

# Attendance Policy

Northampton District High School's Attendance Policy aligns with the  
Government of Western Australia  
Department of Education  
Student Attendance in Public Schools Policy  
Effective: 23 June 2022

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Every day that a student does not attend school can have a negative impact on their learning.

Northampton District High School monitors student attendance and works with other agencies and service providers to maximise student engagement with learning.

NDHS does this in a way that builds shared responsibility for student attendance between school, students, parents and the broader community.

## INDEX

<b>PAGE 3</b>	Policy Rules
<b>PAGE 4</b>	Definitions: Attendance Community Document Plan Parent Attendance Panel Authorised Absence
<b>PAGE 5</b>	Definitions cont.: Student Whereabouts Unknown List Codes used to mark attendance at NDHS
<b>PAGE 6</b>	Procedures: Approaches Promoting Student Attendance Monitoring Student Attendance Attendance Records Retention of Records
<b>PAGE 7</b>	Procedures cont.: Reporting and Disclosure of Attendance Data Early Intervention and Support to Restore Attendance Addressing Persistent Student Absence Alternative School Arrangements Under Section 24
<b>PAGE 8</b>	Procedures cont.: Access to the Curriculum for students with Health Problems Overview of Attendance at NDHS as at 2022

## POLICY RULES

The Principal manages student attendance in accordance with the Student Attendance in Public Schools procedures. This includes:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance to the school community;
- Engaging in community-initiated approaches to strengthen student attendance;
- Developing plans in partnership with students, families, communities and other agencies to improve student attendance, including documented plans where required, to address the persistent absences of individual students;
- Maintaining accurate attendance records;
- Responding to the Education Department requests for reporting and disclosure of attendance data;
- Managing alternative attendance arrangements where these are in the best interests of the student; and
- Retaining all relevant documentation.

### GUIDANCE

*It is the Principal's responsibility as site manager, to manage the implementation of this policy and the associated procedures. It does not mean the Principal must personally undertake the duty. The Principal is responsible for what must happen but has discretion over how it happens on site.*

*Education regions and Statewide Services will support the school to address and improve student attendance in accordance with the Student Attendance in Public Schools procedures.*

*Directors of Education:*

- *Provide advice, guidance and support to the school to manage attendance and to address persistent student absence the context of their region; and*
- *Liaise with and co-ordinate support from other agencies within the region that work with families and young people.*

*Statewide Services:*

- *Will provide resources and support to enable the school to develop local approaches to improving attendance e.g. the Student Attendance Toolkit;*
- *Provide policy advice and support to the school and education region; and*
- *Develop and implement mechanisms to maintain support, engagement and shared responsibility for improving student attendance and addressing absence across government agencies.*

## DEFINITIONS

### ATTENDANCE

A student is considered to be in attendance when present for, or participating in, the school's formal instructional programme. Typically, this will be on the school site, but also includes off-site arrangements that respond to the student's learning needs and circumstances.

### COMMUNITY

Local people, groups, and organisations in and around schools in remote, regional, and metropolitan areas. This includes, but is not limited to, students, families, principals, teachers and other school staff, community leaders, local government agency staff and not-for-profit organisations.

### DOCUMENTED PLAN

Documented plan is the umbrella term describing a range of ways of catering for the identified education needs of an individual student and/or a small group of students with similar education needs. Documented plans may take a variety of forms, including:

- Individual Education Plans (IEP);
- Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP);
- Individual Transition Plans (ITP); and
- Risk Management Plans (RMP).

### PARENT

In relation to a child, parent means a person who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare, and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare, and development of the child.

### ATTENDANCE PANEL

A panel appointed under the School Education Act 1999 (the Act) in circumstances where a principal is of the opinion the reasons given for absence have persistently:

- Been not genuine; or
- Not amounted to sufficient cause.

The primary function of an attendance panel is to provide advice or assistance to students and parents in order to restore attendance and ensure that future absences only occur where there is reasonable cause. Community representation on the panel provides a fresh perspective on the causes of absence and ways in which these may be addressed.

Prosecution of a student or parents under Section 38 of the Act cannot be commenced unless a non-compliance certificate has been issued by the attendance panel to which the child's case was referred. This certifies that reasonably practicable steps have been taken to address persistent absence, but non-compliance has continued.

### AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence where the reason provided by the parent is considered to be legitimate and is deemed acceptable by the Principal.

### STUDENT WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU) LIST

A list, usually referred to as the SWU List, that contains the names of children who are missing from schools and educational programmes in Western Australia. This list is distributed by the Department to administrators in non-government schools and some other agencies by agreement between the parties.

### CODES USED TO MARK ATTENDANCE AT NDHS

/	Present
U	Absent (cause not established)
X	Unacceptable Reason
T	Truant
R	Reasonable Cause
E	Educational Activity
M	Medical/Sick Bay
L	Late
C	Cultural/Religious
N	Notified as Sick
V	Vacation (authorised)
K	Unauthorised Vacation

## PROCEDURES

### APPROACHES

At NDHS the Principal has developed approaches that are relevant and support student attendance. These include:

- **Promotion approaches** that focus on building student, family, school and community resilience, and the promotion of protective factors.
- **Prevention approaches** that are designed to prevent poor attendance for those students most at risk.
- **Response approaches** that provide support or interventions for those students who are not attending.

### PROMOTING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

At NDHS we have a whole school approach whereas both the Principal and school staff:

- Build positive relationships with students, parents and communities;
- Communicate the importance of school attendance to students, their parent/s and the broader school community;
- Engage in community-initiated approaches to strengthen student attendance; and
- Encourages attendance by providing school environments that engage and support students to thrive.

NDHS also has a school bus which collects children who live within the town boundaries so distance is no longer an issue for not attending school.

### MONITORING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Principal ensures that:

- Where a student is participating in a Section 24 arrangement, that the School Officer or MCS manages the student's attendance in conjunction with the alternative school;
- Requests a reason for a student's absence be provided to the Principal's satisfaction; and
- If a student cannot be located, and their parent/s cannot be contacted, the Principal, within 15 days of the start of an absence:
  - Completes an SWU Request Form and submit it electronically;
  - Retains the student on the school's current enrolment register until email notification is received from the Student Tracking Co-ordinator that the student has been placed on the SWU List; and
  - Continues to record the student's unexplained absence until this notification has been received, at which time the student can be removed from the register from the last date of attendance or authorised absence.

### ATTENDANCE RECORDS

At NDHS the Principal shall ensure that the School Officer or MCS:

- Keep accurate attendance records for every student enrolled at NDHS (including attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions for Kindergarten, Pre-Primary and Primary students; and every lesson/period for Secondary students) that are able to be reproduced in a written form;
- Records whether a student's absence was authorised or unauthorised;
- Records a student as:
  - Present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction; and
  - Present if they are on a school-approved activity or attending off-site under a Section 24 arrangement.

### RETENTION OF RECORDS

The Principal:

- Retains attendance records in accordance with the *School Education Regulations 2000 and the Retention and Disposal Schedule for Department of Education, School, College and Campus Records*; and
- Retains documentation of all contact and intervention strategies implemented in addressing a student's absence.

## REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE OF ATTENDANCE DATA

The Principal:

- Complies with requests from their education regional office and Central Office to provide information on student attendance; and
- Include the attendance data of every student enrolled in response to requests for school attendance data (e.g. participation in the Attendance Data Collection).

### GUIDANCE

*Principal should seek advice from an appropriate educational regional officer regarding request for individual or group attendance data from an external agency.*

## EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT TO RESTORE ATTENDANCE

The Principal:

- Identifies when a student's attendance is declining or continues to place them at risk;
- Investigates the causes;
- Intervenes with the aim of restoring student attendance; and
- Consults as appropriate with the student, their parents and other stakeholders to develop approaches that are context specific and culturally responsive.

## ADDRESSING PERSISTENT STUDENT ABSENCE

The Principal:

- Develops, implements and documents attendance improvement plans to address persistent student absence;
- Documents the intervention strategies undertaken to address a student's absence;
- Engages in community-initiated approaches designed to strengthen student attendance;
- Consults with the education regional office to determine further actions if persistent absence continues after meeting with the student's parent and taking all reasonable steps to work with them to improve the student's attendance; and
- Offers the option of an attendance panel to parents before prosecution can be considered.

## ALTERNATIVE ATTENDANCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER SECTION 24 OF THE SCHOOL EDUCATION ACT

Where it is deemed to be in the best interests of an enrolled student, the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled:

- Only enters into a Section 24 arrangement where a student will undertake a programme provided by another school or training organisation and where the combination of arrangements equates to full-time attendance;
- Formalises an alternative attendance arrangement for the student in accordance with Section 24 of the *School Education Act 1999*;
- Approves the Section 24 arrangement and end date the arrangement;
- Issue a Certificate of Approval: Alternative Attendance Arrangement (Section 24 Arrangement) outlining the details of the alternative attendance arrangements;
- Appoint a school-based case manager to monitor the arrangement and to work in consultation with the student, the parents of students and the alternative school or provider;
- Confirm that the duty of care provision for the student meets Department requirements; and
- Records the student's attendance using the E code.



## **ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS WITH ILLNESS AND/OR HEALTH CONDITIONS**

Where a student has a mental or physical illness and/or health care needs which may impact their ability to attend the usual school site, the Principal:

- Communicates with the parent of the student regarding the nature of a health-related absence and health professional recommendations to provide reasonable and appropriate adjustments to curriculum access are implemented by the school
- Informs the student and parent of the student of the student's right to an educational programme and actively engage the parent and the student in negotiating access to a relevant programme; and
- Arrange access to an educational programme for a student who has a physical and/or mental health condition and/or health care needs and who cannot attend the school.

## **OVERVIEW OF ATTENDANCE AT NORTHAMPTON DISTRICT HIGH AS AT 2022**

- Each morning class/form teachers will take attendance and record these absences in Lesson Attendance (Integris);
- At 9am, School Officer or MCS will phone classrooms to confirm who is absent;
- At 10am automatic SMS messages are sent to parents of students marked with U (absent-caused not established);
- As replies to SMS are received Lesson Attendance is amended;
- Each week School Officer prints out Individual Absentee reports for students with unexplained absences and these absences are followed up by phone calls or home visits to the parents of these students by the School Officer/AIEO/Deputy/Principal;
- Should phones go unanswered and no-one at home when called upon, letter is sent to parent's mailing address of student absent;
- After 3 consecutive days of being marked with U, Admin will call families to establish the students whereabouts and reason/s for absences; and
- After 15 days of absence, information is gathered to where student is and if still in town, efforts are made to have them return asap. If they have left town, efforts are made to locate them and if they can't be found, these students are then forwarded to the SWU List.