Macarthur Girls High School

School Attendance Policy
Macarthur Girls High School Attendance Policy

Preamble:

The NSW Government has determined that parents, caregivers or persons having custody of a child are responsible for the regular attendance of that child at school until the child is 17 years of age. All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend school whenever instruction is provided, as stated in the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) School Attendance Policy, 2010.

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. The encouragement and maintenance of regular school attendance remains a core responsibility of Principals and teachers.

The need for careful and accurate roll marking is paramount as student absence may be symptomatic of deeper underlying problems such as:

- sexual abuse
- physical abuse
- serious illness in the family
- death in the family
- drug abuse – parent / student
- poverty
- child exploitation
- delinquency
- minor crime involvement
- difficulty in transporting child to school
- parent may condone absences
- as well as other unidentified reasons

Context:

The Principal is responsible for the development and effective implementation of attendance policies and procedures that are compliant with NSW DEC School Attendance Policy, 2010. All teachers have a legal responsibility to maintain accurate rolls of student attendance, both during Roll Call and all lessons. This is a Duty of Care requirement.

At Macarthur Girls High School, four (4) areas have been identified to assist in student attendance monitoring.

1. Daily school attendance
2. Extended leave
3. Truancy – Full day and Fractional truancy
4. Punctuality/Lateness to lessons

Macarthur Girls High School expectations, responsibilities and requirements for student attendance will be communicated to all stakeholders through a number of ways, including our school website, student diary, P&C meetings, stage meetings and newsletters.
Outcomes

- The implementation of the Macarthur Girls High School attendance policy with associated procedures ensures the provision of consistent systems across the school to meet DEC Policy.

- The Macarthur Girls High School attendance policy provides clarity to all stakeholders - students, parents and staff about Macarthur Girls High School expectations, responsibilities and requirements for student attendance.

- The encouragement and maintenance of regular attendance for each student will ensure students at Macarthur Girls High School maximise their learning potential.

1. Daily school attendance:

All students are required to attend roll call in their designated groupings. Under the current roll system horizontal rolls exist for Years 7 – 12 (Vertical roll for SRC and Sports Council).

**Student responsibility:**

The school day starts with a warning bell at 8:55am. All students must be in roll call, ready for their scheduled roll call by the 9:00am bell.

**Late arrival to school**

A student, who arrives after 9:00 am, is required to go directly to Reception to sign in to school. Late students are required to present a written explanation from parents/caregivers, unless an exceptional circumstance has occurred on the way to school. In such situations, a note explaining this lateness to school is to be provided to their roll teacher on the next school day.

Following the sign in process in Reception, late students must then report to Mr Ford, Head Teacher HSIE in Room 11 to explain their reason for lateness. Students with unacceptable and unexplained reasons, such as poor personal organisation, may be placed on an attendance monitoring card and/or be required to attend detentions. Additional interventions such as parent/caregiver contact/interview may be implemented for those students who display continued patterns of lateness without a satisfactory reason, in consultation with Attendance Monitors, Year Advisers, Stage Executive and Stage Leaders.
Early Leave

A student who wishes to get approval for Early Leave must have a note signed by her parent/caregiver requesting permission for the student to leave at the stated time. The student must take this note to the relevant Stage Leader before 8.40 am. The note will be signed and dated by the Stage Leader. The student presents the note to Reception and is issued with an “early leavers pass”. This pass is to be shown to the class teacher before leaving class. The student must report to Reception, with her ID card, to “swipe out” before leaving the school grounds. The “early leavers pass” must be carried by the student as evidence of approval and can be required to be shown to the Police upon request. A student places herself at risk and beyond the duty of care of teachers if she leaves the school without permission. Failure to follow these procedures may result in disciplinary action as per school policy.

Study Periods

Year 12 and Year 11 students who have no lessons at the start of the day (period 1) must arrive at school on time for roll call.

All students must be in the Library for their study periods. No other venue, such as the quadrangle or Rose Garden, is to be used for study periods.

Senior students who have finished their timetabled lessons for the day are given the privilege to undertake their study period(s) at home, following written parental approval being received by the school. All students are required to register their departure at Reception using their ID card and select as their reason ‘Flexible Timetable’ at all times unless instructed by the school differently. Year 12 students who have timetabled lessons or other school activities on Monday after period 3 must register their stay at school at the Reception Desk at the conclusion of period 3.

Teacher responsibility

Teachers are responsible for ensuring rolls are accurately marked and monitored for patterns of unexplained absences.

Head Teacher Female Student (HTFS) is responsible for monitoring student attendance patterns.

Attendance Monitors (AMs) are members of staff who assist Roll Call Teachers in monitoring attendance, alerting the Head Teacher Female Students and other relevant personnel of students with attendance concerns.

Year Advisers and Stage Executive are responsible for overseeing student attendance patterns and supporting AMs and HTSW.

The following attachments outline procedures and processes:

Attachment 1A: Roll marking procedures, Attachment 1B: Staff responsibilities
Attachment 1C: Unexplained absences/Late arrivals.

Note: Staff must be familiar with DEC/School Policy and their responsibilities in relation to these policies.
2. Extended leave

There are occasions when a student may need to apply for an exemption from their classes due to alternative educational programs, personal or health reasons.

Principals have the authority to grant leave up to 50 days in a 12 month period per student. No minimal approval period is stated. Where approved, these would be entered as an exemption from school attendance in the official school records. Leave will only be granted when the Principal perceives this leave is in the best educational interests of the child. Part day exemptions may also be granted for approved alternative education programs or other appropriate exceptional circumstances.

Parents need to apply in writing to the Principal for any extended periods of leave on the form found at **Attachment 2B: Macarthur Girls High School application for exemption from school attendance**.

The procedures outlining the Macarthur Girls High School extended leave process are detailed in **Attachment 2A: Macarthur Girls High School exemption from attendance at school procedures and Attachment 2C: Macarthur Girls High School exemption from School Communications Sheet**.

3. Truancy – Full day and Fractional truancy

According to the Student Welfare Directorate, **truancy** is the absence of a student from school without the knowledge or permission of their parent or caregiver. Full day truancy is when a student is absent for the full school day, without appropriate permission. Fractional truancy is defined as a student absenting herself for part of a school day without consent.

This includes a student who:

- Is absent from school without a valid reason and without the knowledge/approval of a Parent/Caregiver;
- Has been marked present at roll call but does not attend timetabled class(es);
- Leaves class without the permission of the teacher;
- Is loitering in the school grounds, during class time, without a valid reason;
- Leaves the school grounds without written approval from Parent/Caregiver and the Senior Executive.

As outlined in the preamble, regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential, as well as a legal requirement, therefore truanting students will be counselled accordingly. Though truancy may be symptomatic of underlying welfare issues, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken to ensure that all students recognise and understand the seriousness of the offence.
Teachers, Head Teachers and relevant Stage Leaders have defined roles and responsibilities in the management of truancy. These roles include:

- monitoring of attendance in class / marking class rolls in every class;
- tracking student attendance to identify patterns;
- implementing strategies and interventions when truancy issues are detected;
- communicating truancy within the school, using the agreed proforma;
- communicating truancy to parents/caregivers; and
- implementing disciplinary action, as required.

**Attachment 3A: Management of full-day truancy at Macarthur Girls High School** outlines the school process that applies to full day truants, whilst **Attachment 3B: Management of fractional truancy at Macarthur Girls High School** outlines the school process that applies to fractional truants.

4. Punctuality/lateness to lessons

Students are expected to be punctual to all lessons and roll call. This will ensure maximum learning time for all students in each class. It is also vital for students to understand that punctuality is a basic expectation for life beyond school. To assist students in this understanding, it is important that a consistent process is used to improve student punctuality. When a student arrives late to class, the teacher needs to use discretion in relation to movement times. Students are expected to arrive at class promptly once the bell has rung.

**Attachment 4: Students Who Arrive Late To Class** details the agreed procedures to be implemented for students who consistently arrive late to class.

**Attachment 1A: Roll marking procedures**

**Roll marking procedures at Macarthur Girls High School**

**Roll description**

The rolls are marked electronically or manually in some instances and imported to OASIS to meet DEC requirements by administrative staff.

Rolls are arranged horizontally for Year 7-12 with separate roll groups for the Student Representative Council (including Prefects) and the Sports Council.

**Roll call teachers are responsible for the accuracy of their roll marking.**
Roll marking procedures:

**Electronic Rolls:** Teachers submit attendance data to Office electronically in accordance with school policy. For electronic roll marking visit `\MACARTHURG-H1\staff-data\Sentral\RollMarking`.

**Manual Rolls:** Teachers are required to collect rolls from the Administration Office before roll call. Students are permitted to return rolls at the completion of roll call. Teachers should ensure that students chosen to return rolls are reliable and that the contents of the roll will not be interfered with in any way. Rolls are to be returned to the boxes, placed outside the Administration office, promptly at the end of the roll call period.

**Scheduled Activities During Roll Call Time**

The school day commences at 8.55 am, with the first bell. All students and staff are expected to be in their learning space by 9:00 a.m. (second bell).

During the roll call session the following schedule is included.

Monday – Attendance rolls are marked in roll call. The roll call is followed by PRIDE.

**Important Note:** Term 2 and 3 PRIDE Monday session is after period 3.

Tuesday, Wednesday – Attendance rolls are marked in roll call. The roll call is followed by PRIDE.

Thursday – Attendance rolls are marked in roll call. **Scripture follows straight after roll call.** Non-Scripture students must go straight to their Non-Scripture rooms.

Friday – Attendance rolls are marked in roll call. After roll call, there are assemblies:

- **Week A** - Whole school assembly held in the quadrangle. At the conclusion of the assembly students go to period 1 lessons.

- **Week B** – Stage or Year assemblies. At the conclusion of the assembly students go to period 1 lessons.
Attachment 1B: Staff responsibilities

Staff responsibilities

Roll teacher responsibilities

Teachers should ensure that normal classroom management procedures are applied in the roll call period. They should insist on students arriving promptly and engage in DEAR/PRIDE activities.

Exemption: Only Year 12 students are permitted to study relevant course work due to a formal assessment schedule.

Roll teachers must accurately record student attendance in their roll class. All attendance issues must be dealt with confidentiality, sensitivity and respect.

Rolls must be marked in accordance with DEC and school attendance policy:

- Mark students with an X for their first and last day of each term
- Mark students as absent by placing an a in the day of their absence.
- Count students to check the accuracy of the roll.
- Request notes from students for absences; both full and partial absences.
- Request notes from students for unexplained lateness.
- Place absence and late explanation notes securely in the roll folder.
- Sign/validate the daily attendance sheet.
- Read Mac Matters aloud to students.
- Hand out any information to individuals or groups that have been put in rolls for distribution.
- Alert the relevant AM to continued absences or noted patterns where no explanations have been received or there are ongoing concerns.

Attendance Monitoring

Administrative Responsibilities

Parents are required to explain to the school their child’s absence(s) from school promptly. School personnel will contact parents within two (2) days, after the student’s return, of an unexplained absence. Parents are required to explain absences in writing within seven (7) school days.

If any student is absent for three (3) consecutive days and no communication has been made to the school from home, SASS will phone the parent/caregiver by no later than the fourth day of an absence.

SASS creates attendance reports each week to detect unsatisfactory attendance for each year group and provide this information to the Attendance Review Committee and to the school executive.
The Attendance Monitoring Team

The Attendance Monitoring Team will be monitoring students’ attendance. The Attendance Review Team will consist of the Head Teacher Female Students, AMs, YAs and Stage Executive. The Team will be provided with patterns of attendance from SASS to identify trends in absenteeism and determine strategies to address the issues. ARC meeting for each stage will be led fortnightly by Head Teacher Female Students. Examples of reports may include:

- Absence: by year, attendance %, individual profile, total number of whole day absences, partial absences, unexplained absences or other upon request. Head Teacher Female Students follows up students at risk.
- AMs report, Head Teacher Female Students action plan and a copy of the weekly student attendance record will be tabled by Head Teacher Female Students at Executive Meetings. A fortnightly 85% student attendance and student follow ups will be provided to the Attendance Monitors, Year Advisers and Stage Leaders for their information, by the Head Teacher Female Students.

The designated Stage SASS member will be provided with a detailed job description developed by the SAM in consultation with Principal.

Attendance Monitoring - Personnel responsibility

Head Teacher Female Students (HTFS) is responsible for monitoring students’ attendance patterns and managing the welfare of those students who have been identified ‘at risk’.

Head Teacher Female Students will:
- Manage student attendance
- Coordinate meetings with Stage Attendance Monitors
- Inform Year Advisers, School Executive and Stage Leaders of emerging issues in relation to attendance
- Follow up student non-compliance attendance policy instances
- First to contact parents/caregivers to discuss attendance concerns (whole days, unexplained and punctuality) and notify relevant Year Adviser and Stage leader of outcome
- Refer students at risk to Stage Leaders including the history of events
- Refer students with attendance issues to HSLO or relevant agencies.

Attendance Monitor (AM) is to support students in maintaining regular attendance. By maintaining regular attendance students are able to maximise their learning opportunities. This document should be used in conjunction with the Macarthur Girls High School Attendance Policy. An AM is allocated to each Year Group.
The Attendance Monitor will:

- Ensure punctual attendance of students to roll call
- Visit designated roll classes regularly.
- Interview students who are emerging as ‘at risk’ (e.g. repeated lateness, unexplained absences, other attendance concerns), documenting discussions and outcomes.
- Meet regularly with the HT Female Students to provide feedback where there are identified attendance concerns.
- Are an active member of the Attendance Monitoring Team.
- Assist in organisation and supervision of Roll Call groups at assemblies.
- Make referrals to HT Female Students and the relevant Year Adviser when a student is identified as “welfare concern”.
- Award merit certificates to students for punctual and regular attendance to Roll Call (individuals and classes) based on Sentral data.
- Inform students of 100% attendance awards.

Year Advisers will:

- Follow up welfare attendance concerns identified by AMs and HT Female Students.
- Contact parents/caregivers where appropriate and inform outcome to HT Female Students, AM, Stage Executive, Stage Leader.
- Inform all relevant stage personnel of student welfare attendance issues.
- Acknowledge 100% attendance, in conjunction with the AMs.

Stage Executive will:

- Be responsible for the implementation of stage PRIDE programs.
- Assist in organisation and supervision of Roll Call groups at assemblies.
- Provide assistance to Roll Call Teachers during the roll call period.
- Support HT Female Students, AMs, Year Advisers and Stage Leaders resolving student attendance concerns.
- Contact parents/caregivers as required.
- Award merit certificates/PRIDE awards to students for punctual and regular attendance to roll call (individuals and classes) based on data from SASS.

Stage Leaders are responsible for:

- The overall supervision of students in their stage.
- Managing ‘Non-Compliance’ and students’ at risk due to continued attendance issues.
Attachment 1C: Management of Late Arrivals

HT (in Late Room) inquires re student’s late arrival to school
If no satisfactory explanation,
Verbal warning issued

Behaviour of late arrival to school continues
Three (3) late arrivals to school in a cycle
without acceptable explanation
HT (Late Room) issues an attendance monitoring card.
AM notified and monitors for three (3) weeks (Attachment 1D)
Stage Executive oversees and supports the monitoring process

Behaviour of late arrival to school continues
Student fails to provide parent/caregiver written explanation
and/or to rectify attendance patterns
AM referral to HT Female Students

HTSW interviews student
Parent contacted
Action taken to rectify lateness to roll call as per policy
Year Adviser informed if welfare concern

Behaviour of late arrival to school continues
HT Female Students informs Stage Leader and provides
information on strategies used thus far, with relevant
documentation
Stage Leader organises Parent/Caregiver interview with
relevant Stage Executive personnel
Strategies put in place to assist student

Behaviour of late arrival to school continues
Referral to HSLO
Disciplinary intervention
Referral to principal
Roll Call Attendance Monitoring Card

TERM ___  Week A ☐ Week B ☐ (tick one)

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Date

Time of arrival

Teacher Signature

Parent Signature

AM Signature

TERM ___  Week A ☐ Week B ☐ (tick one)

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Date

Time of arrival

Teacher Signature

Parent Signature

AM Signature

TERM ___  Week A ☐ Week B ☐ (tick one)

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Date

Time of arrival

Teacher Signature

Parent Signature

AM Signature
Attachment 2A:

**Macarthur Girls High School**

**Exemption From Attendance At School Procedures**

1. Student collects *Macarthur Girls High School Application for Exemption from School Attendance* Proforma (Attachment 2B) from the Principal.

2. Parents complete and sign the application providing an attached written explanation/letter, along with proof of travel (if required).

3. Principal reviews application and approves/disapproves application.

4. If approved, the student presents the approved application, signed by the Principal, to Reception.

5. Reception issues the *Exemption from Attendance Communications Sheet (Attachment 2C).*

6. Student must ensure that all their class teachers, and relevant Head Teachers, complete the sheet. Teachers must record the approved leave on their class roll. Where applicable, teachers may require the completion of class work/assessment tasks/projects during this stated period of leave. This requirement must be clearly communicated on the back of the *Exemption from Attendance Communications Sheet.* Students are responsible for handing this work in upon their return or as negotiated.

   **Note:** Where Extended Leave has been approved, non-completion of set tasks including assessments, unless communicated by the teacher, in writing, on the *Exemption from Attendance Communications Sheet,* cannot be taken into consideration when determining whether the student has met the course outcomes. In such a case teacher professional judgement will determine the level of achievement.

7. Student must ensure her Year Adviser has signed the *Exemption from Attendance Communications Sheet* prior to returning the form to Reception. Year Advisers should note the extended leave in their records.

8. Administration staff will maintain the database for students with approved Exemption from Attendance at School Applications.

9. Administration staff will communicate this approval to staff and update the rolls through *First class* to reflect this approval for leave with attendance registered as long term leave.

10. OASIS will be updated once per week through a weekly upload from *Edval* with an *M* registered for the student if approved exemption from attendance at school is granted.
Application for Exemption from Attendance at School

PART A (To be completed by the student’s parent or caregiver)

STUDENT DETAILS

NOTE: If exemption is sought for more than one student, separate applications must be made for each student.

Family name: ___________________ Given name(s): ___________________

Age: ___________ Date of birth: ___/___/____ (dd) / ___/___ (mm) / ___ (year)

Enrolment Registration Number (ERN): _________________________

Student’s address: ____________________________________________

_______________________________ Postcode: _________

School name: ___________________ School’s telephone number: ________________

Dates of exemption applied for: ___/___/____ to ___/___/____

Number of School Days: __________________________

REASON FOR APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION (Please tick ☐)

Exceptional domestic circumstances ☐

Other exceptional circumstance ☐

Please provide more detail about the reason for the application for exemption here:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

NOTE: Where the reason for application for exemption includes long term travel arrangements, of more than 20 school days, copies of travel documentation should be included with the application.

Student Welfare Directorate  Telephone (02) 9244 5573
Attachment 2B: Macarthur Girls High School Application for Exemption from School Attendance (2/2 pages)

GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL

PARENT OR CAREGIVER DETAILS
Family name: ______________________  Given name(s) ______________________
Address: ________________________________
                                                  Postcode: ______
Telephone number: ______________________  Relationship to student: ______________________

DETAILS OF PRIOR/CURRENT EXEMPTIONS
Date of exemption from: _____ / ____ / ____ to _____ / ____ / ____
Number of School Days: ______________________

Copy of Certificate of Exemption attached (Please tick one box ☐): Yes ☐ No ☐

As the parent or caregiver of the above mentioned student, I hereby apply for a Certificate of Exemption from attendance at school, under the Education Act 1990.

I understand that if the exemption is granted:
- I am responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption
- the exemption is limited to the period indicated
- the exemption is subject to the conditions listed on the Certificate of Exemption
- the exemption may be cancelled at any time.

Signature of applicant/s: __________________________________________

Date: _____ / ____ / ____

Student Welfare Directorate  Telephone (02) 9244 5573
Attachment 2C:

Macarthur Girls High School

Exemption from Attendance Communication Form

Name _______________________________ Year/Roll _____________

First Day of Leave Day ___________________ Date ______________

Return to School Day ___________________ Date ______________

Number of School Days _________

Nature of Leave ____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Year Adviser ____________________

Subject | Class Teacher | Signature | HT | Signature
---|---|---|---|---
English

Library

Sport

Attendance

Staff to complete the reverse page

This form must be returned to Reception EACH day
Faculty assessments or tasks to be completed during approved, extended leave period

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DP Curriculum comment (Year 10, 11 & 12 only)

Interview required with:  
Student  Yes No  Parent  Yes No

Outcome/recommendation:

Deputy Principal’s Curriculum signature: __________________ Date:

Principal’s signature: __________________ Date:

Forward this form to Reception. Office: Original form to student; Copy to student file
Attachment 3A: Management of full day truants

Full Day Truancy Procedures

To monitor Full Day truancy random checks of attendance will be done by school personnel. This may include but not be limited to:

- phone call to parent/caregiver;
- monitoring of attendance patterns;
- information from a parent/caregiver and community member

i) Roll Teachers mark their roll each morning, verifying student attendance / absences according to Roll marking procedures outlined in Attachment 1A.

ii) The office produces the Daily Absences Sheet accordingly to roll call records.

iii) When a student is found to be truanting, the person detecting the truancy notifies the relevant Stage Leader.

iv) The relevant Stage Leader will interview the student and issue them with a letter for an afternoon detention. Parents will be notified at least 48 hours prior to the detention.

v) The student will return the detention slip, signed by a parent/caregiver, to the relevant Stage Leader prior to the “Detention Day”.

vi) The Stage Leader will hand the completed form to a member of SASS. The form will then be added to the student’s file.

vii) For those students who do not attend the afternoon detention, additional interventions/strategies will apply which may include immediate parental contact /interview. Where a parent/caregiver opposes the afternoon detention/detention an alternative time or restitution strategies may apply. Alternative interventions may apply for any student whose parent/caregiver requests consideration of stated welfare issues.

viii) Students who truant are also required to report to the relevant Head Teacher(s) of all courses that have been missed to catch up on missed work.
**Attachment 3B:**

**Management of Fractional Truancy**

Class teacher → Mark class roll every lesson

The names of absent students are to be **checked against:**
- the absentee sheet;
- excursion lists;
- office records for any unexpected circumstances.

Where a student’s absence can not be validated, teacher interviews the student to establish reason for absence from class the next course lesson. An unsatisfactory explanation from the student must be followed by teacher implemented strategies to re-engage student and **notification** to the Head Teacher.

Head Teacher

Teacher enters fractional truancy incident on Sentral.

- **Interviews** and **Monitors** fractional truants;
- Strategies/interventions to be implemented as required (e.g. phone parent/caregiver, faculty conduct card, detention);
- Head Teacher updates entry on Sentral indicating action taken.

Makes recommendation to relevant Stage Leader.

If action required by Stage Leader

- Student Interviewed.
- Action Plan put in place

**Strategies and Interventions implemented**
e.g. detention, parent/caregiver contact, counsellor, procedures as per full day truancy. Additional personnel, both in and outside of the school, utilised as relevant. Records in Sentral/student file.
Attachment 4: Students who arrive late to class

Student is late to class
- Teacher questions lateness;
- If *no valid* explanation given, student *accepted* into class and placed on detention;
- Teacher to negotiate/determine the length and time of detention.

Detention held
Problem resolved?

Yes
No further action required
Return to learning focus

No

Teacher referral, *via Sentral*, to Head Teacher
Note: Students who are *consistently* late and those who *do not* attend the required detention for lateness must be referred to Faculty Head Teachers.

Head Teacher interviews student and implements faculty strategies

Problem resolved?

Yes
No further action required
Return to learning focus

No

Refer student, with *all relevant* documentation, to the relevant Stage Leader

Stage Leader will address the lateness issue as per policy
Head Teacher notified of outcome