

# **Iona Public School**

# **Attendance**

# **Policy & Procedures**



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## Attendance Overview

Iona Public School supports and implements the NSW Department of Education Attendance Policy PD20050259 and the associated 'Student Attendance in Government Schools – Procedures' available at [www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au). Section 22 of the Education Act (1990) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to cause the child:

- to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
- to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential, and increase their career and life options. Schools in partnerships 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 part of their duty of care, record and monitor part and whole day absences.

At Iona PS, at the beginning of each day the role is marked on SENTRAL by the class teacher. This is the official school role and indicates a student's daily attendance.

## Attendance Responsibilities

According to departmental policy:

### 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 Teaching Educational Standards (BOSTES) for home schooling;
- Ensuring that their children attend school every day the school is open for instruction;
- Explaining the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school, through means such as telephone call, written note, Skoolbag note or email;
- Working in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school. This includes communicating with the school if they are aware of issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with school; and
- Notifying the school in advance of any planned extended leave due to family arrangements/commitments (e.g. holidays, travel, etc.)

### Students are responsible for:

- Attending school regularly;
- Attending all scheduled lessons; and
- Handing in all notes provided by parents/care givers relating to absences

School staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- 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;
- Recognising excellent and improved 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;
- Notifying the Principal when the classroom teacher identifies students' attendance as a concern or students have been away for more than 2 days and;
- Updating any verbal notifications or explanations relating to student absence.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that:

- Records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of the students;
- Documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern, prior to making an application to the Home School Liaison Program;
- Parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements;
- Attendance reports are generated as required and tabled at the Learning Support Team meeting for follow up by the Principal;
- Consult with parents regarding health care needs of students and develop strategies to ensure regular attendance;
- All cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
- Staff have professional development in school attendance procedures including SAM and SAO; and
- If concerns include not sighting the child, principals must, as soon as possible contact the NSW Police Force to request that a child safety check be undertaken. Where there are concerns about suspected risk of harm consideration should be given to the Mandatory Reporter Guide.

## Absences

### Whole Day or Partial

#### **Unexplained Absences:**

- Following an absence from school parents/caregivers must ensure that within 7 days they provide the school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from them within 2 days, the school will make contact to discuss the absence.
- Principals may decline to accept an explanation that parents/carers have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of the child. In these circumstances a child's absence would be recorded as unjustified.

### **Frequent absences due to illness:**

- Consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of their child;
- Medical certificate can be requested for the absences; and
- Where there are ongoing concerns, approval is sort from parents to contact the student's doctor so that the school has all the relevant information regarding the student's health care needs.

### **Unsatisfactory Attendance:**

A child is considered to have an unsatisfactory school attendance when they have:

- Regular absences without explanation (despite follow up from the school); or
- Regular absences and explanations provided by parents are not accepted by the principal; or
- Extended periods of absence without an explanation or the explanation is not accepted by the principal; or
- Less than **84%** rate of attendance.

# Iona PS - Attendance Referral Flowchart

LaST or Principal to generate term reports on <84% attendance (Whole and Part Day) and present at Term staff meetings



Student appears on two consecutive reports



LST/ Principal to:

1. Initiate Attendance Concern Log (ACL)
2. Feedback given to Staff and at LST meetings
3. Forward Attendance Information **Letter 1** to parents.
4. Involve School Counsellor



Principal to determine action

Improvement

Classroom teacher to monitor

No Improvement

Student appears on 2 reports

No Improvement

LST/Principal to generate Monitoring of School Attendance letter (copy to office)

No Improvement

Interview with parent/carer and possible LST referral

No Improvement

# Iona Public School



860 Paterson Road

email - [iona-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:iona-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

Ph. 4930 1415

Woodville. NSW 2321

Fax. 4930 1807

## What to do if your child is absent from school

### Attendance – It's not OK to be Away!

Research has shown very clearly that poor attendance puts students at greater risk. Poor attendance begins at a low level, such as staying at home to help with younger siblings, going to the movies, or shopping with friends and if this is allowed to continue can be a habit that is hard to break at the beginning of a new school term and during the school year.

If your child is absent from school, parents are legally required to notify the school, explaining the absence, within 7 days. This can be done in a number of ways:

- **Phone or email** – If you know your child is going to be away from school please contact the school via phone **(02) 49301415** or email ([iona-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:iona-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)) to explain the absence.
- **Letter** – On the day your child returns to school after an absence send a note explaining the absence. This note is to be handed in at the school Administration Office or to Class Teachers.
- **Skoolbag** – Please complete the Skoolbag absentee form on the day of absence.

Let's work together to make a difference to your child's future.

Kind regards,  
Rachel Leary  
Principal

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## **Attendance at Public Schools Information**

It is only in exceptional circumstances that a parent can remove a child from school during school hours. Please be aware that all parents have a legal obligation under the *Education Act 1900* to ensure that their child attends school while it is open for their instruction.

### **The importance of arriving on time:**

- Arriving 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;
- Reduces classroom disruption;
- If a child arrives at school with no explanation from a parent they will be marked as **Unexplained**. Parents **MUST** report to the office to explain late arrival and sign students in. A late pass will be given to the student to hand to their teacher; and
- There must be a valid reason for a child to arrive late or be signed out early. If no valid reason is given the child will be marked as **Explained – Unjustified** on their attendance record.

### **On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reason 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; or
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral)

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school will contact you to discuss the absence.

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. An Application for Extended Leave may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

**If a student misses as little as 8 days in a school term, by the end of primary school they'll have missed over a year of school.**





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## **Monitoring of School Attendance**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The NSW Department of Education and Communities monitors the attendance of all students and the Home School Liaison officer visits schools regularly to inspect rolls and attendance rates.

Iona Public School values every student and we need your child to attend school every day. We offer many learning and support programs for students at our school.

Our records show that your child \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ had a total of \_\_\_\_\_ absences including \_\_\_\_\_ unjustified days. This is equivalent to \_\_\_\_\_ week/s and \_\_\_\_\_ day/s missed learning.

We understand that children may become ill sometimes but every day is vital for their learning.

We would like to work together with you to improve your child's attendance. We request your cooperation in sending your child to school every day and ensuring they arrive on time. Iona PS can offer support in many areas to assist you and your child.

Please contact the school on 49 301415 if there has been a valid reason for these absences or if you would like assistance from the school. If the attendance does not improve it may be necessary to refer your child to the Home School Liaison program.

Kind Regards,  
Rachel Leary  
Principal



## Online links to Department of Education Policies

- School Attendance Policy - <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy>
- Exemption from school procedures - [https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/exempt\\_gui.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/exempt_gui.pdf)
- Exemption from School FAQs - [https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/exempt\\_gui.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/exempt_gui.pdf)
- Compulsory School Attendance (Information for Parents) - [https://education.nsw.gov.au/wellbeing-and-learning/media/documents/attendance-behaviour-engagement/attendance/attendance\\_parents.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/wellbeing-and-learning/media/documents/attendance-behaviour-engagement/attendance/attendance_parents.pdf)