
SHELL COVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

The law in NSW states that all children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) years are required to attend school regularly (Education Act 1990) unless they are sick or have another good reason for being absent.

Parents are required to explain their children's absences within seven (7) days of the occurrence of an absence. Failure to explain an absence within this time will be recorded as an unjustified absence on the student's record.

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending Shell Cove Public School every school day. This is:

- committing to promoting the key message of 'Every day matters'
- believing all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day
- monitoring, communicating and implementing strategies to improve regular school attendance
- deeming that truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- recognising and promoting attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

It is the **responsibility of parents or caregivers** to:

- ensure that their child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction (see School Education Act, 1999)
- ensure that their child is on time for school each day – before 9:00am
- notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence
- notify the school in advance if an absence of any period is planned
- ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date.

Parents are required to explain absences within seven (7) school days.

It is the **responsibility of teachers** to:

- monitor and record each student's attendance
- record absences daily and identify students at risk
- record any cases of lateness or absence
- contact home on third day of absence
- discuss and refer non-attendance to the Principal for follow up

REPORTING ATTENDANCE

At Shell Cove Public School reports of absence are taken seriously. Attending school every day makes learning easier for your child and helps build and maintain friendships.

It is important to let the school know when your child will be away and why your child was absent.

To explain an absence, parents may:

- send a note to the school
- telephone the school
- visit the school
- email the school

Written explanation of absences needs to include the child's name, class, dates and reason for which the child was absent and the parent's signature.

Justified Absences

- your child is too sick to go to school
- there is an exceptional or urgent family circumstance (such as attending a funeral)
- your child has been injured
- your child has to go to a special religious ceremony
- your child has an infectious illness (eg: chicken pox, measles or mumps)
- if your child is away from school due to illness for 3 or more days, a doctor's certificate should be provided
- if you know your child is going to be away from school for 2 or more days you should notify the school. The school has a legal obligation to contact parents/carers when a student has been absent for 2 days and the absence is unexplained.

Unjustified Absences

- late
- sleeping in
- haircuts
- shopping
- personal reasons
- birthdays
- minding younger siblings or other children
- working around the house
- family circumstances/commitments



The Principal, or nominee, has a right to question an explanation given for any absence.

Partial absences

This includes being late for school, leaving school to attend appointments etc and leaving school early.

Lateness is recorded as a **partial absence** and must be explained by the parents or carers in the same way as other forms of absence.

Arriving at school and class on time:

- Ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- Helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- Give students time to greet their friends before class
- Reduces classroom disruption.

All children arriving late to school, that is, after the bell has rung, must go to the office and get a late note. If the student is more than 5 minutes late they **MUST** be signed in at the office by a parent.

Early leaving is also recorded as a **partial absence** and must be explained by parents or carers in the same way as other forms of absence. All early leavers **MUST** be signed out at the office by a parent or carer. The printed leave slip is given to the teacher.

Holidays

Families should try to arrange holidays in school vacations. If you can only arrange your family holiday during school time, you should inform the school Principal in advance and request an **Application for Extended Leave – Travel** for the period of leave. You will need to supply an itinerary or other relevant travel documentation. This needs to be completed in School Bytes under Forms **at least 2 weeks prior** to travel to allow time for processing.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

In line with Departmental policy, student attendance is constantly monitored at Shell Cove Public School. The school will inform parents by letter if a student is absent from school without explanation. Parents who have difficulty in ensuring the regular attendance of their children at school should contact their child's class teacher or the Principal.

Where a teacher has concerns regarding a student's attendance they will in the first instance contact the parents, discuss the issues and offer assistance. If the student's attendance continues to be of concern a 'Notification of Attendance Concerns' form is completed by the teacher and submitted to the Principal. Action taken from this point may include notification of concerns to the parent in writing, a formal parent interview to discuss and resolve the issue, referral to the school Learning Support Team, referral to the Home School Liaison Officer.