

**Outline:** Regular attendance at school for every student is an essential component of learning and student wellbeing at Kandos High School if our students are to achieve their potential and increase their career and life options.

## Overview

- The law in NSW states, through the “Education Act” 1990, that all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age of 17 years, are required to attend school regularly.
- While student attendance at school remains a legal obligation of parents and carers, Kandos High School provides active support for the retention and engagement of our students until the completion of a full secondary education or alternative pathway.
- The Department of Education has a current strategic goal for all students to be attending school 90% of the time.
- Regular school attendance is essential to satisfy the legal and accreditation requirements of the:
  - Education Reform Act 1990.
  - Record of School Achievement.
  - Preliminary and HSC Certificate.
- Regular student attendance at school is important for the following reasons:
  - Students are more likely to succeed in their coursework and academic life when they attend school consistently.
  - If students miss the basic skills in the early years of education, they may find it difficult in later years, the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, are a prerequisite to comprehending the varied curriculum demands in secondary education.
  - Attending school every day makes learning easier for our students and helps them build and maintain friendships with other children, which is an important part of school, life, and their future work.
  - It is difficult for teachers and classes to build their skills and progress if large numbers of students are frequently absent.
  - Regular attendance at school will help our students to succeed in later life.
- Student attendance is a whole school responsibility, and the following procedures and guidelines outline the way the school meets the mandatory regulations as identified in the School Attendance Policy and Procedures of the Department of Education. These documents outline the responsibilities of Parents/Carers and Principals/Schools and should be read in conjunction with the Kandos High School Attendance Procedures.

## 1 General Principles

- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children regularly attend school and promptly explain absences of their children from school.

- Parents/Carers are encouraged to make appointments with health professionals before or after school or in non-term time where possible.
- The taking of family holidays during school time is discouraged, due to missed learning time and inability to access key learning area specialists.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to apply for leave in advance during term time, if this is unavoidable to arrange for work to be collated for the student to complete where relevant.
- The Principal will determine if the leave satisfies the granting of an Exemption or justified or unjustified leave.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns in regard to their child's attendance.
- Parents/Carers are required to explain all absences from school within seven school days of the date the absence occurred. If absences remain unexplained after this period, they will automatically become unjustified leave, this information will appear on student reports.
- The resolution of student attendance concerns may require a range of additional school-based strategies that may include student and parent/carer interviews; development of an attendance improvement plan; referral to the learning support team and/or external agencies and support from school-based staff.

## **2 School Procedures**

### **2.1 Register of enrolments**

- The register of enrolments is stored electronically in Sentral, which maintains records of dates of arrival and departures of students. This is maintained by the School Administrative Officer - Student Management (SAO Student Management).
- The following information is entered into the Register of Enrolments: Date of birth; Full legal name; address; parent/carer details; date of enrolment; previous school, where applicable; date of leaving the school; destination of departing students under 17; unknown destination of departing student under 17.
- The Register of Enrolments is updated at the following times: receiving the acceptance of enrolment email; receiving written notification if the student is leaving the school; when parents/carers inform the school of a change of details.

### **2.2 Register of attendance**

- Kandos High School has an electronic roll marking system and Attendance recording module in Sentral.
- Rolls are legal documents that can be subpoenaed in court at any time, hence they need to be accurate and up to date.
- It is a mandatory requirement that Kandos High School use the current attendance codes which are published by the Department of Education to denote absences and leave. These are entered via the SAO Student Management.
- All students will be allocated a roll call class at the beginning of the year or upon enrolment by the SAO Student Management.
- The SAO Student Management consults with the Principal regarding student attendance. The Principal may accept or reject a reason for student absence and which code will be used. The Principal may request further documentation to support the reason for a student absence.

- The Official Register of Attendance is backed up electronically and stored in the Cloud, a hard copy is also printed off in Week 1 of each Term for the previous Term by the SAO Student Management and signed by the Principal for archival purposes.

### **3 Daily Procedures for Monitoring Attendance**

#### **3.1 Roll Call**

- Attendance is marked at 9:00 am during Roll Call by teachers (Monday to Thursday), and each period thereafter within 5 minutes of the lesson commencing. To locate which Teachers are on duty see Sentral - Timetable -> Period Timetable -> Day -> RC
- Unmarked rolls will be reported by the Student Administration Officer to the Senior/ Executive as this is potential breach to our duty of care. Look at the report on Sentral.
- Teachers are required to sight the student and if a student is absent record in Sentral as an 'a' for unexplained absence.
- Teachers should not change status codes once the roll has been submitted in Sentral, this is then managed by the SAO Student Management who may change the code if the student is late or the non-attendance is explained.
- If a student arrives to roll call after 9:00 am without a late note, and the overall "late" field has not been completed, the student should be redirected to sign in at the front office so that the student is recorded as being on site.
- If a teacher is unable to mark the Sentral roll for any reason, a paper roll must be marked by the teacher and sent to the front office, there are paper rolls available in the roll folders. NB. Sentral can be accessed on mobile devices if required.

#### **3.2 Secondary Period by Period (PxP) Class Roll marking**

- A roll of attendance for each period must be marked by the classroom teacher within the first 5 minutes of the period commencing, this is a duty of care requirement.
- Class teachers need to reconcile the lesson roll with the morning attendance roll. If there are discrepancies the teacher needs to advise the SAO Student Management. They will refer to the available Head Teacher/Deputy Principal/Principal if an anomaly is unable to be resolved and they will initiate the process to locate students onsite.

#### **3.3 Whole School and Year Assembly Roll marking**

- Whole school assemblies are held in the school hall, identified by 3-consecutive bell rings.
- Year Advisors are responsible for marking the roll during this time.

#### **3.4 Excursions and Activities**

- Prior to an excursion, coordinating teachers are to send a list of all students expected to attend the event to the SAO Student Management two weeks before the event via Sentral Activities. Staff are to be notified the day before the excursion leaves.
- For excursions where students will meet onsite, teachers are to mark the normal class roll, prepared by the SAO Student Management (including student details and copies of the students medical health care plans and emergency care plans), if possible.
- For excursions where students will meet offsite, teachers are to mark a paper roll, then notify the SAO Student Management (including student details and copies of the students medical health care plans and emergency care plans), of any present or absent students if needed.

- For whole school offsite events such as carnivals paper rolls are to be marked by the teacher and reconciled by the SAO Student Management.
- If a student arrives late or leaves early from an excursion of offsite activity the SAO Student Management must be notified to ensure attendance records are updated. Students may not leave early from an excursion without parent/carer permission and approval from a relevant staff member.
- The attendance register code used to describe the excursion or activity will be entered by the SAO Student Management (refer to the School Attendance Register Codes for clarification).
  - Flexible (F) will be used if the student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in:
    - HSC Pathways Program
    - Best Start Assessments
    - Trial or HSC examinations
    - TAFE/VET courses
  - School Business (B) will be used if the student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example:
    - Work experience
    - School sport (regional and state carnivals)
    - School excursions
    - Student exchange

### **3.5 In school incursions**

- For Students who have appointments within the school at varying times the relevant staff member will coordinate for these partial absences to be entered into the incursion register in Sentral. This is for students that might be: completing PLP/IEP meetings, testing or mentoring; in the intensive learning centre; involved in SRC (inc. Year 11/12 students in roll call), completing PLP/IEP; using their calm cards, or seeing staff such as year advisor, Deputy or Principal, school counsellor. These are timed absences and need to be checked out at the relevant time.

### **3.6 Lateness**

- It is important to arrive to school and class on time to ensure that; students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day, for students to learn the importance of punctuality and routine, to give students time to greet their friends before class and to reduce classroom disruption.
- Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.
- Students arriving late to school after 9:00am must sign in at the Front Office and received a late slip prior to going to roll call or class.
- Lateness is recorded in Sentral by the SAO Student Management.
- Students arriving late to class must present their late slip to their teacher. This has already been recorded in Sentral, please check the time of the slip to ensure that they have directly proceeded to class.

### **3.7 Early Departure**

- For students who need to leave school early, the parent or carer must contact the front office via phone, email or text to arrange this. The student is to report to the front office to sign out at the requested time or if the student has a note from the parent.

- Early departure is recorded as a partial absence in Sentral by the SAO Student Management. Depending on the reason for the early departure the relevant code is used.
- The SAO Student Management will contact the classroom to request that the student is sent to the front office.

### **3.8 Frequent absences due to illness**

- In the event of frequent absences being explained as due to illness the Principal will ensure that consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of the student. The Principal may request medical certificates for extended, regular absences or patterns of absence.
- Where ongoing concerns continue, approval is sought from parents/carers for an exchange of information permission to contact the student's medical professionals, so the school has all the relevant information regarding student health care needs.
- Strategies are developed to ensure regular school attendance.

### **3.9 Frequent absences with no explanation**

- In the event of continued frequent absences not related to illness the Principal/delegate will send a letter of concern (see Appendix 2.2) and if no response is given may request an interview with the student's parents/carers.
- For students over the age of seventeen, a letter regarding their extended absence may be issued if the student has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days without satisfactory explanation (see Appendix 2.3). If no response is received by the school, we will remove the student's name from the school attendance register.
- In the event of a matter relating to school attendance where the student's safety and wellbeing is concerned, priority is given to the Department of Education's Child Protection policy. And relevant reports will be made to the Department of Communities and Justice.
- Documentation related to unsatisfactory will be transferred to the student file and records of parent/carer communications recorded in Sentral – Wellbeing.
- Student punctuality and attendance is recorded in school Academic Reports twice a year.
- If no explanation is provided about an absence by parents/carers within seven days or the explanation is not accepted by the Principal, the code used to describe the absence as unexplained will be used.
- Arriving late to school will be recorded as a partial absence.

### **3.10 Parental/Carer Explaining of Absences and Requesting Leave of Absence**

#### **What should I do if my child has to stay away from school?**

- It is important to let the school know when your child will be away and why your child was absent. You should telephone the school or provide a written note addressed to the school explaining the child's absence.
- Always try to make children's appointments with people like dentists or doctors before or after school. We are mindful as a school that our location does not always allow this with specialist appointments.

- On occasion students may need to be absent from school. 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 circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral).

**What should I do if our family is going on holiday in school time?**

- Families should try to arrange holidays during school holiday periods. If you can only arrange your family holiday during school time, you should inform the School Principal in advance and request permission for your child to be absent. You can ask the school to provide homework that can be completed while your child is absent.

**Granting leave**

- The Principal has discretion in granting leave if they are satisfied that the reason for the absence is substantial and that the progress of the student towards course outcomes will not be unduly affected.
- Where the period of leave requested is extensive, the student must demonstrate to the Principal that outcomes in each course will be achieved. Educational progress can be ensured by a variety of means, including assignments set by the school, tuition or private study, attendance at another school, distance education lessons and catching up.

**3.11 Exemptions from attendance or enrolment**

- A student may be eligible for being exempt from being enrolled at or attending school if the Minister or delegate is satisfied that conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable that a Certificate should be granted.
- A Certificate of Exemption may be given subject to conditions and limited to a period specified in the certificate. Applications are available via the Student Administration Officer and are submitted to the School Principal for approval or endorsement. This process is for elite arts or sporting event participation, employment in approved entertainment activities or exceptional circumstances that meet the criteria.
- The Principal will notify the year advisor for learning materials where relevant, they will arrange collection for the front office to then distribute to the parent/care.
- Parents need to contact the SAO Student Management for enquiries regarding Exemptions.

**4 Attendance proactive and supportive strategies**

Tier 1 Universal Intervention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff know and implement procedures and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Classroom and roll teachers maintain accurate rolls and follow up absences.</li> <li>• Setting clear standards and High Expectations.</li> <li>• Effective classroom management and motivating learning goals.</li> <li>• Positive teacher student relationships.</li> <li>• Increasing family engagement with the school.</li> <li>• Inclusive education.</li> <li>• Implementing anti-bullying plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring cultural safety.</li> <li>• Absentee letters sent to parent/carer in Week 3 (see Appendix 2.1).</li> <li>• SMS/Email Parent/Carer contact by Sentral re unexplained absences on day of absence (see Appendix 1).</li> <li>• Year meeting/Assembly reinforcement/reminders.</li> <li>• Attendance Matters and Everyday counts promotion across social media throughout the year.</li> <li>• Attendance expectations for excursions/special events.</li> <li>• Promoting connectedness and belonging.</li> <li>• Attendance Initiatives.</li> </ul>

<b>Tier 2 Targeted Early Intervention</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained absence follow up by class teacher/year advisor supporting student attendance.</li> <li>• Frequent monitoring of attendance to identify characteristics of absent students.</li> <li>• Student and or Parent Carer interviewed to investigate underlying causes of non-attendance and plan for support – summary in Sentral. (Student support officer via Targeted 20 students each term).</li> <li>• Focus on student needs e.g. Breakfast, clothing, hygiene, medical care, emotional support (Grief and Loss, Building Resilience) .</li> <li>• Discussion at student wellbeing team meeting.</li> <li>• Learning support for modification to curriculum.</li> <li>• Teach alternate behaviours.</li> <li>• Daily wake up/check up calls.</li> <li>• Investigate flexible learning or work experience options if relevant.</li> <li>• Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer role support.</li> <li>• Cultural mentoring program connections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualised student monitoring card/development of attendance contract.</li> <li>• Give responsibility and/or leadership opportunity to student.</li> <li>• Discuss and address any bullying/harassment issues.</li> <li>• Buddy student.</li> <li>• Teacher mentor check in at designated time.</li> <li>• Attendance card.</li> <li>• Follow up on student non-returners each term.</li> <li>• Request medical certificates for continual illness.</li> <li>• Whole School Phone Improvement Programs (PIPs) – Staff make contact with home to explain and or identify reasons for absence (Student Administration officer).</li> <li>• Attendance Improvement Initiatives.</li> <li>• Need to be matched to student needs and root causes on non-attendance. Often involve a multifaceted program rather than a single isolated practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 3 Intensive Individual Intervention</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to Learning Support Team/Year Advisor.</li> <li>• Development of plan in LST/Wellbeing meeting.</li> <li>• Gain permission to contact medical practitioner to discuss medical concerns.</li> <li>• Referral to School counsellor.</li> <li>• Involvement of External Agencies – Health/Police/DCJ/Barnardos/Other.</li> <li>• School Attendance meeting.</li> <li>• Establish alternate timetable e.g. Senior class placement or Head Teacher withdrawal.</li> <li>• Negotiated Attendance Plan (partial attendance transition to school program).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral for Home school liaison program support, when school options exhausted.</li> <li>• Attendance improvement and engagement meetings with student and parent/HSLO?</li> <li>• Educational neglect - Habitual absence report to CWU/CP.</li> <li>• Student whose enrolment status is unknown referral to HSLP (Marked absent for a periods exceeding a total of 10 school days over a 3 week period and after attempted communication).</li> <li>• Certificate of exemption from school pending placement in alternate pathway, such as TAFE.</li> <li>• Need to be matched to student needs and root causes on non-attendance.</li> </ul>

## 5 References

- School Attendance Policy <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0259>
- Exemption form School Procedures [https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/implementation-documents/exempt\\_gui.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/implementation-documents/exempt_gui.pdf)
- Student Attendance in Government Schools – Procedures <https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/implementation-documents/pd-2005-0259-02.pdf>
- Attendance matters – resources for schools <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters-resources-for-schools> includes letters for reference and parent support resources.
- School Attendance Support Plan <https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/en/home/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters---resources-for->

[schools/School based attendance improvement plan template.pdf](#)

- School Attendance Register Codes [https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/related-documents/reg\\_codes.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/public/related-documents/reg_codes.pdf)

## **6 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements**

- This policy has been reviewed in Week 9 Term 3, 2023 and will be again in the first year of implementation and subsequent years on a 3-year cycle.

## **7 Contact**

- Kandos High School Principal (02) 6379 4103.



## Appendix 1. Daily Absence Templates for SMS & Email to Parents/Carers

The following templates are available for supporting student attendance at Kandos High School and are generated via Sentral -> Attendance -> Notifications -> SMS & Email Notifications

### 1.1 Absence Type = Whole Days; Template = Whole Day Absence

KANDOS HIGH SCHOOL: {student\_first\_name} {student\_surname\_initial} was marked absent today {absence}. The Education Act 1990 requires you to explain your child's absences within 7 days, failure to do so will result in an unjustified absence being recorded. Please contact us on ##### #####, reply to this message or login to our Sentral Portal to explain the absence/s with an acceptable reason.

### 1.2 Absence Type = All Partial Absences; Template = Partial Day Absence

KANDOS HIGH SCHOOL: {student\_first\_name} {student\_surname\_initial} was marked late to school today {absence}. The Education Act 1990 requires you to explain your child's absences within 7 days, failure to do so will result in an unjustified absence being recorded. Please contact us on ##### #####, reply to this message or login to our Sentral Portal to explain the absence/s with an acceptable reason.

## Appendix 2. Letters to Parents/Carers

This letter is generated from Sentral -> Attendance -> Notifications -> Letters to Parents

The following templates are available for supporting student attendance at Kandos High School.

### 2.1 Letter of Concern – KHS Unexplained Absence Letter

[Insert Parent/Carer Name]  
[Insert Address]  
[TOWN] [STATE] [PC]

[Day, Date]

#### STUDENT ATTENDANCE OF CONCERN

Dear [Insert Parent/Carer Name],

Regular attendance at school is essential for students to reach their potential and achieve quality life outcomes. The school is required to record the reason for any absences as a way of ensuring that students are absent from school only when they are sick or have another valid reason for missing school.

Your child, [Students First Name]'s, was absent from school on: [absence\_dates] and no explanation has been received. It is a legal requirement for absences from school to be explained within three days. Please assist us by completing the attached form and return it to school with your child as soon as possible.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the school by telephone to discuss your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

[Principal Name]  
Principal

## 2.2 Letter of Concern – KHS Compulsory Attendance

[Insert Parent/Carer Name]

[Insert Address]

[TOWN] [STATE] [PC]

[Day, Date]

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE OF CONCERN

Dear [Insert Parent/Carer Name],

I refer to the attendance of [Insert Students Full Name] at school. The Education Act (1990) requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on each day that the school is open for instruction. If children are absent from school, parents are required to provide the school with an acceptable explanation within seven days of the absence.

You have previously been advised that [Students First Name]'s attendance is a matter of concern. The school has implemented a range of strategies to encourage his full attendance at school without success.

At a recent school Learning Support/Student Welfare Team meeting [Students First Name]'s pattern of attendance was reviewed and it is clear that their attendance is still at an unacceptable level (X %).

I am obliged to report apparent unresolved non-compliance with the Education Act (1990) to the local manager of the region's Home School Liaison Program for further investigation by a home school liaison officer to help resolve the matter. The local manager will consider if further action is necessary. This may include the development of an Attendance Improvement Plan with specific targets, strategies and timelines.

If you do not meaningfully engage in the plan and there is no improvement in [Students First Name]'s attendance during this time, the matter may be referred to the Department's senior officers for possible legal action.

It is important that you work with us to resolve the issue.

Yours sincerely,

[Principal Name]

Principal

## 2.3 Letter of Concern – Extended Absence - Intent to remove from roll

[Insert Parent/Carer Name]

[Insert Address]

[TOWN] [STATE] [PC]

[Day, Date]

### EXTENDED ABSENCE - INTENT TO REMOVE FROM ROLL

Dear [Insert Parent/Carer Name],

We have noted that your child, [Insert Students Full Name], has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days without satisfactory explanation.

Our records indicate that [Students First Name] has not attended school in any consistent manner this year and has missed a substantial amount of course work and assessment tasks in their chosen curriculum pattern.

You are asked to contact the school immediately to establish [Students First Name]'s intentions regarding furthering their education at Kandos High School.

Should you fail to contact the school within 10 working days from the date noted above, we will assume that [Students First Name] no longer intends to remain as a student at Kandos High School. As such, we will remove their name from the school attendance register.

Yours sincerely,

[Principal Name]

Principal