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Document No.	Effective Date	Version Date	Version No.	Cancels Version
ATT.001	21/06/2018	15/11/2021	0024	23

Purpose

Attendance at school is one of the most important aspects of a child's education. Attending school regularly improves engagement and the likelihood of a child experiencing success at school. Research indicates the positive impact school attendance has on learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people. Learning is cumulative and irregular attendance has an adverse impact of student learning, wellbeing, and school connectedness.

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education and Children's Services Act 2019 states that all children must attend school from 6 until they turn 17. This could be in a school or an approved learning program. Parents or legal guardians (carers) can be prosecuted if they do not make sure their child attends school.

Norwood International High School aims to create an inclusive, safe and supportive educational environment where every young person has the opportunity to attend and engage in learning and school life. This policy outlines the practices and responsibilities of the school community to ensure every young person attends school. These are underpinned by the partnership of school staff with parents and caregivers to support the attendance of all students.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of students, parents and caregivers, and staff to ensure students attend school and engage in their learning. NIHS staff work with students to develop positive attendance routines and habits. They use effective and consistent local practices to monitor and manage absences. The section below outlines the responsibilities of all stakeholders in maximising student attendance:

Student Responsibilities:

- Attend every school day unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Proactively communicate with teachers when learning is disrupted due to approved absence.
- Arrive at school and attend all lessons and activities on time.
- Engage positively in all learning activities.
- Report to Student Services if they arrive late or leave early. A parent or carer will be contacted if the school has not received communication from a parent or caregiver.
- Year 12 Late Arrival Early Departure Process:

- Year 12 students can gain permission to leave school early and arrive late. This permission is provided in writing via the Late Arrival/Early Departure Letter, signed by parents/caregivers and the students Learning Community Leader.
- Year 12 students are expected to attend all lessons on time and every Connect session unless otherwise negotiated. Students are given autonomy to manage their study independently.
- This is an optional process and a privilege which can also be revoked at any time by a member of the school leadership team.
- Students must sign in and out at Student Services.

Parent & Caregiver Responsibilities:

- Make sure their child attends school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Make sure their child arrives at school by 8.30am (9.45am on Wednesdays), unless they are a Year 12 student with late arrival privileges.
- Provide their child's school with up-to-date contact details and inform the school of any changes within 7 days of occurring.
- Provide a reason to the school if their child is absent, late, or leaving early on the day this occurs.
- Provide a medical certificate or written explanation if their child is ill for 3 or more days in a row.
- Make appointments outside of school hours if possible. For example, medical appointments or driving lessons.
- Notify the school immediately if the child is diagnosed with a notifiable infectious disease. See full list of infectious diseases via the SA Health website available through [this link](#).

Staff Responsibilities:

Teachers	Leaders	Identified School Support Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accurately record each absence or late arrival with the appropriate code using Daymap. ○ Subject teacher contacts parent/caregiver via phone or email within 48 hours of lesson (only if absent for from their class). Subject Teacher notifies the student's Connect Teacher & Learning Community Leader via email. ○ If a student is absent from school unexplained between 1 to 3 days the Connect Teacher contacts parent/caregiver via phone or email within 3 days, to seek reason for absence, in accordance with the DfE attendance process. Connect teacher alters attendance on Daymap once reason is known. ○ Document all contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact via the Daymap note category. ○ Connect Teachers monitor the attendance of all students in their Connect Class by reviewing the attendance of all students at least once per week. Any concerning trends or non-attendance will be discussed with the student. If there is not an improvement, they will contact the parents/caregivers via phone or email. ○ Each fortnight Connect Teachers check the printed version of the EDSAS attendance list, verifying absences and following-up non-attendance. ○ Make notifications about concerning levels of non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide clear information to parents and carers about attendance expectations, policies and procedures via the school website, parent information session, the school newsletter and letters. ○ Monitor student attendance via Daymap and PowerBI app. ○ Arrange meetings with student, parent or caregiver if student has high number of unexplained absences or a low attendance rate. During this meeting the leader will identify appropriate support strategies and interventions. ○ Consult with the local Student Support Services if needed. For example Social Work, Truancy. ○ Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide. ○ Undertake a home-visit, in line with the school and DfE procedure. ○ Learning Community Leaders will have attendance as a standing agenda item in all Learning Community Meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Send an SMS to families when a student is absent or late for an unapproved reason. ○ Contact families to retrieve documentation to support absences. ○ Provide Learning Community Leaders with a list of students with an attendance rate at or below 85% at the end of each fortnight. ○ Distribute EDSAS attendance print-outs to Connect Teachers each fortnight. ○ Update EDSAS and Daymap when reasons for absences or lateness become known. ○ Ensure that accurate Daymap attendance information is transferred into EDSAS roll at regular intervals (2 weeks in arrears). ○ Generate weekly EDSAS list for Connect teachers to check and sign off.

Supporting Student Attendance

This section outlines the strategies and interventions used by NMHS staff to support student attendance:

Family Partnerships

Teachers and leaders at NMHS will communicate and engage with families and students when attendance concerns are identified. This communication takes place as early as possible before patterns are formed.

When talking with parents and caregivers, NMHS staff will be:

- be sensitive to individual circumstances and reasons for absences
- highlight the benefits of education ([click for further information](#)) for children and young people
- talk about building habits ([click for further information](#)) to attend every day.

Communication to families will include:

- SMS communication informing them of unexplained absences and unapproved lateness
- Written communication (letters and emails) notifying families of unexplained absences.
- Phone conversations from teachers, leaders and school support staff regarding non-attendance.
- Meetings with teachers, leaders, students and families to discuss non-attendance impacting learning and achievement. An attendance support plan will be developed in these meetings to identify support strategies and interventions.
- Home visits, in accordance with DfE policy.

Attendance Meetings

Meetings are requested to identify appropriate support and interventions for students who have issues in attending school. These meetings will be chaired by a leader and can involve a Connect Teacher and/or Student Wellbeing Leader to provide additional support. Students and parents/caregivers are expected to attend and engage in the meeting. Each attendance meeting will vary depending on the student, however the following steps typically occur:

- Identification of barriers and/or reasons for non attendance, and how these can be resolved.
- Identification of external support e.g. family members or other services.
- Establishing communication agreements with parents and caregivers to facilitate regular two-way communication.
- Identify any barriers to attendance. Work with parents on solutions.

During meetings an Attendance Support Plan will be developed and reviewed, outlining strategies and interventions to improve student attendance. The plan will be referred to and used by the student, their family, the student's connect teacher and subject teachers, and their Learning Community Leader.

Monitoring and Case Management

At NMHS student attendance and academic achievement is closely monitored. Students at risk of disengagement with school are case managed, providing personalised support and interventions. This monitoring and case management process includes the weekly review of student attendance data and ongoing communication with student's teachers and parents/caregivers.

High Risk Strategies

Students displaying significant non-attendance with additional risk factors may require further interventions. These are implemented by members of the Executive Team and involve:

- Contacting DfE Support Services, via the social work duty line or making an attendance referral.
- Conducting a home-visit.
- Engaging with other external agencies such as DCP or SAPOL.

Home Visit Process

Some attendance interventions may require a home visit from a staff member to facilitate contact with the student and family. All home visits will be undertaken in accordance with the DfE Home Visit protocols [available here](#).

When undertaking a home visit NMHS staff will:

- Undertake the compulsory WHS training including:
 - conducting home visits
 - [personal safety and conflict awareness](#)
 - [safer lone working](#).
- Complete a risk assessment and have this approved by a member of the Executive Team. Ensure they are informed of the date and time of the home visit.
- Complete the home visit with at least two workers in attendance.
- Report any injuries and/or near misses involving employees on the incident response and management system (IRMS).

- Identify a contact person at school who will check in with the visiting team at agreed times. The nominated person must attempt to make contact with the employee within 20 minutes of a missed check in. If 2 unsuccessful attempts are made to contact the employee within a 30 minute period, the nominated person must enact the emergency response plan.

Definitions & Abbreviations

Categories of non-attendance:

- Habitual non-attendance: a student has 5 to 9 days absent in a term for any reason.
- Chronic non-attendance: a student has 10 or more days absent in a term for any reason.

Absence codes

- C: Illness with a day/s absence verified by a doctor's letter, doctor's certificate, a dentist's appointment card or some other health practitioner's communication.
- E: Exemption – approved exemption from school attendance by the principal (for up to one calendar month) or the Director, School and Regional Operations (for more than one month or for Home Schooling).
- F: Family/social – for absences condoned by a parent as being for family, social or cultural reason.
- I: Illness with a day/s absence covered by notes, messages and phone calls from parents, stating a medical condition or illness preventing the student's attendance.
- K: Take Home - Absence due to a student being sent home for disciplinary reasons.
- N: Not approved - Absent without parent/guardian approval.
- S: Suspension – Suspended externally from school to an agreed place, usually home. In the discipline screen of EDSAS, record the reason for the suspension, e.g. violence.
- U: Unexplained - a student who is absent without explanation by either:
 - Parent
 - Or school
 - Or another authority, e.g. Families SA

Use this code for unexplained absences of students both under and over the age of compulsion.

- X: Exclusion – for absences of students over the age of compulsion who have been excluded without the provision of a learning program.

- Z: School following up - Students who are absent for an extended period of time but the school is in communication with, and actively following up to try to re-engage the student.

Codes counted as present for data collection purposes

- A: SBNA (School based new apprenticeship)
- D: Dispute – used on days or half days where the school is closed for industrial action
- G: Off-site learning program where the program is offered by another provider but still managed through the school.
- H: Home study
- M: Camps and excursions
- P: Alternative placement: for students to attend off-site learning programs, where the school provides a learning program at an alternative venue or for students who have been excluded and are undertaking an alternative program. The student is considered to be present from the day the alternative placement or program is provided or commences
- Q: Approved Medical Program
- R: Risk/Hazard which records student attendance on days posing a risk/hazard to student welfare/wellbeing.
- T: School sport.
- W: Work experience
- Y: End of year activities - for students, 16 years or older, who are not in attendance after examinations or similar.

Attachments and References

Links included throughout the policy document.

Attachments

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References

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Review

Review Date	Reviewed By	Accepted Date	Comments

