



Attendance Policy

Version 5

	North Academy Attendance Policy	Policy Code:	ATT
		Revision:	05
		Implementation Date:	August 2025
Applicable to:	North Academy staff, Teachers, Parents/Carers and Students	Review Date:	December 2027
		Principal Approval:	

School Context

North Academy is a registered non-government secondary special assistance school established to support vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who may have complex trauma, developmental and mental health needs. North Academy provides students with a flexible alternative to mainstream schooling for students who have social, emotional, or behavioural challenges.

Policy

This policy will provide guidelines and outline school and parent/carer responsibilities in relation to attendance in accordance with legislative requirements related to attendance and student welfare. The policy applies to North Academy staff, parents/carers, and students in year 9, 10 and 11.

North Academy will monitor student attendance to provide for the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of the students in its care. Parents/carers are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their student. School staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

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Parent/Carer Attendance Responsibilities

Your legal obligations and responsibilities (Education Act 1990)

- Enrolling your child at compulsory school age in a school or registering them for Home Schooling.
- Ensuring that your child attends school regularly.
- Explaining the absences of your child from school promptly and within 7 days to administration staff.
- Taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving your child with the school.
- Promptly explaining absences or partial absences as early as possible with administration staff.
- Obtain a medical certificate or other documentation if requested or possible.

Parent/Carer Procedure for Student Absence

When to communicate with the school if your child is absent

- Before 8:45am, every day they are absent
- You are required to provide a reason if your child is absent, late or departing early each day

Communicate with the school by

Call office phone: 1300 113 208

Email admin: admin@northacademy.nsw.edu.au

SMS admin: 0456 352 140

TASS Parent portal: Log into your account and notify us

Details to communicate with the school

Date: The date of absence

Documentation: If applicable or requested

Absence reason: Sickness, school refusal, transport etc

Type of absence: Full day, or partial day

Justified Absent Reasons

- Being sick or having an infectious disease
- Attending a recognised religious holiday
- Published public transport delays or traffic accidents
- Having an unavoidable medical appointment
- Exceptional circumstances – eg, funeral
- Mental health circumstances

Unexplained Absences

- Parent/carers must provide a reason within 7 days of the date of absence
- After 7 days has passed, administration will record this absence as unexplained on the record
- The school will SMS you by 2:00PM, if your child has an unexplained absence each day
- You are required to respond to that SMS and explain why

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Parent/Carer Procedure for Extended Leave

What is Extended Leave?

- Parent/Carers may request extended leave from school during term weeks
- All students are expected to participate in all aspects of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities

The Principal has authority to grant

- Permission for a student to be absent for extended leave during school term. Eg for travel

Extended leave may be granted for (not limited to)

- Family weddings or bereavement
- Cultural and or religious events
- Educational and/or social and emotional events
- Other planned special circumstances

How to apply?

- Parents/carers must make requests for extended leave via email and addressed to the principal.
- Email admin: admin@northacademy.nsw.edu.au

Will the leave be accepted?

- The principal may not accept the leave application if it impacts the school or student
- The principal will confirm via email if the leave application is approved or declined

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North Academy Attendance Responsibilities

The schools responsibilities:

- Use the common code approved by the Minister
- Maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- Implementing practices to address attendance issues, where possible
- Providing clear information to students and parents/carers regarding attendance requirements
- Liaise with Principal where applicable, regarding unsatisfactory attendance processes being followed

Principal Responsibilities

- Attendance records are maintained in the approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students
- The principal can decline a reason provided for an absence if it is not in the best interest of the student.
- Unexplained absences are followed up as per the policy.
- Documented plans are developed to address the needs of students with identified attendance concerns
- The principal is provided with regular information about students with chronic nonattendance patterns and school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.
- Parents/carers and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements
- All cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies including communication with parents/carers are implemented.
- The principal may delegate responsibility for the maintenance of attendance registers to other school staff. In such cases, the principal will ensure that the staff member understands their obligations and responsibilities as per the policy.

North Academy Procedure for Attendance Record Keeping

Retaining the attendance register

- Administration will maintain and retain the register of daily attendance of all enrolled students for 7 years after the last entry was made, in TASS

Retaining attendance documentation

- Administration will retain all attendance documentation for all enrolled students for 7 years in SharePoint
- Administration will retain all enrolment documentation regarding attendance for 7 years in SharePoint upon completion of enrolment at North Academy

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North Academy Procedure for Daily Attendance Register

Marking attendance

- Teachers will record student attendance and absences by 9:30am each day in TASS

Communication of Daily Absences

- Administration will SMS the parents/carers via TASS automated SMS service if their student is absent from school, and if there has been no communication by 2:00PM

Recording absent reasons

- Administration will record reasons and documentation for all absences in TASS

Recording late arrivals and early departures

- Teaching and Support will ensure student sign the late arrival or early departure sheet in the foyer
- Administration will record accurate times and reasons for late arrival or early departures in TASS
- Administration will follow up unexplained late arrivals with parents/carers and document in TASS
- Administration will cross-reference late arrival and early departure sheet each day with TASS data
- Administration will file late arrival and early departure sheet in SharePoint each week

Record keeping

- Administration will record absences in TASS via the following table
- Administration will record comments in TASS, which is a record of the reason given by the parent/carer
- The principal can request documentation to substantiate any reason.

Reason given by parents/carers	Common Code Record in TASS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student absent due to mental health or anxiety Student is absent due to being sick (cold, illness etc) Student is absent due to school refusal. Eg the student is at home/asleep/ refusing to attend. Student is absent due to due to family/life challenges & the parents/carers are with the student. Student is absent and the parents/carers are aware of where the student is located. Parents/carers do not know where the student is located or is currently a missing person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted by Principal Sickness Accepted by Principal Accepted by Principal Accepted by Principal Unexplained

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North Academy Procedure for Communication of Unexplained Absences

Unexplained Absence

- Unexplained absences are when the parent/carer does not notify the school of the student whereabouts on any day.
- If a reason has not been provided in seven (7) days of the date of the absence administration will record the absence as unexplained in TASS

Communication of Unexplained Absences

- Administration will continue to follow up with the parents/carer if a reason is not provided
- Administration will send a summary of unexplained absences via email to parents/carers at the end of each term requesting documentation or supportive evidence by TASS
- Unexplained absences will be recorded in the student’s semester progress report
- North Academy acknowledges that documentation may not be provided

Record Keeping

- Administration will record absences in TASS via the following matrix
- Administration will record comments in TASS, which is a record of the reason given by the parent/carer
- The principal can request documentation to substantiate any reason

Reason given within 7 days of absence	Reason given after 7 days or not given at all
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration to record reason & adjust the common code record in TASS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration will record reason but keep common code record as ‘unexplained’ in TASS

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North Academy Procedure for Exemptions

Exemptions (Section 25, Education Act)

- Exemption from compulsory education requirements may be granted by the Principal (and cannot be delegated)
- The exemption must be in the best interests of the student in the short and long term and alternatives have been considered
- Exemptions will not be granted retrospectively

The Principal has authority to grant

- Under section 25 of the Education Act the Principal may grant an exemption from enrolment or attendance

Exemption for Enrolment may be granted for

- students who have completed Year 9 but not yet completed Year 10 and who have secured a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship

Exemption for attendance may be granted for

- Exceptional circumstances such as health reasons
- Participation in elite arts or sporting events
- Direction under the Public Health Act 2010
- Employment in the entertainment industry

Application process

- Parents/carers can request an exemption form in writing addressed to the Principal
- Email admin: admin@northacademy.nsw.edu.au
- Administration will seek permission from the principal to send an exemption form to the parents/carer
- The Principal will review the exemption form within 3 weeks of receiving in collaboration with the Head Teacher and Wellbeing Coordinator
- The Principal, Head Teacher and Wellbeing Coordinator will review the length, reasons, supporting documentation and any issues concerning curriculum requirements, including assessment tasks
- The Principal will reach a decision and will notify the parent/carer via email if the exemption has been approved or declined

Record Keeping

- Administration will send the parent/carer a copy of the signed exemption form to the parents/carers via email
- Administration will save the exemption form to SharePoint
- Administration will update the Attendance Register as per the common code in TASS

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Supporting Regular Attendance of Students at School

Shared Responsibility

The principal and school staff, in consultation with students and their parents/carers, will aim to resolve problems of non-attendance. While parents should be reminded of their legal obligations under the Education Act 1990 the welfare of the student must be the focus of this consultation. The special nature of North Academy in its inclusion of students with social, emotional, and behavioural challenges means that attendance issues may stem from student wellbeing and student protection concerns. The school understands its obligation regarding mandatory reporting. North Academy understands the different multifaceted layers of absences is crucial when identifying trends, interventions, and school responses.

Definitions

- **Absenteeism:** defined as any form of absence from school or class.
- **School refusal:** refers to when a student or young person refuses to attend school and/or has problems remaining in class for an entire day and is anxiety-based (e.g., separation, generalised or social anxiety driven). It can present as multi-layered from extended absences, to periodic, missed classes or chronic lateness when the student experiences intense anxiety or dread about the school. Parents/carers are aware, and the student makes no attempt to conceal.
- **Chronic school refusal:** defined as missing 15 school days in an academic year or missing at least 10% of school days at some point of the academic year.
- **Truancy:** refers to concealed absences by the student or young person, without parents/carers knowledge. Truancy is not anxiety-based.
- **School withdrawal:** refers to when parents/carers deliberately keep a student away from school for various reasons including family illness, parental conflict, or family holidays.

Monitoring Attendance Concerns

- **Daily:** Administration is required to monitor the completion of daily attendance and ensure parents/carers have notified the school of any unexplained absences. If Parents/Carers fail to do so, administration is responsible for sending out an 'unexplained absence' text message via TASS automated messaging.
- **Fortnightly:** Attendance patterns are monitored during a team meeting. The Wellbeing Coordinator is required to report student absences to identify concerns and trends at each team meeting.
- **Semesterly:** During Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, student attendance is tracked and monitored by the Wellbeing Coordinator.

Identifying Attendance Concerns and Patterns

- Habitual lateness or unexplained absences
- Regularly leaving school early
- Regular absences on Mondays or after significant events
- Multiple single day absence over a term
- Frequent complaints of illness while at school
- Challenges leaving or arriving at school

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North Academy Attendance Intervention Strategies

Attendance Strategies

- Students with attendance concerns will be monitored by the Wellbeing Coordinator fortnightly and strategies will be considered to support and increase attendance issues.
- North Academy will use a proactive and therapeutic system to gain resolution of attendance difficulties.

Proactive Prevention

- A range of whole school strategies implemented to support engagement and attendance.

Therapeutic Intervention

- Collaborative and therapeutic supports for identified patterns, concerns, and unsatisfactory attendance. The interventions will be therapeutic, collaborative and strength based.

Proactive Prevention	Therapeutic Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a strong school culture of belonging • Promote and reward good attendance • Maintain electronic systems to store, record and report data • Wellbeing Coordinate to lead practice • Develop and maintain a rapport with students and parents/carers • Have clear policy and procedure & communication • Communicate regularly with parents/carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report patterns and trends • Promptly engage with students and parents/carers • Implement or revise an Attendance Improvement Plan or Part Day Attendance or Reconnect Plan • Engage Allied Health Professionals if applicable • Review plans in a timely planer with key stakeholders • Highlight attendance concerns in the IEP process • Communicate with parents/carers via formal letters

Formal Letters

- Wellbeing Coordinator will send a formal letter at the end of each term if attendance is below 40%

Communication

- Wellbeing Coordinator will engage parents/carers regarding concerns and strategies via phone call
- Wellbeing Coordinator will engage parents/carers in a collaborative meeting to implement plans
- Wellbeing Coordinator will discuss attendance concerns during IEP meetings
- Wellbeing Coordinator will send formal letters to parents/carers via TASS email
- Wellbeing Coordinator will notify parents/carers to engage with the school via email and meeting invite

Record Keeping

- Wellbeing Coordinator will save all correspondence and plans to the student file in SharePoint
- Wellbeing Coordinator will keep accurate case notes and meeting minutes via TASS

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North Academy Part Day Attendance Plan

Part Day Attendance Plan

- A Part Day Attendance Plan is where a student only attends for the specified time periods that have been agreed
- Plans will be developed with the goal of the student attending full-time hours within a respective time frame, where appropriate

When can a plan be implemented

- At enrolment if a parent/carer identifies a historic pattern of poor attendance
- In collaboration with the Wellbeing Coordinator as part of a therapeutic intervention

Plan timeframes

- Plans will be implemented across a 5-week period completed by the Wellbeing Coordinator
- Any adjustments made prior to the 5 weeks; parents/carers will be consulted by the Wellbeing Coordinator
- Post 5-week reviews will be completed with parents/carers and the Wellbeing Coordinator. An increase in hours will be discussed and the plan updated if appropriate
- The Principal may approve a 10-week plan, if deemed in the best interests of the student

Supporting documentation

- The Wellbeing Coordinator may request supporting documents during the initial determination of a plan. Eg, letter of support from a psychologist

Approval of Part Day Attendance Plans

- The principal will have final approval of all plans

Record Keeping

- Wellbeing Coordinator will keep accurate case notes and meeting minutes via TASS, including all reviews
- Wellbeing Coordinator will save plans in the student file on SharePoint
- Administration will update the attendance records in TASS, reflective of the plan

