

## Piara Waters Primary School Attendance Policy

### Department of Education Attendance Policy

The Principal is responsible for the accurate recording and rigorous monitoring of the attendance of all students and for the implementing appropriate strategies to restore attendance if there are attendance issues.

In support of the Department of Education *Better Attendance: Brighter Futures* which reflects the commitment in the *Classroom First Strategy* to ensure every student in every public school is successful, Piara Waters Primary School will:

- Promote to parents the importance of their children attending school regularly
- Build strong relationships with students and parents/caregivers
- Ensure the curriculum is tailored to address all students' needs
- Provide safe and welcoming learning environments

### South Metropolitan Education Region Attendance Policy

South Metropolitan Education Region endorses the following guiding principles when responding to attendance concerns:

- It is in the best interest of the student, parent and school that connectedness and positive relationships are nurtured and preserved.
- A Whole School Attendance Plan is in place.
- The reasons for non-attendance are explored and addressed.
- Thorough documentation is maintained.
- A Case Management Approach is used incorporating monitoring, planning and review.

### **Rationale**

All schools in Western Australia are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students, which address their educational needs. Regular attendance at school is fundamental to all students' learning. Consistent attendance and participation are essential for all students' social and academic learning. We follow the DOE's 4 R approach to attendance, by Recognising, Recording, Resolving, and Restoring Attendance across the school:

- Recognise - identify every absence
- Resolve – seek a reason for every absence
- Restore – identify when attendance is a concern (to an individual, target group and whole-school levels) and implement improvement strategies
- Records – maintain accurate records that would withstand external scrutiny

## School community beliefs about the importance of attending school

***It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school regularly at our school.***

- Is committed to promoting the key message of #dontmissoutpwps.
- Believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend all day, every school day where possible.
- Monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance.
- Believes vacations taken within the school term will be an unapproved absence and impacts on student learning.
- Believes truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.
- Believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

## Monitoring

The school will utilise the following to monitor student attendance:

- Student Attendance Reporting (Via the DoE portal), Regular Class Attendance Analysis Report (Via SIS), Percentage Attendance Report (via SIS)  
At the completion of each Term: Attendance Summary Report, Unexplained Absentees Report and Longitudinal Attendance Report
- Parents /caregivers will be contacted by email if their child's attendance falls below 90%-80% (per semester) A PWPS Attendance Plan will be put into place if a student's attendance falls below 80% (per semester).
- Staff and the School Community will be given regular updates on Whole School Attendance Data.

## School Data

Schools Online- Attendance- [https://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/attendance\\_ov\\_yrlev.do?schoolID=5829&pageID=SP10](https://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/attendance_ov_yrlev.do?schoolID=5829&pageID=SP10)

## School Attendance Targets

School Focus	Targets
<b>Strategic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By 2018, All year groups to maintain an attendance rate that is above the average for WA Public Schools</li></ul>
<b>Operational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By 2018, prevent the upward trend of unauthorised absences through whole school and classroom strategies around unauthorised vacations</li><li>• By 2018, at least 85% of our students will be attending school at a regular rate (90% or more)</li></ul>
<b>Classrooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By 2018, all classroom teachers will develop strategies to improve student attendance for students who sit between 80% and 89% attendance</li><li>• By 2018, all classroom teachers will be developing attendance plans for students whose attendance rates consistently sit below 80%</li></ul>

## **School Procedures**

*Accurate entry of attendance in SIS using the appropriate code is vital in ensuring data is valid and can be collected to inform decisions regarding student attendance.*

### **Daily Attendance**

- Student attendance will be recorded by 9.00am and updated when necessary throughout the day. This is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the classroom between 8:30-9:00am.

### **Absences**

- Parents/Caregivers are required to advise the classroom teacher the reasons for an absence as soon as practical. This can be written or verbal.
- If a student is away for more than 2 consecutive days, the teacher will contact the parent/caregiver.
- For prolonged absences that are due to sickness or injury the school will require a medical certificate.
- Classroom teachers will enter the reason (either verbal or written) for the absence. This must be entered into SIS Lesson Attendance for the absent days using the 'Add Note' feature. This will include teacher's initials and the date.
- Our aim is to have no unexplained absences in our attendance data.

### **Students 'at risk'. Attendance below 90%**

- Students with attendance below 90% will be deemed 'at risk'. Teachers will be in regular contact with Parents/Caregivers of students in this category. Students with 'at risk' will be monitored carefully by the classroom teacher.
- If attendance falls to below 80% the student will be placed on a PWPS Attendance Plan.
- If unsuccessful in making contact with Parent/Caregiver of students 'at risk' or non-attendance does not improve after classroom level intervention and support, the student will be referred to the Attendance Team.

### **Late Students**

- For students arriving at school after 8:30am this will be noted as late in SIS by Teacher.
- If students arrive unattended they will be given a late slip. Parents/Caregivers are required to fill in a reason and return to the classroom teacher the following day.
- For students arriving late (L) regularly, teacher to follow up with contact with Parents/Caregivers. This may be used to generate an Individual Attendance Plan.
- Students who are consistently late will be placed on a PWPS Attendance Plan.

### **Planned Leave**

- All planned leave needs to be approved by the Principal.
- If the leave is approved it will be considered as authorised leave.

### **Vacation Leave**

- Families taking Vacation Leave during school terms is discouraged. Parents/Caregivers must send notification of vacation leave to the Principal. All vacations must be approved by the Principal. If approved this will be entered as 'V' in SIS Lesson Attendance. If not approved it will be entered as a K (unauthorised vacation).
- Teachers are not obliged to provide work to students on unapproved leave.

### **Authorised Leave**

- All authorised leave will need to be pre- approved by the principal. Teachers will provide a students will be provided with a journal to complete if the leave is authorised.
- For authorised absences the appropriate code will need to be entered.

### **Illness/Health Conditions**

- Where a student has a mental or physical illness and/or health care needs which may impact on their ability to attend the usual school site, the principal will: Inform the parent of a student under the age of 18 and the student of the student's right to an educational program and actively engage the parent and the student in negotiating access to a relevant program.
- Arrange access to an educational program for a student who has a physical and/or mental health condition and/or health care needs and who cannot attend the regular site.
- Follow the procedures described in School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health (SSEN:M&MH).

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **ATTENDANCE COORDINATOR (Deputy Principal - Student Services)**

- Attendance Team to provide regular parent information on attendance.
- Attendance Team to provide at least 2 Attendance Reports a Term, highlighting students sitting below 90% attendance
- Attendance Team meets when student referrals are made or when whole school attendance decisions need to be made.
- Attendance Team to coordinate case conferences where necessary.
- Give regular Whole School Attendance Percentage Figures to staff (2-3 times per term) and parents (once per term via Connect)
- For at risk students, letter sent home outlining Attendance Percentage. Copy to Teachers – then collated into handover file for the following year.
- Depending on outcome of letter (e.g improved attendance) a more formal process to be implemented (e.g conference) with parent/caregiver as outlined in DoE Attendance Policy.
- Promote student attendance through the hashtag #dontmissoutpwps, through positive reminders across the school and communication where necessary to the community
- To develop whole school strategies that reinforce positive school attendance.
- PWPS Attendance Award will be given to one Junior class and one Senior class per term for the best attendance. This will commence in 2018.

## **TEACHERS**

- Comment on and complete attendance reports within a week of receiving them.
- Monitor all student attendances and be aware of students sitting below 90% attendance.
- Follow the schools agreed 'Attendance Process' document for recording attendance.
- Develop classroom strategies to encourage student attendance at school.
- Remind parents/students of what they are missing out on when they are away from school.
- To create attendance plans for students consistently late to school, or who are sitting below an attendance rate of 80%.
- To participate in any attendance plan meetings, case conferences or attendance advisory meetings.
- To not encourage students taking unauthorised vacation leave during school terms

## **STUDENTS**

- Ensure they arrive at school before 8:30am siren.
- Prompt attendance outside respective classrooms after recess and lunch.

## **PARENTS**

- Parent to provide written/verbal explanation of child's absence immediately preceding or prior to absence.
- Parents attend non-attendance case conference as deemed necessary by Attendance Team.
- Parents to notify school principal and teacher of any intended vacation leave during school term in writing.

Parents to complete any absentee slips and/or late slips immediately preceding the late arrival or on the next school day.

## **APPENDIX A LESSON ATTENDANCE CODE DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTIO N</b>	<b>*TYPE</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>/</b>	Present	Present	Resolved	The student is recorded as being present at school. This is the default when daily records are created.
<b>E</b>	Educational Activity	Present	Resolved	The student is recorded as NOT absent from school. The student is involved in an approved educational program such as an excursion and no follow up is required.
<b>W</b>	Withdrawn	Present	Resolved	The student is recorded as NOT absent from school. The student is withdrawn from classroom activities but is still present at school.
<b>M</b>	Medical or Sick Bay	Present	Resolved	The student is in the medical or sick bay but is still present at school. The student is recorded as NOT absent from school.

<b>L</b>	Late	Late	Resolved	The student is late but the degree of lateness is insufficient to have been recorded as a period or session absence. If the student is so late as to have missed more than 25% of a period or session then they should be recorded as absent for that period or session.
<b>R</b>	Reasonable Cause	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. An acceptable reason for the student's absence has been provided. Pre- authorised absences will be recorded as an R.
<b>Z</b>	Suspended	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. This is an authorised absence.
<b>C</b>	Cultural Absence	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. The Principal has authorised this absence because of cultural or religious significance to the family.
<b>N</b>	Notified as Sick	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. The Principal has authorised this absence due to confirmation of the student's ill health by the parent.
<b>K</b>	Unapproved Vacation	Unauthorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. The Principal has not authorised this absence.
<b>X</b>	Unacceptable Reason	Unauthorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. A reason has been given for the student's absence from school but has been deemed unacceptable and further follow up will be required.
<b>U</b>	Absence – cause not yet established	Unauthorised Absence	Unresolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. Sometimes called an <b>Unexplained</b> absence. No reason has yet been established for this absence.
<b>T</b>	Truant	Unauthorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. Investigation has revealed that the student has truanted.
<b>Y</b>	Enforced Closure	Not required to attend	Resolved	The student is not required to attend on the selected day. A school can be closed for AM, PM or the whole day for a selected date. The Y code can be applied to the whole school or a selected group of students. Schools can use this code for critical events or amending Kindergarten programs.
<b>F</b>	Flexible Code	Not required	Resolved	The student is not required to attend on the selected day. The F code can be applied to an individual student or a group of students. Schools can use this code for study leave or

		to attend		flexible study arrangements.
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## APPENDIX B EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR SIS LESSON ATTENDANCE CODES

### Codes for students attending on or off site

*I* - Present code, this is the default setting in Lesson Attendance.

#### **E - Educational Activity**

This code should be used when the student is participating in an approved educational program off school site, such as a Section 24, Alternative Attendance Arrangement, an excursion, work placement or programs such as PEAC. This code is not classified as an absence. This code is not to be used for students on the Participation List.

#### **M - Medical or Sick Bay**

The M code should be applied to students when they are on school grounds in the medical or sick bay. This code is not classified as an absence. Sick **students that are not at school should be marked with an N – Notified as Sick.**

#### **W - Withdrawn**

Where a student is withdrawn from school activities as a planned response to a breach of school discipline but is present at school. For example, when a student is sent to the office or a buddy class but is still at school. This code is not classified as an absence.

### Codes for students who are late

#### **L - Late**

To be used when a student is late to school but is not late enough to be recorded as a half day absence. This code is not classified as an absence. NB: A student is absent if they have attended less than two full hours of continuous instruction.

### Codes for Authorised Absences

#### **R - Reasonable Cause**

This code should be used when the principal has deemed the reason provided as acceptable other than an absence due to suspension, cultural absence, illness or family holiday (See code options below).

#### **C - Cultural Absence**

Absences authorised for cultural or religious significance to the family such as funerals, sorry time and religious observances. The principal should negotiate the duration of this absence prior to it being taken. If the absence extends beyond the number of agreed days, and no acceptable reason is provided, the additional absences should be recorded with an X (Unacceptable Reason).

#### **N - Notified as Sick**

Applied to a student whose reason for absence is due to illness. The principal may request a medical certificate.

## **V - Vacation**

This code may be used when the absence has been negotiated in advance and the principal is satisfied that reasonable grounds for authorising the absence apply. Completion of a work package during the period of absence may be requested by the principal.

## **K -Unauthorised Vacation**

This code may be used when the absence has not been approved.

## **Codes for Unauthorised Absences**

### **U - Absence – cause not yet established**

To be used when a student is initially absent from school and no explanation has yet been provided. Further follow up is required to establish a reason for the absence and once obtained, the code should be changed accordingly.

### **K - Unauthorised Vacation**

This code identifies students whose parents have taken them on an in-term holiday and the principal has not authorised the absence. A template letter, to notify parents of a decision not to approve an in-term vacation, is available online in [Microsoft Word](#) and SIS [KST format](#) on the STIMS website.

### **X - Unacceptable Reason**

This code is used when the school has sought an explanation but the response from the parent is not considered reasonable, and the principal does not believe it satisfies the requirements of Section 25 of the School Education Act 1999.

### **T - Truant**

This is be used for a student that is absent from school and an investigation has revealed that the student has truanted. This will usually require a teacher or parent witnessing the student leaving the school grounds or educational program without permission.

### **Y – School Closure**

This code indicates that students are not required to attend on the selected day and effectively reduces the number of half days available for that student. The Y code can be applied to the whole school or a cohort of students. Schools can use this code for critical events, natural disasters, infectious diseases or amending programs. It can be applied to AM, PM or the whole day for a selected date.

Note: This code is applied through the school diary and Lesson Attendance > Parameters > Enforced School Closure.

### **Q - Not required to attend**

Students in Year 11 and 12 only who are on study or exam leave, and are not on school site, are to be recorded with this code. This will not be counted as an absence. This code is not to be used for students on the Participation List or students in Kindergarten to Year 10.

## **References**

**A. Department of Education, Student Attendance Policy and Procedures**

**B. Department of Education, Focus documents**