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**Rationale/context:**

Underpinning the effectiveness of a school’s welfare and learning programs, is the expectation that students should be attending regularly. In fact, sound attendance-monitoring is probably one of the most important welfare programs of all, given:

- the importance of continuity to effective learning of any type, and the potentially devastating effects of prolonged or punctuated patterns of absences;
- the potential harm to students which may await truants and non-attenders, outside the school;
- the damage done to a school’s perception, in the eyes of the community, through being “loose” in the area of attendance-monitoring; conversely, the approval resulting from close checking and follow-up;
- its importance as one of the pre-conditions to avoiding higher-order student welfare and management difficulties (ie “fix the little things”), and establishing a good tone within the school; and
- the essential nature of establishing, within students, good habits of attendance and punctuality, as training for the life and workforce.

**There is also a need to comply with current DET policy requirements: ie,**

- Student attendance in Government Schools: procedures (2006);
- Symbols and codes to be used in manual and electronic attendance registers: support document (2006):
  - Enrolment of students in Government Schools (1997); and
  - Education Act (1990)

and with ESOS Act (Education Services for Overseas Students) 2000, and the National Code.

**Overview and the KHS context:**

- At KHS, the official roll is the OASIS electronic record. At any given point in time, every effort needs to be made to ensure the currency and accuracy of this record, both in terms of actual enrolments and the attendance information contained. Students need to be placed on this record on their first day of attendance, and their enrolment status regularly reviewed to ensure currency. In addition, great care needs to be taken to ensure the real-time and accurate entry of attendance data: whole-day, partial, early-leavers and lateness, suspensions, various forms of leave, and involvement in excursions and off-site programs. Account also needs to be taken of flexible timetables: eg, senior study-periods, late-starts, early-finishes, or days not required at school – none of which should be recorded as absences.
With respect to the Oasis electronic record:

- enrolling students may be placed on Oasis only on their first full day of enrolment and attendance at the school; earlier placement of enrolling students may be carried out on the timetablers’ database;

- no student entries or deletions should be made to OASIS student-lists, apart from those requested by the Principal/DP’s.

- Oasis will be updated on every day on which the school is open, except for:
  - days on which there is Industrial Action;
  - staff development days; and
  - days on which the school is inaccessible or unusable (e.g. through flood, fire, etc). On these days, note will be made of students actually present, together with the reason for disruption, and this note included with the official records;

- a weekly printout will be made of the Oasis attendance record. This printout will be endorsed by the Principal and stored in a secure location (for 7 years); a complete Oasis attendance printout, for the previous year, will also be made prior to rollover each year;

- the Oasis record will be the basis for all enrolment returns and audits;

- only correct symbols and codes will be used to update Oasis attendance records (see appendix: symbols and codes to be used in manual and electronic attendance registers).

- Roll-books, marked by roll-teachers in the daily roll-call period, will be important support documents for the official Oasis records. There should be a one-to-one correspondence, at any given time, between roll-book entries and entries on Oasis, both in terms of student entries and the actual attendance data. The same conventions will apply as for Oasis records: symbols and codes used, only officially – sanctioned entries and deletions etc, to be made by Admin/office staff only. No roll books should be removed from the premises, and all completed roll books stored securely for 3 years. Any corrections made to the Oasis record, should also be made in the roll books. Students’ names should be entered onto the roll-books on their first day of attendance, and any changes to rolls should result in an entry to a new roll being matched by a deletion from the old roll. Attendance must be marked against names of students, from the first day of appearance of the names.

- Accurate class rolls will be maintained daily in all classes, by class teachers. These records should be retained for the whole year, and will form the basis of daily comparison with the distributed attendance-sheet, then feedback to the Head Teacher, Admin, via faculty attendance folders.
- Monitoring of attendance will take place via:
  - SMS attendance-messaging daily;
  - the daily attendance-sheet, generated through roll call, and distributed to all faculties;
  - inspection of daily absentee sheets, especially sections showing Year – totals;
  - comparison of class rolls with the attendance sheet, and daily feedback of discrepancies to the Head Teacher, Admin.; via faculty attendance folders;
  - fortnightly attendance printouts for all enrolled students, circulated to Year Advisers for follow-up;
  - 4 weekly attendance printout (total and unexplained absences) for Years 10-12, circulated to all staff; also, 4-weekly “late” printouts;
  - checking and recording of International Students attendances, at end of each Term; visa-warning letters to be written if attendance rates less than 80% (not including approved leave); ISC to be informed if students do not show up 3-4 days after enrolment date, or if unauthorised leave is taken; guardians informed if student absent for more than 3 days.
  - end term attendance printout for Years 7-9, showing total and unexplained absences for each student for the whole term;
  - analysis of semester attendance – returns, by the Principal; also of DET comparative attendance information;
  - random phone calls made by office staff to homes of absent students, as per request from P/DP’s; also, “targeting” of previous truants (live phone calls, or by SMS).

- Welfare and discipline response to attendance – monitoring will take the form of:
  - general advice and information to parents via newsletters and parent meetings, and to students via Year meetings (especially on new policy developments, or perceived areas of risk);
  - follow-up of suspected truants and partial truants, initially by Head Teacher Admin, then by referral to Principal/DP’s (policy will be warning letter, placement on Oasis and after school detention for first offence; suspension normal thereafter);
  - telephone calls and/or student interviews conducted by Year Advisers, and HT Welfare following multiple student unexplained absences; also, fortnightly letters sent out through the office, to all students with unexplained absences. All contacts and interventions to be recorded on RISC;
- individual attendance plans negotiated with targeted students in which welfare/social issues, buddy-ing, mentoring, counselling, etc, addressed, as well as appropriate curriculum-modification.

- generation of expulsion warnings, culminating in expulsion on grounds of non-seriousness, by Principal/DP’s based on continued patterns of unexplained absences on the part of students of post compulsory age; (especially when associated with other signs of poor course-progress);

- letters of warning sent to targeted poor attenders, Years 7-9, based on term absences printout; subsequent follow-up of these targeted offenders, through interview or phone calls, by the Principal/DP’s (possibly culminating in invitations to repeat the Year);

- referral to HSLO, by the Welfare Head Teacher, of students with ongoing patterns of unexplained absences; referral to the Education Director, by the Principal, of extreme cases;

- response, as per ISC protocols, to International Students Term attendance-monitoring: recording on student file-cards, sending of warning letters; (warning letters to be sent if attendance less than 80% for Term; ISC to be informed if “no-show” 3-4 days after enrolment date, or it taking unauthorised leave; guardian informed if absent from more than 3 days);

- follow up, by Principal/DP’s, of all targeted repeat late offenders, normally taking the form of after school detentions for all subsequent offences, as well as warning letters home; and

- close monitoring of end-term or other high risk attendance situations: e.g., “leftover” groups from excursions and elimination of “drop-ins” or end term truancy.

Roles and responsibilities:

- Office staff to:
  - issue common leave passes, on presentation of leave note authorised by Principal/DP’s;

  - generate and circulate daily absentee sheet to all faculties and executive staff;

  - generate letters, fortnightly, for all unexplained absences;

  - refer targeted latecomers to Principal/DP’s;

  - file/archive attendance records (eg leave notes, exemption certificates, Oasis printouts, roll books) as requested by Principal, DP’s or Head Teacher, Admin;

  - generate attendance printouts, as requested by Principal/DP’s;
Roles and responsibilities Cont:

- transfer attendance information from roll books onto Oasis; also, enter variations due to: lateness, early leavers, withdrawals by Executive, leave information;

- print out responses to SMS contact with parents;

- make entries, deletions or changes to rolls as required: on enrolment on leaving, or in case of roll-changes;

- generate weekly Oasis attendance printouts, also attendance whole-year printout prior to rollover then file hardcopy;

- make phone calls, as requested by Principal/DP’s, as random or targeted attendance – checks, also to verify early-leaver notes;

- relay urgent attendance-related messages from parents, to Principal/DP’s;

- ensure entry of enrolling student names onto Oasis, on first day of attendance; also, carry out clearances as requested.

- SASS responsible for International Students to:
  - set up student record card for each ISC student, as per template;
  - calculate % attendance for each ISC student, at end of each Term; then, enter this on student record card, and forward attendance to Principal;
  - forward copies of warning letters to ISC.
  - Print room SASS to distribute copies of all ISC attendance warning letters to:
    - student files.
    - International Students Coordinator.

- Year Advisers to:
  - follow up (phone calls, or student interviews) multiple unexplained absences (3 or more per fortnight); then, make note of such contacts and give feedback as appropriate, to HT Welfare or DP; then, enter onto RISC;

  - monitor for suspicious attendance patterns;

  - monitor beginning – Term attendance, and follow up on non returners (especially at beginning of year);

  - forward attendance – related information to Principal/DP’s/Head Teacher Admin/Head Teacher Welfare, as judged necessary;

  - refer advance leave applications to the Principal/DP’s for approval.
Roles and responsibilities Cont:

- **Head Teachers to:**
  - ensure return of daily attendance information folder to Head Teacher Admin, noting discrepancies against absentee sheet;
  - encourage faculty generation of BOS warning letters for Years 10, 11 & 12, in response to attendance data circulated.

- **International Students Coordinator to:**
  - inform International Students of relevant Visa conditions (at least 80% attendance), and of rules for taking leave;
  - inform International Students of appeal-rights;
  - contact any International Student with more than 3 consecutive days unexplained absence;
  - forward any requests for leave to the Principal, and inform student and guardians of result;
  - forward copies of attendance warning letters to parents and caregivers;
  - provide counselling-support to students, regarding attendance warning letters.

- **Head Teacher Admin to:**
  - monitor daily attendance returns or other suspected truancy cases by:
    - interviewing students;
    - sending home letters, and entering onto Oasis;
    - applying school discipline policy (a/s detention, or possible suspension recommendation);
    - follow up instances of recording errors, and generally monitor maintenance of roll books;
    - train roll-staff in roll-marking procedures;
    - monitor return of attendance folders from faculties;
    - arrange additional roll checks, in consultation with the Principal/DP’s;
    - follow up on attendance related queries from staff, Principal or community.

- **Class teachers to:**
  - mark, and accurately maintain, daily class rolls for each class taught;
  - lodge accurate “variations” lists for all excursions and other activities, on the morning of the event;
Roles and responsibilities Cont:

- report all discrepancies between class rolls and absence sheet on any given day;

- only add or delete names from class rolls when official advice given re enrolment, clearance or change of class.

- Roll teachers to:
  - use only approved codes and symbols in roll marking;
  - mark rolls accurately, checking both by name and head count, in roll classes which are quiet and orderly;

- Principal/DP’s to:
  - initiate generation and circulation of attendance reports: fortnightly, monthly, and end – term;
  - raise attendance – related issues with Executive or Welfare teams, following checks of data;
  - monitor Year by Year total attendances each 4 weeks;

- react to attendance data at levels of:
  - requesting Oasis adjustments; e.g., appropriate removal of students names; and
  - initiating expulsion warnings, or requests for counselling;
    - interview and follow-up of “target” offenders, initially at end of each Term, then ongoing;
  - carry out higher order sanctions; eg, suspensions for repeat offenders, as per discipline policy;
  - arrange for attendance-related phone calls, through office staff;
  - interview and counsel targeted latecomers;
  - approve leave and exemption-certificate applications, prior to forwarding/circulation; (note special conditions applying to granting of leave for International Students), then informing of result in writing (leave for ISC students only given if attendances above 80% for Term);
  - initiate circulation of appropriate attendance – related information to parents (eg, through newsletters);
  - monitor daily attendance-printout, especially as relate to Year-totals;
  - ensure appropriate archiving and filing of attendance records: leave notes, exemption certificates/applications, roll books, Oasis printouts;
  - inform office, for real-time updating of Oasis records, of students suspended or withdrawn from class;
Roles and responsibilities Cont:

- monitor effectiveness of SMS messaging-system;
- inform Education Director, where appropriate, of chronic cases of non-attendance;
- monitor high-risk situations, such as final week of Term, leftover excursion – groups etc.
- Send out appropriate ISC attendance warning letters each Term, in response to Term attendance data from designated SASS (copies to student file, and to International Students Coordinator).

Head Teacher, Welfare, to:
- exercise a “watching brief” on students whose attendance is of concern;
- arrange for meetings or contact with parents and students whose attendance is causing concern;
- organise HSLO referrals, as appropriate;
- arrange for individual attendance plan to be negotiated with some students and their parents;

Sports Co-ordinator to:
- ensure accurate attendance information received from staff on sports groups, then forward to Head Teacher, Admin.

Parents to:
- assume responsibility for their children’s school attendance (Education Act, 1990);
- provide advice, in writing, to school in all cases of non-attendance.

Information and training support:

Attendance-related information and training support will be provided, as follows:
- parents: to be informed of attendance requirements and responsibilities via:
  - newsletters
  - parent meetings (eg Orientation Day, Yr 6)
  - end-year letter
- with specific focus on policy updates, high-risk areas and arising issues;
- students: as above, via Year-meetings, particularly early in the year;
- teaching staff: focus on accurate marking of class rolls, and return of daily attendance information. Particular mention on day 1 staff meeting, also in handbook and orientation program;
- roll-teachers and office staff: training in correct use of roll marking symbols/codes, maintenance of attendance records, archiving/filing, and general conduct of roll classes.

**Evaluation of policy:**

**Evaluation of attendance policy and procedures to arise from consideration of:**
- semester attendance returns;
- DET attendance information, showing data comparative to Regional, State and district levels;

**daily monitoring of attendance information:**
- from absence lists;
- from faculties;
- detected cases of truancy;
- attendance patterns shown in:
  - 4 weekly checks;
  - fortnightly, monthly and end term printouts.
Appendix:
Symbols and codes to be used in manual and electronic attendance registers.

The following symbols are to be used on attendance registers (rolls). Additional symbols must not be used. Examples and further information on recording student attendance may be found in How to Mark a School or Class Roll. Home school liaison personnel can assist school staff in using the appropriate symbols.

Manual Attendance Registers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>The first and last day that the student attended for each term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The student was absent on that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa</td>
<td>The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The student’s absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- no notice has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of the absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the absence has been explained by the parent, but the reason provided is not accepted by the principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>The student’s absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. This symbol is recorded above the ‘a’ symbol where:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a medical certificate is provided or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation as reasonable. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted or the duration of the absence is more than four days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>The student’s absence is due to leave approved by the Principal. Principals may approve up to 15 days leave in a school year for students of compulsory school age. Additional leave for students not of compulsory school age may be granted at the principal’s discretion. This symbol is recorded above the ‘a’ symbol where a parent provides an explanation that is due to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- misadventure or unforseen event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- participation in special events not related to the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- short family holidays that cannot be taken within normal vacation period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- attendance of funerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- short-term employment in the entertainment industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leave should not be recorded for any student of compulsory school age on more than 15 days in a school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The student was suspended from school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The student was exempted from attending school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Senior student participating in flexible timetable not present because they are not required to be at school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Electronic Attendance Registers

The following symbols are to be used on Electronic Attendance Registers. Additional symbols must not be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>The student was absent on that day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A      | The student’s absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if:  
  - no notice has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of the absence  
  - the absence has been explained by the parent, but the reason provided is not accepted by the principal. |
| S      | The student’s absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. This symbol is used when:  
  - a medical certificate is provided or  
  - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation as reasonable.  
  Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted or the duration of the absence is more than four days. |
| L      | The student’s absence is due to leave approved by the Principal. Principals may approve up to 15 days leave in a school year. This symbol is used when a parent provides an explanation that is due to:  
  - misadventure or unforeseen event  
  - participation in special events not related to the school  
  - short family holidays that cannot be taken within normal vacation period  
  - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member  
  - attendance of funerals  
  - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions  
  - short-term employment in the entertainment industry  
  Leave should not be recorded for any student of compulsory school age on more than 15 days in a school year. |
| E      | The student was suspended from school |
| M      | The student was exempted from attending school |
| F      | Senior student participating in flexible timetable not present because they are not required to be at school. |