Muirfield High School Attendance Policy

The Department of Education’s Attendance Policy and supporting documents can be found at: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/a-z/attendance.php

Rationale
It is a legal requirement of the Education Act that children between the ages of 6 and 17 attend school. Regular attendance is also essential if students are to maximise their learning outcomes.

Responsibilities
Student Responsibility
Students are to:
• Be punctual to school and roll call which begins at 8.15am
• Be punctual to all classes and attend all classes
• Attend school for the full time that instruction is provided unless illness or misadventure prevents
• Provide timely written notification from parents/caregivers for any absences
• Obtain written permission from home
• Swipe out of at the front before leaving
• Follow school attendance procedures
• Take responsibility for completion for work missed due to non-attendance

Parent/Caregiver Responsibility
Parents/caregivers need to:
• Ensure their child attends school daily
• Provide written notification for their child’s absences within 7 days of absence
• Provide written explanations for lateness or early leavers
• Work with the school to support student attendance
• Apply for extended leave in advance

Muirfield High School Responsibility
Muirfield High School will support regular attendance by:
• providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students’ sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community
• recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
• maintaining accurate records of 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.

Morning Roll Call
• Daily attendance is recorded every morning in Roll Call at 8.15.
• All students in Years 7 to 12 are allocated a Roll Call class.
• Year 12 students may arrive by the end of period 1 if they have no timetabled lessons period 1. In this case they swipe on at the front office.
• It is the professional responsibility of all staff to ensure that the roll is marked accurately at all times. It is a legal document and may be introduced into court.
Roll Call teachers are expected to:

- Collect their roll before 8.00 every morning.
- Arrive punctually to their allocated roll call room
- Call the name and sight each student
- Notate each roll with an ‘X’ for each student that is present, leave blank for absent students
- Mark down the total number of students absent and initial. Reconcile student numbers via a head count.
- Collect absentee explanation notes and place them in the roll.
- Read the daily notices to class
- Mark student absent on excursions and other approved events
- Encourage and praise good attendance
- Staff accuracy, ownership and responsibility are central to maintaining accurate records.
- Teachers are to return rolls to boxes in designated staff rooms in each block.
- If you have any concerns about a student’s lateness, refer them to the HT
  Administration for absences refer to the relevant Year Adviser.

Official Roll

- The school’s official roll is First Class.
- Daily information including absences, sickness, lateness, excursions and suspensions are entered, by SASS according to Department of Education and Training procedures.
- This information is backed up daily, every morning before school.
- Data is transferred every term to OASIS

Absentee Sheet

- All attendance information will be printed from the First Class Roll.
- The information is to be entered as soon as possible after roll call.
- The daily absentee sheet will be printed and distributed to all faculty rooms, Deputy Principals and Principal as soon as possible. The distribution will be completed by the school service students

Notes

- Department of Education and Communities Procedures specify that absences must be explained within 7 days of the occurrence. After 7 days without explanations an absence will be marked as unjustified.
- Students in Years 10 to 12 must follow the requirements for explanation of absence in the Assessment Booklet if they are absent for an assessment task.
- Roll Call Teachers are to ask for and collect any notes from students in their roll class and place in roll folder.
- Teachers are to insist that notes have: student’s name, roll class, date the note was written, date(s) of absences(s), reasons for absence(s) and the parent/caregiver’s signature.
- All notes are to be filed in the student absentee file, unless it relates to injury at school. In the latter case notes are to be kept until the child turns 26.
- Phone messages are to be recorded directly into First Class. The Attendance SASS will indicate the reason and that it was given by phone.
If the authenticity or reason of any explanation is in question, the office clerical staff will contact the relevant Deputy who will take appropriate action.

Principals may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence. The parent will be advised that the explanation has not been accepted and a reason for the decision will be provided. Absences in these cases will be recorded as unjustified.

Letters will be posted home twice a term informing parents if there have been unexplained absences. A copy will be placed on the student’s personal file.

**Lateness**

- A student who is late to school must report immediately to the front office. The administration staff will direct the student to swipe their student card to receive a late pass.
- This pass is to be presented to the class teacher for admission to class.
- The late pass must be handed to the roll call teacher on the next school day, together with a note from a parent/guardian explaining the lateness.
- Repeated lateness may be dealt with according to the school’s Discipline Policy.
- Class teachers are to advise the relevant Deputy Principal if a student is present in class but marked absent on the Absentee Sheet.

**Early Leavers**

- The DEC and Board of Studies require students to study subjects for a prescribed amount of hours. Leaving school early on a regular basis is a disruption to the learning process for the student concerned, the whole class and the ability of the teacher to deliver content.
- Students are to present their request in writing to their class teacher on departure. The note must include the student’s name, departure time, reason for early leaving, date of early leaving and parent’s signature.
- Students then swipe out via the front office.
- If the authenticity or reason of any early leave request is in question, the Deputy Principal will take appropriate action.
- The Attendance Clerical Assistant will enter the times into First Class.

**Class Rolls**

- Teachers must maintain accurate class attendance records online using the First Class program.
- Staff accuracy, ownership and responsibility are central to maintaining accurate records.

**Partial Truancy**

- Teachers are required to mark their class roll for all lessons and check the student attendance against the absentee sheet.
- The class checks with the absent student at the earliest opportunity. If the outcome from this meeting is not satisfactory, the student is referred to the relevant Head Teacher of that faculty.
- The faculty Head Teacher, interviews the student, records the truancy on First Class and puts suitable consequences in place for this unacceptable behaviour.
- If the student is found to have a legitimate reason for being absent, the original teacher must be informed of this fact. The Head Teacher who has recorded the absence must then delete the entry on First Class.
Proven truants may:
- Be placed on afternoon detention
- Be placed on a monitoring card
- Have parents contacted
- Repeated truants may be referred to the relevant Deputy Principal for further action.

Whole-Day Truancy
- Whole day truancy will be investigated by Year Advisers or the relevant Deputy Principal.
- Disciplinary action or counselling will be taken as appropriate.

Extended, Frequent or Unexplained Absences (including HSLO referrals)
- The Principal or nominee may request medical certificates or other documents when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged.
- Medical certificates are not sacrosanct documents. Where the Principal or nominees have concerns about medical certificates being produced for absences, they can ask the parent to request that the doctor write on the certificate the statement “This child is unfit for school” with specified dates.
- Where the Principal or nominee has ongoing concerns they can request the parents’ consent to contact the doctor. If the request is denied, or if the Principal is still not satisfied with the reason for absence, the absence can be recorded as unjustified.
- Year Advisers interview identified students of concern who may be identified by class teachers or from First Class printouts of attendance of less than 85% which will be distributed every month at the Welfare meeting. Head Teacher Administration to organise attendance print outs. YA initiate contact with parents by phone. A record of attendance concern and action taken is to be made on Frist Class. Medical certificates may be requested for continual absences due to illness.
- If no improvement to attendance then HSLO support may be sought.
- If no improvement then parents/guardians and students are interviewed by the HSLO and relevant Deputy Principal. A plan is devised to improve the student’s attendance.
- Where appropriate, referral is made by the Deputy Principal or LST to one or more of the following:
  - the School Counsellor who may apply for support from DET and non DET agencies (e.g. DOCS, Community Health, Mission Australia)
  - the Learning Support Team
  - Senior Review Panel
  - Careers Adviser
- If there is no improvement within 4 weeks the Principal sends a letter to parents advising of a referral to the Home School Liaison Program. An application for HSLO support is also made by the school.

Exemptions – Requests for Leave
- In order to apply for leave for their child, parents need to notify the school in writing according to the different categories below:
  1. **For leave of less than 5 days**, parents are to request leave in writing addressed to the principal, preferably prior to leave. If the request has not
been made in advance, a note must be supplied within 7 days or the absence will be recorded as unjustified.

2. **For leave of between 5 and 50 days in any calendar year** parents must apply to principal on the Exemption Application Leave form. This can be obtained from the front office. If the absence is for more than 20 days or falls at the end or beginning of the school year a copy of travel documentation such as air tickets must be attached to the application.

3. **For leave over 50 days in any calendar year** the application must go to the principal who will forward to the School Education Director for consideration.

   - In approving an exemption or leave request, the school will consider:
     1. prior absence
     2. ability to complete of assessment tasks and course work or undertake educational program
   - In order for the process to be completed, requests for exemption need to placed at least 2 weeks in advance.
   - If the exemption is approved the front office will issue a Certificate of Exemption. A copy of this will also be placed on the student’s file.
   - If the Principal has declined to support an application for leave or exemption, parents will be notified in writing with a reason for the decision.
   - For students absent due to illness, injury or misadventure the school will provide ongoing educational support. For students absent due to family holidays, parents are responsible for ongoing educational programs.

**Late to Class/Teachers Detaining a Student/Allowing Students Out of Class**

- Class teachers are to record lateness to class on their class rolls and take appropriate action.
- Repeated lateness may be referred to the faculty Head Teacher for disciplinary action.
- Students who are out of class for any reason must have a note from the class teacher stating time, date and reason.
- Teachers who detain a student where that student should be in class must provide a note stating date and time of release so the student can enter class.
- Where students are withdrawn from a lesson consent must be gained from the class teacher, preferably prior to the lesson. This is a matter of professional courtesy.

**Illness at School**

- If a student reports as ill in class, teachers are to supply a note. The student is to then report to the front office.
- For injuries requiring first aid, students are to go straight to the student reception front office.
- Teachers may send another student to accompany a student to the front office if deemed necessary.
- The front office will maintain records of students admitted to the clinic and record any partial absences of students who leave school for illness or injury.
- The front office, not students, is to contact parents if needed.
Sport

- Completion of sport is a requirement of the Department of Education and is a normal part of school activity that students must attend.
- All teachers are to mark their sport rolls at sport.
- Students requesting to leave school early on a Wednesday must present their signed request note to the Sports Coordinator by recess Wednesday. A pink slip will be attached to the note which will allow them then to sign out from the front office.
- If a student is absent from sport but are not on the Absentee Sheet the teacher is to fill in a fractional truancy notification and send it to the Sports Coordinator who will take appropriate action.
- If a student has truanted sport, the First Class register will be adjusted to indicate unjustified absence which will count on the student’s report.

Rewarding Excellent and Improved Attendance

- Students who achieve 100% attendance in a term will receive a Year Adviser Commendation.
- The Year Advisers will monitor attendance rates and will issue merit certificates to those with improved attendance rates and almost perfect attendance. Merits certificates may also be issued as a form of positive reinforcement to encourage students.
Year 12 Attendance Policy and Procedures
Year 12 students have some extra rights and responsibilities. Good attendance is linked to successful learning and achievement. Your enrolment as a Year 12 student is conditional on you knowing and understanding your responsibilities. If you do not understand any points that are listed below you need to speak with your Year Adviser or the Deputy Principal.

Roll Call
- Year 12 students are assigned a roll call, but you do not have to attend if you have no timetabled lessons in period 1. You are expected to attend assemblies and swipe on prior to your first lesson or by recess. Failure to swipe on will result in you being marked absent all day and this will register on your report.
- You are not permitted to leave school grounds without swiping off.

Whole Day Absence from School
- Year 12 students need to make a commitment to senior studies and as such need to maintain regular and consistent attendance. If your attendance slips below a reasonable level, and if no valid reason exists with appropriate documentation, your status may be reviewed in conjunction with the Deputy Principal and the Senior Review Panel.
- If you are absent you must bring a note explaining your absence on the first day you return to school. This note is to be handed in to the front office or your roll call teacher.

Early Leaving, Lateness and Sickness at School
- If you are late to school you need to follow normal school procedures. That is, bring a note to explain your lateness. This should be handed into the front office.
- Persistent lateness is not acceptable and this will be dealt with according to the School’s Attendance Policy.
- If you need to leave early, such as for a medical appointment, you need to hand in a note from your parent or caregiver (explaining why you need to leave and the time you will be leaving) to the front office. Before you leave school you must report to the front office to swipe out and hand in your note.
- If you become sick at school you need to ask your class teacher for a note to report to the front office. If it is necessary to send you home, your parents will be contacted by school staff and arrangements made. If you leave school grounds without following this process you may face consequences for failing to follow school directions.
- If you do not have a lesson after lunch, you may swipe out and leave at the beginning of lunch. You need to leave the school immediately after swiping off and are not to remain in Tiernan Avenue or surrounds. If, for any reason, you need to return you must swipe on again.
- You need to follow requirements in the Assessment Booklet if you have an assessment task for which you are absent.

Truancy
- Truancy is a serious issue. If you are caught truanting you may be given a consequence including after school detentions, Deputy Principal interview and parental interviews. You may also be referred to the Senior Review Panel with a possible warning of suspension or expulsion.
Study Periods
- If you have a study period (i.e. you do not have a timetabled class) you are expected to be in the Senior Study space of the library, quad or senior courtyard. This is particularly relevant to any students arriving before or staying beyond timetabled classes.

TAFE
- Senior students studying at TAFE may leave school early on some days. You will be given a pass with the day and time you need to leave. This process will be coordinated by the Careers Adviser.

Sport
- Year 12 students do not have to participate in sport. Some extension classes are timetabled during this time. Other students may leave at 12.00.

Uniform
- If you are not recognisable as identifying with this school, you will be sent home to change by the Deputy Principal or Principal. You are expected to attend school in full school uniform every day.
## Short Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late to school</td>
<td>• Front Office enters details</td>
<td>• HT Administration monitors &amp; issues consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student to bring parental note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Leavers</td>
<td>• Student shows note to teacher</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students swipes off at the front office</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Front office enters details and files note</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Partial/Fractional Truancy</td>
<td>• Classroom Teacher to verify</td>
<td>• Head Teacher issues consequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Day truancy</td>
<td>• HT Administration issues attendance 85% reports twice per term</td>
<td>• YA may investigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Front office issues letters twice per term</td>
<td>• DP issue consequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated absences and</td>
<td>• Classroom teacher action</td>
<td>• YA to investigate e.g. contact home, counsel student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repeat unexplained</td>
<td>• Repeat offenders → HTs</td>
<td>• DP action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• HT Administration issues</td>
<td>• HSLO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late to class</td>
<td>• Classroom teacher action</td>
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