



Hawkesbury High school

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

2024

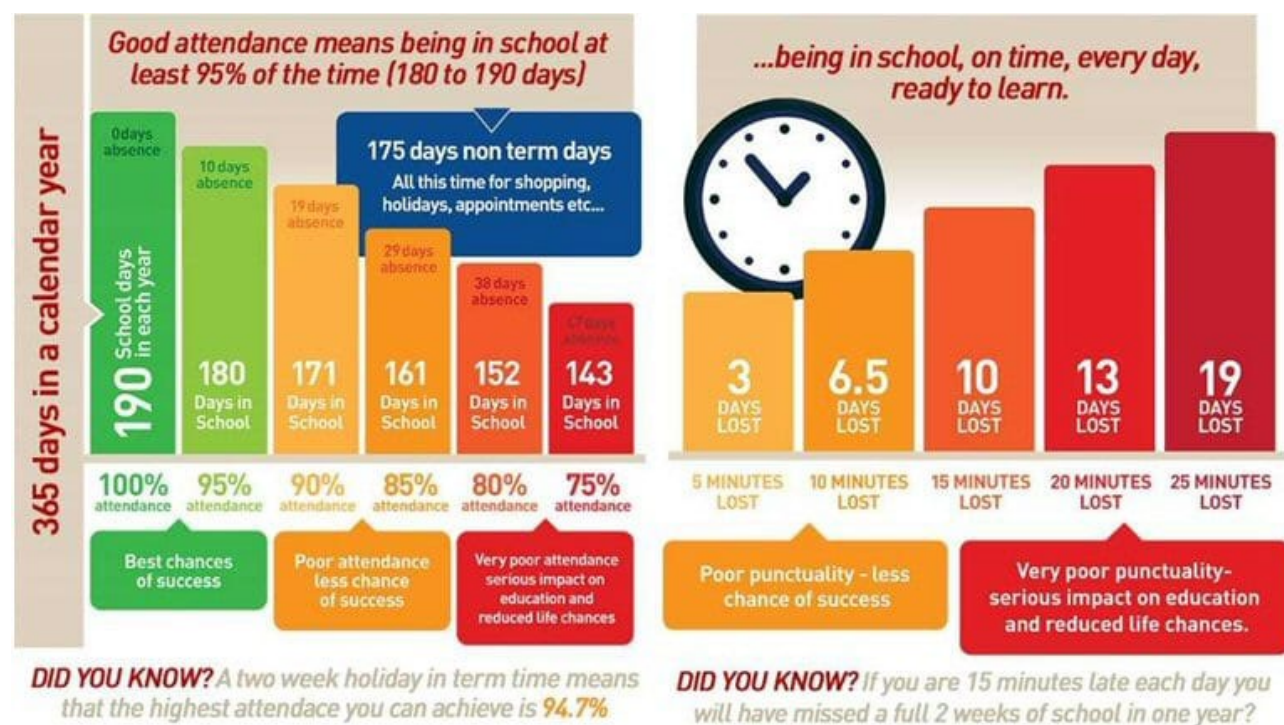


STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Attendance is a shared responsibility between the school, parents/carers and students. Every student is expected to attend school every day, unless unwell.

Hawkesbury High School is committed to providing a safe learning environment that promotes and recognises positive attendance and supports students whose attendance is causing concern.

At Hawkesbury High School student achievement and success starts with being at school. Regular attendance is essential for students to maximise learning opportunities, develop future-focused skills and capabilities and develop their personal and social competence.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE SCHOOL

The school will support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the impact of unsatisfactory attendance
- keeping a period by period record of student attendance
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- providing a safe and engaging learning environment that encourages student attendance
- supporting students whose attendance is causing concern

- identifying attendance patterns of concern and communicating these with parents/carers

Student attendance will be monitored by year advisers and the Wellbeing Team.

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

It is a legal requirement that the parents of a child of compulsory school-age ensure their child is enrolled at school or an approved education provider and attends school up until the age of 17.

It is essential that parents work in partnership with the school to ensure their child has access to learning at school. Parents are expected to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that their child is at school on time every day it is open for instruction.

At Hawkesbury High School, it is expected that:

- parents make suitable arrangements to ensure their children arrive at school in time to attend roll call by 8:50 am from Tuesday to Friday and 9 am on Mondays.
- parents inform the school prior to a known absence or on the day of the absence
- parents provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence or lateness by contacting the school via a return SMS message, email, telephone call, or written note
- a student's absence is explained within 7 school days of the absence taking place
- parents contact the school at least three weeks in advance when they apply for extend leave – travel for their child
- parents provide the school with updated contact details
- parents work with the school in relation to any attendance concerns.

Additional information on Compulsory School Attendance can be found on:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/translated-documents/compulsory-school-attendance-information-for-parents>

STUDENTS

At Hawkesbury High School, all students, are expected to follow the school's STAR values – core rules and expectations built on rights and responsibilities to be SAFE, a TEAM PLAYER, an ACHIEVER, and to be RESPECTFUL. The school's STAR values are explicitly taught and all students are expected to observe these values and the associated behaviour expectations, including attendance.

All students are expected to attend school every day, unless there is a justified reason for being absent. All students are expected to arrive at school on time and to attend every lesson punctually.

PROCEDURES

LATE ARRIVALS

Parents must ensure that their child is at school before the commencement of the school day. Under exceptional circumstances a student may be late to school providing it is an acceptable reason for lateness as stated below and the student is not habitually late.

Reasons Acceptable for Lateness:

- Doctor's Appointment (with a note)
- Unexpected emergency or incident on the way to school
- Public transport issues

A student will be marked absent, explained, for the period the student is absent from school if the partial absence meets the above criteria.

Reasons Not Acceptable for Lateness:

- Slept in
- Other avoidable situations (e.g. buying breakfast, couldn't find my school uniform, etc)
- No reason given

A student will be marked absent, unjustified, for the period the student is absent from school if the partial absence does not meet the school criteria for an acceptable reason for lateness to school.

Students who arrive after the school day commences must report immediately to Student Foyer at the front office where they will be issued with a late slip that must be presented to the teacher in their timetabled classroom at the time of their arrival.

Students who are habitually late to school will be referred to their Year Adviser where appropriate course of action will be taken (refer to Attendance Concerns).

EARLY LEAVERS

If a student is required to leave school early they must present a signed note at the Student Foyer at the front office as soon as they arrive at school. Alternatively, parents can contact the front office directly on 02 4579 6800 to apply for an early leaver pass for their child, or send an email to hawkesbury-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au.

Parents may be contacted to ensure the authenticity of the note. The student will then be issued with an Early Leavers Slip which must be shown to the teacher of that lesson at the time of departure. Students are required to report to the Student Foyer at the front office before departing school. In most circumstances, parents are expected to collect the child from the front office in person.

Reasons Acceptable for leaving school early may include:

- Doctor's appointment that could not be scheduled outside of school hours
- Unexpected emergency
- Flexible attendance (seniors)
- TAFE attendance (seniors)

Reasons Not Acceptable for leaving early may include:

- Attendance at work
- Unspecified family reasons (other than family emergencies)
- Other commitments that could be reasonably scheduled outside of school hours

TRUANCY

Students are expected to be present and accounted for each period of the day they are at school. Partial truancy from class includes any student who presents late without a note or any student who leaves the class without permission. It is expected that any truants or partial truants from class will be followed up by the classroom teacher and the incident will be recorded on SENTRAL.

Truancies and partial truancies will be monitored by the classroom teacher and may be referred to the subject head teacher. A range of strategies to address truancy and consequences for truancy will be put in place which may include a recess detention, an attendance monitoring card, a formal caution, or a suspension from school.

Classroom teachers will contact parents of students who truant classes.

EXEMPTIONS FROM ATTENDANCE OR ENROLMENT

A child may be exempt from being enrolled at and attending school if the Minister or delegate is satisfied that conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable that a Certificate should be granted. A Certificate of Exemption may be given subject to conditions and limited to a period specified in the certificate.

More information about Exemptions from school procedures can be found here:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policyprocedures/pd-2005-0259/pd-2005-0259-01>

Full day or part day exemptions from school **attendance** may be granted for the following reasons:

- Exceptional circumstances
- Direction under the Public Health Act 2010
- Employment in the entertainment industry
- Participation in elite arts or elite sporting events

Exemptions from school **enrolment** may be granted for completion of education under special circumstances – apprenticeship or traineeship.

The Principal may grant exemptions to students from the requirement to be enrolled in school provided approval has been given for commencing a full time apprenticeship or traineeship. This applies to students who have **completed Year 9** and **before they have completed Year 10**. Such exemptions will only be granted where:

- The Principal considers that the student is a suitable candidate to complete their education through an apprenticeship or traineeship
- student's parents give permission for this to occur
- The Principal has sighted a full time apprenticeship or traineeship contract signed by the employer and a summary training plan authorised by the registered Training organisation
- The employer agrees to notify the NSW Department of Education (through the Principal) if the apprenticeship or traineeship is abandoned before the student turns 17 years
- The apprenticeship or traineeship is approved by the Commissioner for Vocational Training, State Training Services, as suitable for the young person and the training contract attains 'registered' status following the probationary period.

Where approval is granted by the principal and the commissioner subsequently notifies the student of his or her decision not to approve the contract following the probationary period, the approval and the exemption will be cancelled. The student's parents must then take steps to comply with their compulsory schooling obligations. Note: If the student does not complete the apprenticeship or traineeship, he or she will not have completed Year 10. They will be legally required to complete Year 10 under another pathway of the Education Act 1990, for example, by returning to school or seeking enrolment in TAFE NSW.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS (EXTENDED LEAVE – TRAVEL)

Family holidays should be planned outside of regular school days. In some circumstances, however, parents may need to plan a family holiday that coincides with school days. In these circumstances, parents **must seek approval for exemption from the School Principal** for absences of up to 50 days and the **School Education Director** for more than 50 days.

When applying for an exemption for travel, parents must make contact with the school **at least three weeks in advance** and include evidence of travel and an acceptable reason for undertaking travel during the school term.

The process for applying for extended leave for the purpose of travel is given below:

- **Parent** fills out Application for Extended Leave – Travel form, attaches supporting documentation, and submits the application to the school **at least three weeks** prior to intended date of travel

- The Principal considers the application and, if approved, issues the Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel
- The Certificate must be produced when requested by police or other authorised officers.

The Application for Extended Leave – Travel from can be found on the schools website:

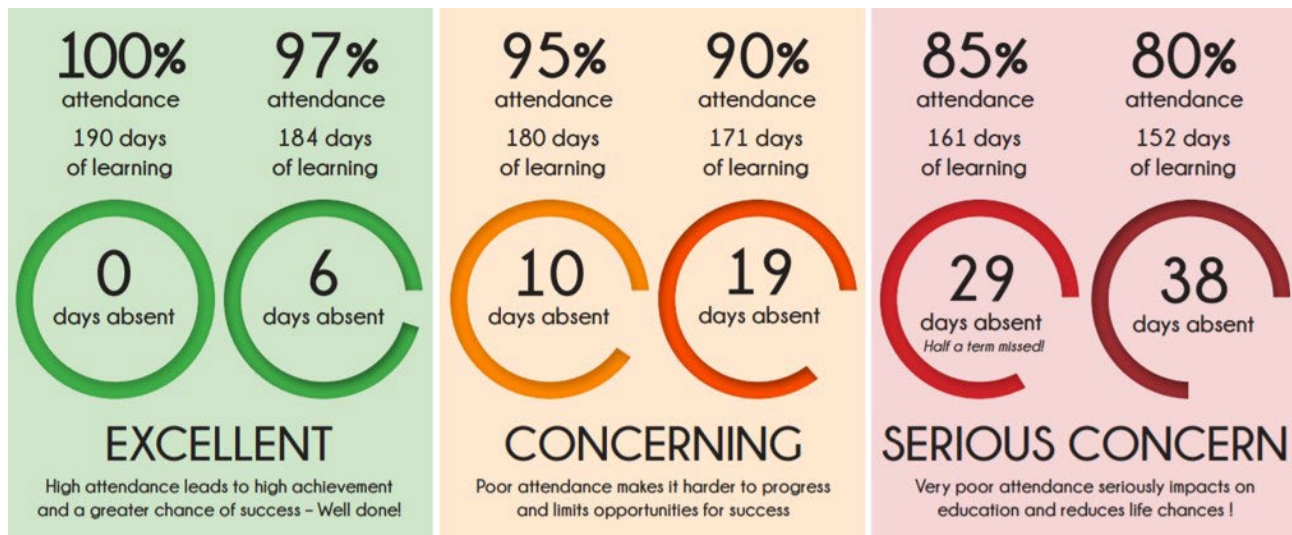
<https://hawkesbury-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/about-our-school/notes.html>

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

Year advisers will regularly run an attendance report for their year group to gather information on students whose attendance is causing concern. Year advisers will interview students and contact parents of students whose attendance is causing concern to identify strategies to support an improvement in attendance.

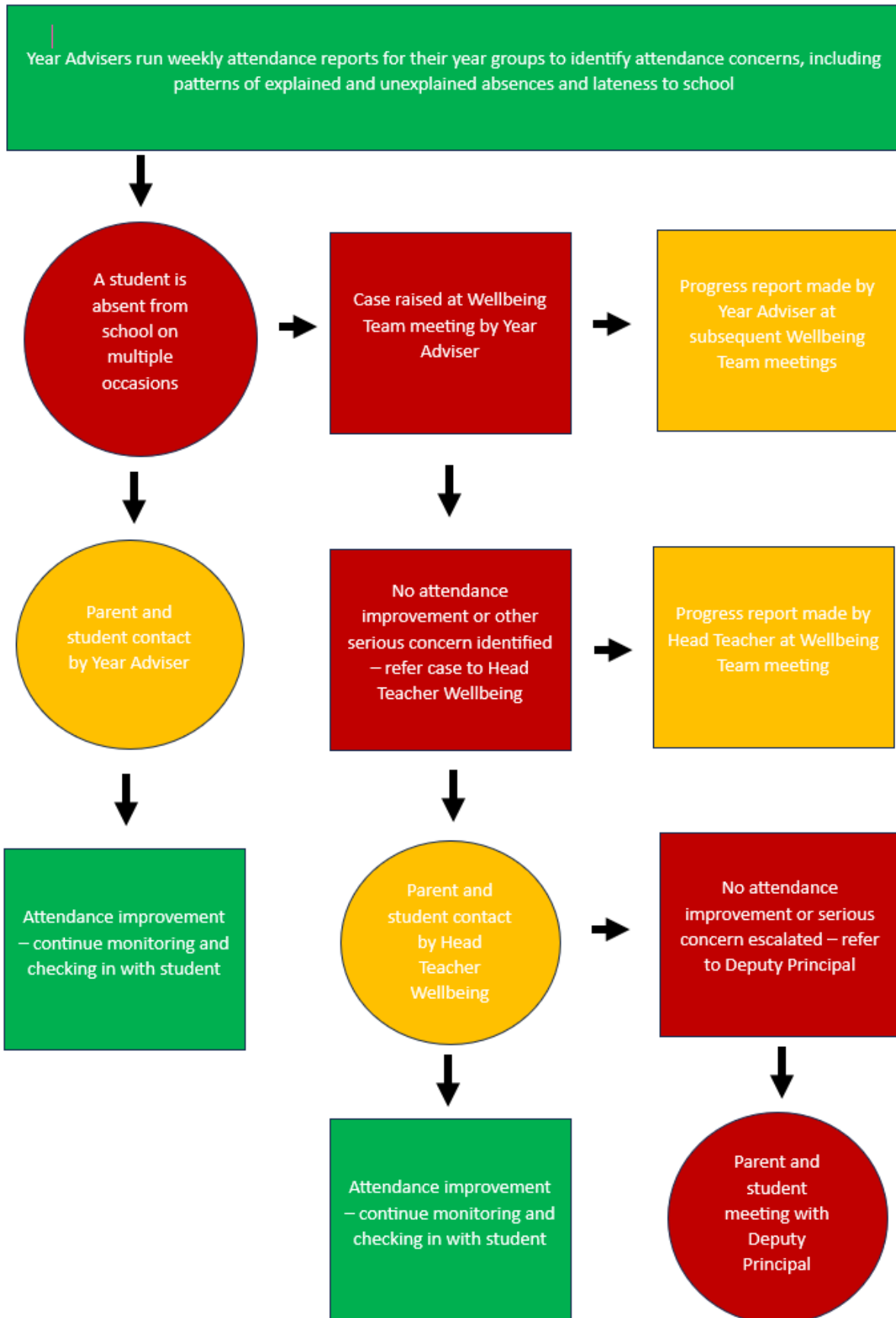
Students who are at risk may fall under one or all of the following categories:

- A multiple number of unexplained absences
- A pattern of explained or unexplained absences
- Non-Attendance to school for 5 or more days without contact from home
- Attendance percentage drops below 85%



Once attendance issues have been identified, Year Advisers will follow the procedures outlined in the Student Attendance Concern Flowchart:

Student Attendance Concern Flowchart



Best outcomes for students are achieved when the school and parents work together. A drop in student attendance may be a sign of disengagement with learning, peer issues, conflict, or other concerns. The Wellbeing Team will work with the student and their family to identify these concerns and put in place appropriate supports or interventions.

PROMOTING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School attendance is promoted in various ways at Hawkesbury High School. One key strategy is through the mentoring program. Mentoring group sessions take place every third Monday, alternating with school assemblies and year meetings. Students are placed into small groups with an assigned teacher where they reflect on their attendance and the positive and negative aspects that have influenced their attendance percentage for the cycle. Students also work with their teacher mentor to create an attendance goal for the term and reflect on strategies to ensure they can achieve their attendance goal. Teacher mentors can have tailored discussions with each student to allow targeted goal progression throughout the year. Twice per term a letter will be sent home with each students' attendance rate and an infographic showing the impact their current attendance rate is having on their learning. This allows parents to assess their child's current attendance and facilitate discussions around improving or maintaining their school attendance.

RECOGNISING AND REWARDING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

At Hawkesbury High School, we believe in celebrating the attendance and efforts of our students in various ways to foster a positive learning environment. One way we do this is through rewards excursions, where students who demonstrate outstanding attendance of 90% or above, or have demonstrated significant improvement in their school attendance, are given the opportunity to participate in fun and educational outings. Additionally, our attendance voucher system encourages regular attendance by rewarding students with vouchers redeemable for various prizes or privileges. Moreover, we organise special lunches or events to recognise and appreciate students who consistently uphold our school values and contribute positively to the school community. These initiatives acknowledge individual accomplishments and provide motivation among our students, encouraging them to strive for excellence in all aspects of their school life.

REVIEWING ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

All school policies and procedures are regularly reviewed in collaboration with parents, students and staff.

Implementation date: Term 2, 2024

Review date: Term 3, 2025