

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY and PROCEDURES

Rationale

Students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education and assists them to reach their full potential. Attendance at school is also a legal requirement for all children between 6 and 17 years of age as set out by the NSW Education Act (1990).

Aims

- To encourage and maintain strong attendance patterns and enhanced outcomes for all our students.
- To keep an accurate record of each student's attendance at Byron Community Primary School (BCPS) using the state attendance codes. This is a legal requirement.

Responsibilities

Principal ensures:

- Parent(s) or Guardian(s) are made aware of their responsibilities to have their children attend school every day it is open. These responsibilities to be reinforced in interviews/meetings and newsletters throughout the year.
- All staff understand their responsibilities regarding student attendance.
- All class rolls are completed using the attendance codes approved by the Minister of Education.
- Class rolls are checked regularly for legal compliance.
- Suitable procedures are in place to identify attendance patterns of students who could be at risk.
- Attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.
- Parent(s) or Guardian(s) and students are informed of attendance requirements.
- All cases of unsatisfactory attendance of part or full day absences of a student from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.
- Parent(s) or Guardian(s) are contacted promptly by text every morning if their child has been marked on the roll as 'unknown'.
- Parent(s) or Guardian(s) are contacted promptly by email or telephone within three days if unexplained absences continue to occur.
- The issue of continued unexplained or inadequately explained absences over a term or frequent late arrivals will be addressed by a meeting between parent(s) or guardian(s) and Principal.
- Consideration of the conditions/consequences applicable to the acceptance of an application for extended leave or exemption.
- An explanation for a full day absence needs to be satisfactory and if not, the Principal may decline the request. Medical certificates or other documentation are requested when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged. Where the Principal has concerns about medical certificates being produced for absences, they can ask the parent(s) or guardian(s) to request that the doctor write on the certificate the statement 'this child is unfit for school' with specified dates included.
- If the Principal has ongoing concerns, they can request the parent(s) or guardian(s) consent to contact the doctor. 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'.
- That determining whether concerns about poor school attendance raise safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns requiring a mandatory report to Dept. of Communities and Justice.
- Minutes from an attendance meeting are kept in the student's file.

Staff ensure:

- Accurate records of student attendance are maintained – including the class rolls marked daily in accordance with the current legal requirements and procedures.
- Attendance rolls are completed by 9:15am every day marked by the current legal requirements and procedures.
- Students are marked as 'A' unless you are given the following advice by parents:
 - being sick or having an infectious disease
 - having an unavoidable medical appointment
 - being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
 - exceptional or urgent family circumstances e.g. attending a funeral
- Principal intervention occurs when required.
- Report habitual unexplained, full or part day absences, fractional truancy and persistent lateness promptly to the Principal by discussing absences as part of weekly staff meetings.

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) ensure:

- Their child attends school every day that school is open unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent.
- Students are expected to arrive at school between 8:30am and 8:55am as the official starting time is 9:00am.
- When a student is late for school the parent(s) or guardian(s) needs to explain the reason for the lateness: either by a written note, email, by a telephone call or advising the Office staff.
- Explanatory notes, emails, phone calls or information is to be provided promptly when their child is absent from school.
- They respond to texts from the office about their child's absence.
- They take measures to resolve attendance issues involving their child.
- As part of the implementation of the National Standards for Student Attendance Data, holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods will now be included as absences.
- Leave of five or more consecutive school days will require the completion of an Application for Extended Leave form.
- Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. If travel during school term is necessary, the following considerations apply:
 - If the Principal accepts the reason for the absence, the absence will be recorded as "Approved Family Holiday."
 - If the Principal does not believe the absence is in the student's best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence is unjustified and will be recorded as "Unexplained or unjustified leave."
 - If the period of absence is in excess of 50 days, the student may be eligible to enroll in Distance Education. For that period the student's enrolment transfers to the distance education school.
 - Note: A student cannot be enrolled in more than one school concurrently (including Distance Education). If a student enrolls in Distance Education they would not remain enrolled in BCPS.
 - They would be able to apply to enroll again on their return. Enrolment would depend on a place being available in that class.
- Staff will be made aware of how a child is leaving school if there is a change of routine and have written advice if leaving by taxi or by a ride share company.
- If you would like your child to leave with someone other than a parent, you must notify the Office staff at the beginning of the day, who will then inform the child's teacher and teachers on duty.

Late Arrivals and Early Leavers

BCPS has an official starting time of 9am. Students who arrive after this time are late.

Late arrivals need to check in at the Office and will be given a late note to take to class and hand to their teacher.

The Office staff will then update the Attendance Roll.

All students who arrive after the official start of school must be entered into the school roll as 'p' (partial) and the time that they arrived be noted.

If you would like your child to leave school early, you must notify the Office staff at the beginning of the day, who will then inform the child's teacher and teachers on duty. The student and parent must come to Reception and notify the Office staff when they leave.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Ratified by the School Council	March 2012
Ratified by Board of Directors	May 2014
Changes approved by the Leadership Team	January 2015
Changes approved by the Leadership Team	March 2015
Changes approved by the Leadership Team	June 2017
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Ratified by the Board of Directors	February 2020