

Student Attendance Policy



Overview

This policy provides the guidelines for the School's responsibilities in relation to attendance will be adhered to in accordance with legislative requirements related to attendance and student welfare. The School will monitor student attendance to provide for the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the students in its care.

Policy

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

The Principal is required to keep a register, in a form approved by the Minister of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school;

Kamaroi must provide a safe and supportive environment by

- Having in place policies and procedures that provide for student welfare; and
- Maintaining a student enrolment and attendance register

Parents are Responsible for:

- Enrolling their children of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school or registering them with the Board of Studies NSW for Home Schooling.
- Ensuring that their children attend school regularly
- Explaining the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school.
- Taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.
- Promptly explaining absences or partial absences by:
 - 10am on the day of absence, email: kamaroi@kamaroi.nsw.edu.au
SMS: 0417 931 070 or telephone the School Office on 02 9450 1651.
 - Inform the School Office in addition to class teachers of the reason for absence.
Obtain a Medical Certificate for illness longer than 3 days.

Justified Reasons for Student Absences may include:

- 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
- Published public transport delays or traffic accidents

Unjustified Reasons for Student Absences may include:

- Sleeping in
- Running late
- Missing the train/bus
- Couldn't get ready in time

Extended Leave

All children are expected to participate in all aspects of the curriculum including festivals, camps and excursions, plays and other whole school events during the school year.

Parents/guardians must make requests for extended leave in writing and addressed to the Principal, with reasons for leave: such as Family (bereavement, weddings), educational, cultural/religious events and

other special family circumstances, using the Extended Leave form available on the website or from the office.

Only one extended leave of absence will be approved each calendar year.

Reasons Extended Leave will not be granted:

- Approval will not be granted in the period twenty days prior to the Commonwealth and State government census dates in February and August.
- Approval will not be granted if the absence impacts on whole school events such as festivals concerts and picnics.
- Approval will not be granted when the student would be absent from their classes, camps, excursions and plays.

Students Attending Lessons Outside School during School Hours

Involvement in private lessons, such as ballet and music classes, conducted outside the school during school hours may not be conducive to the effective operation of the school or to the education of the student concerned. Students' involvement in extra-curricula activities will usually be limited to outside school hours.

Where attendance at a private lesson during school hours is of exceptional importance such as sitting examinations, the Principal may use discretion in justifying the absence. This provision must not be used on a regular basis.

If parents withdraw their children from school for private lessons, an unjustified absence may be recorded.

The Responsibilities of School Staff:

- Providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community
- Maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- Liaise with Administration Officer and Principal where applicable, regarding unsatisfactory attendance processes being followed.

The Principal is Responsible for ensuring that:

- Attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.
- Following up unexplained Student Absences
- Documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.
- The Principal is or nominee is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.
- Parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements.
- All cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies including communication with parents/caregivers are implemented.
- The Principal or delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two days of an unexplained absence occurring.

The Principal may grant:

- Sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- An exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student
- Part-day exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student
- The Principal may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence. The parent should be advised that the explanation has not been accepted and a reason for the decision provided.

- The Principal may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged.
- The Principal may grant extended leave in accordance with the Legislation. “Extended Leave” means absence aside from illness or accident (e.g. movie role, overseas travel) up to 100 days in 12 months as per the Minister’s delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act.

Where the Principal has ongoing concerns, consent to contact the doctor will be sought from the parents. If the request is denied, or if the Principal is still not happy with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as ‘unjustified’.

The Principal may delegate responsibility for the maintenance of attendance registers (rolls) to teachers and other school personnel. In such cases, the Principal must ensure that these staff:

- Know the procedures in this document before marking the attendance register and following up absences. Staff must understand how an absence should be noted on an attendance register using the Common Codes approved by the Minister.
- Retain record of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents. If teachers receive verbal explanations from parents, they should record, sign and date the explanation.
- Are aware of their responsibility to alert the Principal or staff member responsible for monitoring attendance when a student’s pattern of attendance is of concern, or if no explanation is received from the parent or carer.
- Report chronic non-attendance and persistent lateness promptly to the Principal or nominee.

Supporting the Regular Attendance of Students at School

- Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of students at school.
- The Principal and school staff, in consultation with students and their parents, will usually be able to resolve problems of non-attendance.
- While parents should be reminded of their legal obligations under the Education Act (1990) the welfare of the student must be the focus of this consultation.
- The most effective means of restoring and maintaining regular school attendance includes sound attendance monitoring practices and regular follow-up of unexplained absences by contacting parents promptly. Early telephone contact with parent is one means of achieving this.

Unsatisfactory Attendance Intervention Strategies

- The School encourages parents/guardians to understand their obligations to ensure their child attends school, and to not condone absences for unauthorised reasons such as birthdays, shopping and other leisure activities.
- Students with persistently low attendance will be monitored and personalised strategies will be considered to increase their attendance and/or engage them in continuing education programs. For students requiring more intensive support, one-on-one meetings and alternative arrangements may be organised in consultation with parents/guardians.
- When frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the School will request medical certificates for the absences and will consult with parents/guardians regarding the health care needs of the student.

The School has implemented the following strategies in order to improve unsatisfactory attendance and student engagement in school and learning:

Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school-based strategies including:

- Parent interviews
- Transfer unsatisfactory student attendance to student files
- Reviewing the appropriateness of the student’s educational programme
- Development of a school-based attendance improvement plan
- Referral to outside agencies
- Support from school based personnel

Implementation

Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School has set up a series of compliance tasks in **Complispace Assurance**, to ensure that key obligations under the NSW Registration Manual are managed effectively. For further information regarding Attendance, please contact the School Office.