Beechwood Public School

Attendance Practices and Procedures

Contents

Rationale

All schools in New South Wales are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their educational needs. In NSW all children between the ages of six and below the minimum school leaving age of seventeen are legally required to attend school or an educational facility. Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their academic and social potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of schools. Parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children and school staff are responsible for the monitoring of part or whole day absences.

The Beechwood Public School Attendance Practices and Procedures document aims to provide teachers, parents and community members with an understanding of the school processes to ensure that every student has the opportunity to attend school regularly.

(1)   School Community Beliefs about Attendance

Beechwood Public School Attendance Practices and Procedures aim to develop a shared understanding of the importance of attending school with students, parents and the wider community.

(1.1) Beechwood Public School staff:
- (1.1.1) believe all children should be enrolled at school and attend school every day for the entire school day;
- (1.1.2) believe attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community;
- (1.1.3) recognise that students with poor attendance are at risk of not achieving their educational, social or psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the choices they are able to make later in life. Students who attend less than 90% of the time may be at educational risk;
- (1.1.4) monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance.

(1.2) BPS believes students with poor patterns of attendance may:
- (1.2.1) be socially isolated;
- (1.2.2) have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts;
- (1.2.3) place themselves at risk during times of absence;
- (1.2.4) be more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable and/or illegal activities;
- (1.2.5) feel insecure in the school environment;
- (1.2.6) be more likely to leave school before completing Year 10;
- (1.2.7) continue a poor pattern of attendance throughout high school.

(1.3) Beechwood Public School community:

- (1.3.1) attendance is linked to academic performance;
- (1.3.2) poor attendance at school will affect student's choices in later life;
- (1.3.3) arriving late to school is only acceptable due to specialist appointments or emergencies;
- (1.3.4) 5 days absence a term is only acceptable if a child is sick or on a family holiday;
- (1.3.5) sickness and family holidays are the most acceptable reasons for being absent;
- (1.3.6) leaving school early is only acceptable for a medical appointment and occasionally extreme weather.

(1.4) Beechwood Public School students believe:

- (1.4.1) the main reason to go to school is to gain knowledge;
- (1.4.2) going to school is linked to future income prospects;
- (1.4.3) the best time of the school day is social time with friends;
- (1.4.4) the best excuse to get out of school is to say you are sick;
- (1.4.5) the only excuses for being absent from school is sickness, injury or family emergencies;
- (1.4.6) students with good attendance should be rewarded with prizes, lollies, special lunches or certificates.

(2)   Benefits of Regular Attendance

Regular attendance has benefits for students, teachers, parents/caregivers and the community
These benefits include:

(2.1) For students

- (2.1.1) maximising learning opportunities which will optimise life choices;
- (2.1.2) assisting to develop skills and attitudes that will help the student be successful later in life, such as; punctuality, organisation and confidence;
- (2.1.3) success in learning outcomes;
- (2.1.4) making friends and learning to maintain relationships;
- (2.1.5) learning social skills to interact with others.

(2.2) For teachers

- (2.2.1) improved learning outcomes for all;
- (2.2.2) ability to fulfil responsibilities to all students;
- (2.2.3) maintaining relationships with students, which may reduce disruptions to learning due to poor student behaviour;
- (2.2.4) saving resources and time by avoiding non-attendance follow up procedures.

(2.3) For parents/caregivers

- (2.3.1) children are safer at school than being unsupervised at home or in the community;
- (2.3.2) children can succeed in their learning;
- (2.3.3) children are more likely to complete Year 12 and have broader opportunities and higher educational goals;
- (2.3.4) fewer incidents of negative contact with government agencies.

(2.4) For the community

- (2.4.1) increased level of safety for all;
- (2.4.2) young people are less likely to be involved in criminal behaviour;
- (2.4.3) the community as a whole will experience less cost, both financially and socially.

(3)   Responsibilities

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of students, parents and school staff.

(3.1) Student responsibilities:

- (3.1.1) arrive punctually between 8:30 and 9:00 am;
- (3.1.2) attend school every day between 9:00am and 3:00pm;
- (3.1.3) attend school every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (e.g. sickness);
- (3.1.4) hand letters or notes from parents to the front office or classroom teacher promptly;
- (3.1.5) when arriving late, students are required to present at the office, before going to class with a late slip;
- (3.1.6) if late, come to class quietly so as not to disturb other students' learning.

(3.2) Parent responsibilities:

- (3.2.1) actively encourage their children to regularly attend school;
- (3.2.2) notify the school of any absences in writing, through School Bytes, via email to the school or via telephone within 7 days;
- (3.2.3) provide the office with an appropriate, justifiable explanation for arriving late or leaving early;
- (3.2.4) inform the school if an extended absence is likely or if they would like the school to arrange work at home for the student;
- (3.2.5) inform the school when their child is away;
- (3.2.6) inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- (3.2.7) ensure children are picked up promptly from school at the end of the school day at 3:00pm;

- (3.2.8) contact the school if delayed for any reason or length of time when picking up children;
- (3.2.9) apply for extended leave via the school principal if withdrawing their child or 10 or more consecutive school days.

(3.3) Teacher responsibilities:

- (3.3.1) actively encourage students to attend school regularly by providing an engaging, educational program which is inclusive of the needs of all learners;

- (3.3.2) monitor each child's attendance and implement the school's attendance procedures by following the Attendance Procedures Flow-Chart;
- (3.3.3) implement strategies aimed at increasing school attendance, as outlined in the Attendance Procedures Flow-Chart;
- (3.3.4) accurately complete the attendance register (roll) on School Bytes each day before 9:30am. If internet access is down, teachers must complete a paper roll and send it to the office;
- (3.3.5) complete a paper roll for partial absences for the class when attending approved school activities, such as excursions and sporting events. Provide a copy of this roll to administrative staff;
- (3.3.6) use School Bytes to complete school business absences when students are attending offsite school based activities;
- (3.3.7) remind students of the need to supply a note when returning to school;
- (3.3.8) distribute unexplained absence notes to students, which are provided by administrative staff each Thursday;
- (3.3.9) coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons, when requested by parents/carers;
- (3.3.10) inform the School Principal or attendance coordinator of any concerns about attendance, including a completed intervention checklist, as outlined in the Attendance Procedures Flow-Chart;

(3.4) Attendance Coordinator responsibilities:

- (3.4.1) analyse Scout attendance data with the Learning and Support Teamand identify students with an attendance concern on a fortnightly basis;
  - Target tier 1, 80 to 89% attendance. Communicate with Class teachers for follow up.
- (3.4.2) take action when attendance concerns are raised by class teachers, as detailed in the Attendance Procedures Flow-Chart;
- (3.4.3) complete letters to parents to notify them when a Non-Attender Interview (NIPs) has been completed;
- (3.4.4) complete warning letters to parents, notifying them that attendance is a concern (tier 2 and tier 3);
- (3.4.5) submit Home School Liaison Applications when all strategies have been implemented, as outlined in the Attendance Procedures Flow-Chart;
- (3.4.6) lead whole school attendance initiative such as attendance certificates and the Late Comers Interview Program (LIPs);
- (3.4.7) attend Learning Support Team Meetings to discuss any student who is displaying a concerning pattern of attendance;
- (3.4.8) present and/or provide information packs for Kindergarten orientation and stage parent/teacher meetings;
- (3.4.9) provide the administrative staff with regular newsletter items to include in the school newsletter;
- (3.4.10) support classroom teachers with resources and ideas to promote attendance within the classroom and around the school;
- (3.4.11) introduce BPS Attendance Practices and Procedures with new staff and casual teachers;
- (3.4.12) provide professional development sessions for all school staff in roll marking procedures, school and Department attendance policies and procedures;

- (3.4.13) liaise with administrative staff to ensure the efficiency of roll collection, late arrival sign on and early departure sign out procedures;
- (3.4.14) document interventions, strategies and parent contact/meetings in School Bytes

(3.5) Administrative Staff Responsibilities:

- (3.5.1) email or phone parents of unexplained absences each day requesting explanation
- (3.5.2) input absence notes onto School Bytes;
- (3.5.3) input late arrival and early leaver information onto School Bytes;
- (3.5.4) complete a Late Arrival Interview (LIPs) with students and/or their families once per term as determined by the principal;
  - input LIPs information
- (3.5.5) follow the procedures for the Phone Interview Program (PIPs);
- (3.5.6) inform class teachers of relevant information about student absences provided by families;
- (3.5.7) input attendance information provided by teachers when paper rolls are completed;
- (3.5.8) print and distribute unexplained absence notices to class teachers each Thursday;
- (3.5.9) make attendance data available to Home School Liaison Officer staff when requested;
- (3.5.10) call the families of nominated students from the PIPs folder, using the PIPs procedures. If an acceptable reason is provided, notify the classroom teacher, assistant principal or principal, who can designate an absent code. Enter the information into School Bytes.

(3.6) Principal Responsibilities:

- (3.6.1) ensure the attendance register is accurately completed by staff

- (3.6.2) when the classroom teacher or School Principal faces an unsatisfactory outcome, to be responsible for recommending future action
- (3.6.3) complete Child Wellbeing Unit report for Habitual Absence (Mandatory Reporting Guide) to accompany Home School Liaison referrals
  - Habitual absence is recommended at 30 days out of 100
- (3.6.4) contact the Child Wellbeing Unit, the Police and complete HSLO and 'missing student' referral when a student is absent for more than 10 consecutive days, with no explanation and the parents/carers cannot be contacted.

(4) Promoting Good Attendance

At Beechwood Public School we promote the importance of regular attendance to parents, students and staff through a range of strategies.

(4.1) Promoting good attendance with parents:

- (4.1.1) Principal presents at the kindergarten orientation and provides information for stage and parent/teacher information sessions;
- (4.1.2) class teachers promote the importance of regular attendance during Personalised Learning Pathways (PLP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings;
- (4.1.3) student reports inform parents/carers of their child's attendance each Semester (whole day and partial);
- (4.1.4) school attendance pamphlet outlining the importance of regular attendance, the difference between justified and unjustified reasons of absence, partial absences and how to contact the school, is distributed.
- (4.1.5) school developed "every day counts" video shared on Facebook page and updated as needed.

(4.2) Promoting good attendance with students:

- (4.2.1) class teachers implement intervention strategies when students are identified with an attendance concern;
- (4.2.2) when marking the roll, teachers discuss the importance of regular attendance;
- (4.2.3) students with improved attendance are acknowledged;
- (4.2.4) students with >97% or improved attendance are acknowledged each term with a certificate, presented at assembly.

(4.3) Promoting good attendance with staff:

- (4.3.1) all staff engage in professional development to review roll marking procedures, the benefits of regular attendance and ways to improve and promote attendance
- (4.3.2) School Attendance Coordinator meets regularly with admin staff and the learning support team to discuss attendance issues

- (4.3.3) School Attendance Coordinator keeps staff updated about attendance initiatives and concerns at weekly communication meetings
- (4.3.4) class teachers are provided with an attendance folder to aid in following the School Attendance Procedures.

(5)   Attendance Targets

At Beechwood Public School we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance as outlined in our 2021 – 2024 School Improvement Plan:

- **Improvement Measure:** The attendance rate for the school is increased from 91.9% in 2023 to 92.7% by 2027**.**

- **2024 Progress Measure** An increased proportion of students report a positive sense of wellbeing at school.

- **2025 Progress Measure** An increased proportion of students report positive engagement with learning.

- **2026 Progress Measure** Attendance during higher periods of absence is improved - specifically Monday and Friday.

Attendance Checklist

Name:	Class:	Teacher:	Carer: Ph:

√	date	**Phase 1- Informing the Parent of Concern**
		Discuss the importance of attendance during PLP or parent teacher interview
		Send home attendance slips for unjustified absences
		Phone parents for absences over 2 consecutive days (Office email parents each day)
		Request a meeting with parents to discuss attendance concerns (in person or phone)
Outcomes/Comments:		

√	date	**Phase 2- Monitoring Attendance**
		Interview the student to identify causes of non-attendance (use interview sheet)
		Request Principal to send a letter home to parents informing them the interview has taken place
		Request a medical certificate if the student is sick for a number of days
		Individual monitoring sheet and incentive program developed in consultation with the student over a two week period
		If attendance improves, provide student and family with 'attendance improvement award'
Outcomes/Comments:		

	date	**Phase 3- Engaging Assistance from LST and Attendance Team**
		Submit a Learning Support Team Referral requesting assistance from the Principal, attend LST meeting, discuss attendance strategies and support required
		Include copies of interview sheet and this checklist with referral

Outcomes/Comments:

√	date	**Phase 4- Reporting Attendance Concerns**
		Principal to attend LST meeting and assist teacher to implement strategies
		Principal to make Child Wellbeing Report for Habitual Absence
		Principal to complete HSLO application
		Principal to send home Letter 2 informing parents that a HSLO referral has been made
		Principal to meet with HSLO to discuss attendance concerns
		HSLO, Principal and class teacher to meet with parents to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP)
		Principal to make contact with any outside agencies
		Other – Please provide details

Outcomes/Comments:

Attendance Checklist to be attached to HSLO Application

Principals and Learning Support Teams are required to ensure that a full range of strategies to restore school attendance have been implemented prior to applying for support from the Home School Liaison Program (refer to Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures)

Intervention	Yes/No	Date	Comment/Outcome
School has notified all parents of their responsibilities under Education Act to ensure their children attend school regularly by newsletter or DoE flyer			
Absentee notice/compulsory school attendance letter sent to parent after two days unexplained absence			
Contact made with parent by phone or letter regarding the non-attendance issue			
Request for medical certificates			
Student interviews with teacher/LaSC/school counsellor to identify causes of non-attendance			
Any involvement from outside agencies			
Student raised at LST meeting to discuss attendance strategies and school support required and a plan developed			
School personnel to convene attendance meeting with parent			
Any involvement from regional support staff including HSLO contact and/or attendance at school convened meetings with parent			
Individual attendance monitoring, student placed on attendance card, student reports to designated teacher, provided with a mentor, STLA support, incentive program established			
Principal has made Child Wellbeing Unit report for Habitual Absence (Mandatory Reporting Guide)			
Principal has sent Letter 1 to parents advising of HSLO Application. Attach to completed application and forward to regional personnel			

Please note that all HSLO Applications need to be signed by the Principal before submission to regional personnel

<u>Non Attender Interview Sheet</u>

Name:_____   Class:_____

Date:_____

☐ Aboriginal   ☐ Behaviour Plan

☐ Adjustment Plan   ☐ Counsellor   ☐ Learning

Support Other_____

What are the main reasons why you are absent/late?

☐ Sick   ☐ slept in   ☐ rain/weather

☐ Bullying   ☐ no food   ☐ dislike of school   ☐ family issues

Other_____

Do you normally bring a note to explain why you have been away?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   If not, why:_____

Are there particular days you are absent from school? If yes, which days and why?

_____

_____

What do you enjoy about school?

_____

_____

What would make school better for you?

_____

_____

Is there anything teachers can do to help you come to school more regularly/on time?

_____

_____

*Please attach a printout of the student's attendance record from School Bytes and hand to the Principal so they can send home '**Attendance Letter 1**' to inform parents/carers that an interview has taken place. File in your attendance folder.*

L.I.Ps

Latecomers Interview Program

Name: _____   **Class:** _____

Good morning_____. I'm just going to ask you a few questions that might help you be on time for school.

1. Why are you late this morning?

( ) Sick   ( ) Missed the bus   ( ) No uniform   ( ) other

……………………………….. ( ) Slept in   ( ) Rain   ( ) Broken car

2. Did you bring a note to explain your absence today?

( ) YES   ( ) NO

3. Do your parents/carers know that you are late today?

( ) YES   ( ) NO

4. Are there particular days you are late to school? If yes, which days and why?

5. Is there anything we can do to help you get to school on time?

Thank you. We hope to see you at school on time tomorrow.

Interviewer's signature:_____   Date:_____

Information added to School Bytes ( ) YES
( ) NO Date:_____