring of attendance is effective.**
- **all necessary roll statistics have been calculated.**
- **explanatory notes, late notes and a record of verbal explanations are accurate and kept with the class roll.**
- **requests are made for medical certificates detailing the nature and duration of the sickness if there are concerns about notes provided by the parents or caregivers or the sickness is over an extended period.**
- **contact the parent/caregiver when an unexplained absence occurs and will contact parents personally if an explanation of absence does not follow**
implement appropriate school intervention or refer the case to the HSLO

Attendance Flow Chart

At Jasper Road Public School all 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.*
 - *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 (see section 5).*
- When nominated by the principal, liaise with external agencies, arrange referrals*

3.3 This policy should be read in the context of [The Enrolment of Students in Government Schools: A summary and consolidation of policy \(1997\)](#) and the [Memorandum Enhanced Enrolment Procedures](#) (Intranet only).

A community approach is imperative for the safe and successful operation of the school. All parties are to be part of the development of policies and plans. Open communication and effective writing and storage of paperwork is an integral part of the process

At Jasper Road Public School attendance records will include:

- *a Student Registration Number*
- *written notes, records of verbal explanations and records of electronic explanations for absences from parents. This advice is to be retained for two years from the date of receipt*
- *an Attendance Roll, to be retained for two years.*

information detailing a student's absences each year, kept on the student's file until seven years after the student has left. In the case of a student who has had an accident necessitating an accident report, the record should be retained until the student reaches the age of 25 years

Responsibilities

- 4.1.1 It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to cause the child:
- (a) to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
 - (b) to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

Parents must ensure their child of compulsory school age are enrolled in a government or registered non-government school or, they are registered with National Educational Standards (NESA) for Home Schooling.

4.1.2 Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school. An explanation for absence must be provided to the school within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence.

There are a variety of ways parents/carers can notify the school.

At Jasper Road Public School Parents/carers provide an explanation for absences by means such as a telephone call, written note, text message or email to the school within 2 days from the first day of any period of absence. Parents/carers 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. Please refer to timing on the flowchart.

4.2.1 Principals must provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

All attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the Director Public Schools NSW, attendance officers and other personnel nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Education, Director Public Schools NSW, or Audit Directorate.

At Jasper Road Public School Principals have the responsibility to ensure:

- *Open communication on issues affecting student attendance is promoted with parents.*
- *Effective strategies are in place to contact parents where there is a pattern of attendance causing concern or the parent has failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence.*
- *Interpreters and translated materials, including letters are available when communicating with parents from language backgrounds other than English in matters relating to school attendance.*
- *School staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised.*
- *All cases of unsatisfactory attendance, including part day absences are investigated promptly and school based factors impacting on attendance are addressed.*
- *Early identification of students at risk of developing poor school attendance patterns through strategies such as regular roll checks.*
- *Attendance reports from roll checks are generated at least fortnightly and tabled at Learning Support Team or attendance meetings for follow up by appropriate staff members.*
- *The school's Learning and Support Team in partnership with parents identify and implement strategies that address the learning and support needs of a student with attendance patterns of concern.*

Responsibilities

- *Parents, students and the school community are regularly informed of the importance of school and attendance requirements. A range of resources (refer to resource section) have been developed for schools to provide information to parents and key community groups about the requirements of school attendance.*
- *Effective referral and support networks are established so that students whose attendance is identified as being of concern and their families can be connected to relevant services within the department and with local external agencies in discussion with parents. Appropriate staff members may be nominated to meet with parents, arrange referrals and to be the contact points for consultation and coordination of school involvement.*

4.2.2 Principals must ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences.

Training occurs regularly around this document and Departmental processes.

At Jasper Road Public School the Deputy Principal (Welfare) will be responsible for ensuring the Principal is informed and aware of issues, documentation and their safe storage and:

- *Communication, collaboration and information sharing occurs with other services and agencies to enhance the effectiveness of interventions with students and families.*
- *Any other child protection concerns underlying school attendance issues (including educational neglect) are managed consistent with the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.*
- *If concerns include not sighting the child principals must, as soon as possible contact the NSW Police Force to request that a child safety check be undertaken.*
- *Consideration is given to the [Mandatory Reporter Guide](#) (MRG) specialist advice and professional judgement, where there are concerns about suspected risk of harm. In accordance with the MRG Neglect Education - Habitual Absence is defined as 'The child/young person is of compulsory school age (6 years to current leaving age) AND is habitually absent'. 'Habitually absent is a minimum of 30 days absence within the past 100 school days. However, principals should consider other factors, such as the student's age and learning support needs in deciding on action earlier than the 30 days indicated. Other decisions trees can be used if the underlying issues impacting on school attendance are also of concern. For example, care concerns, neglect: supervision, or child /young person is a danger to self and others.*

4.2.3 Principals or their delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an absence being unexplained, if contact has not already been made. An absence is unexplained if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days.

Departmental processes are outlined in the flowchart above.

At Jasper Road Public School the Deputy Principal (Welfare) will be responsible for ensuring the Principal is informed and aware of issues, documentation and their safe storage

Responsibilities

4.2.4 Principals are responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.

The principal or delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents within two days of an absence where parents have not contacted the school. Contact may be made by means such as providing the parents with an Absentee Notice-Compulsory School Attendance, by telephone, email or SMS text message.

At Jasper Road Public School the Principal and Deputy Principal (Welfare) (as required) will be responsible for ensuring the awareness of issues, documentation and their safe storage. Staff have training around the flowchart and its implementation

4.2.5 Principals must ensure that for students with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are addressed in consultation with parents.

Principals may grant exemptions due to:

- **exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate)**
- **the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under the Public Health Act 2010. (The parent is not required to complete an application for exemption)**
- **employment in the entertainment industry – refer to children's employment**
- **participation in elite arts or elite sporting events**

For any other matter not covered by the above points, the delegate must consult the next most senior delegate in their reporting line.

Note: Students travelling during school terms are not to be exempt. If the principal accepts the reason then leave is granted and the 'L' code should be used, consistent with the implementation of National Standards for Student Attendance Data and Attendance Register.

At Jasper Road Public School all families are contacted as needed and may involve accessing the [Telephone Interpreter Service and translated materials](#), including letters can be used as required when communicating with parents from language backgrounds other than English if an explanation for absence has not been received.

4.2.6 Principals are responsible for ensuring 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.

A Certificate of Exemption must only be granted when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is in the student's best interests in the short and long term. Alternatives to exemption should have been fully explored. For example, it may be in the student's best interests and be more appropriate to access Distance Education

Responsibilities

At Jasper Road Public School:

- *Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness consultation with parents must occur regarding the health care needs of the child.*
- *Principals can request the parents to provide a medical certificate if they have concerns with the explanation provided, or where there is a history of poor attendance.*
- *Where the principal has concerns about the medical certificates being produced for absences they can ask the parents to request that the doctor writes on the medical certificate the statement 'this child is unfit for school' with specified dates included.*
- *Where principals have ongoing concerns they can request the parent's consent for a doctor to provide information to the school about their child's health condition. It is essential the school has all relevant information to ensure the learning and health care needs of the student are addressed. If the request is denied or if the principal is still not satisfied with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as 'unjustified'. The principal must consider whether the habitual absence or parental attitude places the child or young person at suspected risk of harm.*

Principals can seek information from prescribed bodies under Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 where they have ongoing concerns regarding a student's safety, welfare or wellbeing. They should also contact [the Child Wellbeing Unit \(CWU\)](#) or if they believe the student is at risk of significant harm the [Child Protection Helpline](#).

4.2.7 Principals must ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.

A child is considered to have an unsatisfactory school attendance when they have:

- **regular absences without explanation (despite follow-up from the school)**
- **regular absences and explanations provided by parents are not accepted by the principal, or**
- **extended periods of absence without an explanation or the explanation is not accepted by the principal. An extended period of absence may be consecutive or irregular patterns of non-attendance.**

At Jasper Road Public School staff contact the Deputy Principal as soon as possible around attendance issues.

4.2.8 Principals must ensure that any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student:

- consideration is given to the requirements of the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy

all required reports are made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or contact made with the Child Wellbeing Unit (as required by the [Mandatory Reporter Guide](#)).

Training occurs regularly around this document and Departmental processes.

At Jasper Road Public School the Deputy Principal (Welfare) will be responsible for ensuring training is current and staff are compliant.

Responsibilities

4.2.9 Principals have the authority to:

- grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
 - accept other explanations for absence and record the absence as "L"
 - decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
- grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (See the [Exemption from School - Procedures](#)).

grant part-day exemptions from school for periods totalling up to 100 days in a twelve month period (See the [Exemption from School - Procedures](#)).

grant exemption from enrolment for students who have completed year 9 and have the required approval to complete their education in special circumstances through an apprenticeship or traineeship (See the [Exemption from School - Procedures](#)).

Procedural fairness must be accorded to an applicant. If the delegate 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.

At Jasper Road Public School staff record absences into SENTRAL until the end of 2018. SAOs export this data from SENTRAL, save to faculty/office/ABS file and then upload into EBS4 every Monday morning. Any pink shading in the rolls must be investigated and corrected prior to final upload. From 2019 staff will require training in roll marking using EBS4. Deputy Principals as delegates of the principal complete applications for extended leave and follow up attendance issues. Staff notify DPs with an attendance issue through the notification space in SENTRAL