

Attendance Policy at Killara High School

At Killara High School, school begins with Home Group at 8:40am (Wednesday, Thursday) or 8:50am (Monday, Tuesday, Friday). It is essential that students arrive at school on time for Home Group every day.

Year 12 students must attend Home Group on a Thursday, even if they do not have a Period 1 class scheduled.

If a student has missed Home Group, or arrive late at any point in the day, and **do not** sign in at the office, they will be marked as absent for the day – even if they have been marked present for the remainder of their classes on that day.

If students are late, they **must always sign in** at the Attendance Window. This will ensure that their attendance for the day is registered.

Contacting parents

As noted in the NSW Government Procedures, if a student is absent and no explanation has been provided, parents/carers will be contacted on the same day by the office via SMS text message. Staff may also contact parents/carers via phone or email to request a reason for the absence.

Explained vs justified absences

Parents are required to explain absences within seven (7) days of the initial absence. At Killara High School this should be done via Compass.

The NSW Education Act requires all absences that have not been explained within seven (7) calendar days to be permanently recorded as 'unjustified'.

There are a limited number of reasons which justify an absence from school. In some circumstances, even though a reason has been provided, the absence will still be recorded as 'unjustified' because the reason does not count as a valid reason as per the Department of Education policy.

What are valid reasons?

The two most common justified reasons for student absences are 'Sick' and 'Leave'.

S- Sick: The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical appointment. The school requires a **medical certificate** for absences related to sickness for more than **three days (i.e. four or more days)**. The Principal/teachers may request a medical certificate on each occasion in addition to explanations, if the explanation is doubted or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.

L- Approved leave: The student's absence is due to an incident such as a serious illness of an immediate family member or attendance at a funeral, and the explanation has been accepted by the Principal.

A- Unexplained absence: The student's absence is unexplained or explained but unacceptable (e.g. going shopping, weather conditions, tired, needed a day off etc.).

Reason for Absence	School Attendance Register Codes	Justified Code
Medical – Illness (*Please also refer to current Covid-19 Guidelines) Includes: Sickness, medical and dental treatment	S	Yes
Medical – Appointment (*Please also refer to current Covid-19 Guidelines) The student's absence is due to a medical or paramedical appointment. If the student has a regular weekly appointment that creates a recurring absence, additional documentation may be required.	A/L	To be determined*
Parent Choice Parent explained, with a reason that is not covered by other approval codes.	A/L	To be determined*
Bereavement Includes funeral, death in the family, and absence due to the death.	L	Yes
Holiday (Extended Leave – Travel) Student does not attend school due to student/family holiday.	A/L	To be determined*
Transport Issues Transport issue, including traffic or missed bus.	A/L	To be determined*
Self-Isolation (<i>Please also refer to most recent Covid-19 Guidelines which you may request from the school</i>) Students at home engaged in learning because parents have kept them at home, they have been placed into self-isolation due to contact or have been self-isolated after returning from overseas.	F	Yes
<p>*To be determined - A determination will be made if the reason was justified or not. For example, a late arrival due to a broken down bus is unavoidable (L), however sleeping in and missing your bus is avoidable (A). Holiday/Extended Leave must be approved by the Principal to be considered justified.</p> <p>NOTE that after 7 days, if an absence remains unexplained (i.e. without a parent note with approved reason), it will automatically be designated as 'A' to indicate unexplained.</p>		

Late Arrival

Students are expected to be at school and in their Home Group class at 8:40am (Wednesday, Thursday) or at 8:50am (Monday, Tuesday, Friday).

If a student is late to school, they need to sign in at the Attendance Window to receive a late note. Parents are expected to provide a reason for their child's lateness. If a valid reason is not provided within **seven days**, the absence will be recorded as 'unjustified'. Parents should use Compass to provide a note for the late arrival (either before or after the fact) but as soon as possible.

Early Departure (Partial absences) for all students

If a student needs to leave early (e.g. for a doctor's appointment), they must bring a handwritten note on the day of their appointment to be presented to the student's teacher so that they may leave class in order to meet their parent in A Block.

The student must be collected by a parent at our Attendance Window in A Block. The Attendance Officer will enter a note into Compass at the time of departure to cover the absence.

In the instance that a student must leave for an appointment on their own, that student must bring a hand written note to the office in the morning - before the start of school – and have it signed by a Deputy Principal. The student must present the note to the teacher to exit class and again to the Attendance Window in A Block in order to sign out at the appointed time.

Feeling unwell

If a student is feeling unwell, at any time during the day, they should go to Sick Bay in A Block and be attended to by the School Nurse.

Under no circumstances should they leave school on their own or with a parent without visiting Reception or Sick Bay in A Block.

Students may contact their parents but should only leave the school once they have come to Sick Bay and have been signed out accordingly.

It is important that we know where students are at all times, especially when they are feeling unwell.

***Early Departures for Years 9, 10 and 11 on a Thursday**

Students in Years 9, 10 and 11 have Sports every Thursday afternoon. Attendance is **compulsory** and medical (or other) appointments should not be booked at this time.

Early departures on a Thursday for appointments or other unavoidable reasons

Following are the procedures for any *unavoidable absences* on a Thursday afternoon:

1. Any Year 9, 10 or 11 students who must leave school early on a Thursday are required to bring a note from their parents stating the reason for their early departure.

The student must have this note signed by a Deputy Principal before signing out.

Deputy Principals will be available to sign notes before school (i.e. before 8:40am) and at Recess A or B.

All Year 9, 10 and 11 students leaving early on a Thursday must present the Deputy Principal approved note to the Attendance Window at A Block when they are signing out.

2. This policy applies to all Year 9, 10 and 11 students – even those who are being collected later in the day by a parent (see *Accompanied Students* below).

If the student requires permission to leave on their own, this must also be written in the note as an additional consideration for the Deputy Principal to approve.

3. **Accompanied Students**

Students who come to the Attendance Window to sign out from sport will need to present their signed note. If they do not have a note, they can be signed out by their parent/guardian but a Deputy Principal will follow up with the student the next day.

4. **Unaccompanied Students**

Unaccompanied students who come to the Attendance Window to sign out *without a signed note from a Deputy* will be asked to find a Deputy to approve their departure.

The school reserves the right to refuse departure from the school if they deem that there is not a valid reason.

Departures and absences due to illness

1. If a student is at school on Thursday morning but subsequently is feeling unwell, the student must come to see the school Nurse in A Block before leaving school. If a student does NOT come to Sick Bay and follow the appropriate sign out procedures, a sick note will not be accepted as the reason for missing sport.

As per our “Feeling unwell” policy above, reporting to Sick Bay and following procedure is for the safety of all involved.

2. Finally, if a child is sick at home all day or absent on a Thursday (i.e. did not attend school at all on their sports day) then the parent must enter a note in Compass.

Emergency Contacts

A student who is unwell and needs to be picked up from school can ONLY be collected by a parent or a designated Emergency Contact (as per the student’s DoE record). If you are unsure of your appointed Emergency Contacts or would like to update that information, please send an email to Killara-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au.

If your son or daughter needs to be collected by someone who is not an appointed Emergency Contact, please email the school stating who is authorised to collect the student. The email must include that person’s full name and mobile number. Once the email is received, we will phone you to verify the information.

Extended Leave/Family Holidays

Application for Extended Leave and Certificate of Extended Leave forms are required when a student will be absent from school for more than five (5) days.

1. Parents of students seeking leave from school for periods of five (5) days or more for any reason (including school or department endorsed activities) are requested to send an email to the school with the dates and reasons for the absence. The Principal will review this request. Approval for leave may only be granted by the Principal.
2. Where leave is approved, an *Application for Extended Leave* will be provided to the student. This must be completed, signed and returned to the Attendance Window. Travel documents must be attached to these forms if they were not provided in the initial email.
Once returned to the school, the student will be given a *Long Term Leave* form which must be signed by each of his or her teachers.
3. The completed *Long Term Leave* form must be returned to the Attendance Window for checking and copying prior to departure. The student will retain the original form containing all work and assessment tasks required for completion during the period of leave and will also be given a *Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel* which can be presented to any relevant authorities while traveling as evidence of approved leave from school.

Families are encouraged to travel during the NSW school holidays. If travel outside of NSW school holiday periods is necessary, the family must apply to the Principal for approval beforehand. If the family does not apply for leave, or it is not approved, the absences from school will be unjustified.

Approved absences relating to travel will be marked as justified leave on the roll but will contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

Attendance concerns

If there is a pattern of absences identified (e.g. one day every week or more than one day in a week as a pattern), or if attendance percentages fall below 90% for a student within a term, the relevant Stage Head will be alerted for further follow up.

If a student is only missing just...	that adds up to...	which is...	and over 13 years of schooling, that is...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1½ weeks per year	Nearly ½ a year
20 minutes per day	1 hour 40 minutes per week	Over 2½ weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
½ an hour per day	½ a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1½ years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2½ years

One or two days a week doesn't seem like much, but...

If a student is only missing just...	that adds up to...	which is...	and over 13 years of schooling, that is...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1½ years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2½ years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

Other Important Information

My child won't go to school. What should I do?

You should contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's Learning and Support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The school may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?

It is important to understand that the Department of Education may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school. Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.
- Application to the Children's Court - Compulsory Schooling Order. If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.
- Prosecution in the Local Court School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

Lunchtime

No student may leave the school premises for any reason, to go home or to the local shops during lunchtime unless written permission is obtained from one of the Deputy Principals.

Leaving Killara High School to attend another school

School leavers must bring a note from their parents indicating their intention to leave, the reason and, if known, which school they will be attending. This note is to be presented to Reception, at least one week prior to leaving. The student is then required to complete a Leaver's Form. Teachers and Head Teachers will initial opposite their name on this form to indicate the student has returned all the text books, library books, sports uniforms, laptop (if appropriate), emptied their locker etc., and has paid any outstanding contributions. The completed form should be returned to Reception.

What age can my child leave school?

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling. Working in partnership The Department of Education recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school. We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

For additional information, please refer to the following links:

NSW School Attendance Policy

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy>

NSW School Attendance Register Codes

https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/related-documents/reg_codes.pdf