

## ***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
<b>Medical – Illness (*Please also refer to current Covid-19 Guidelines)</b> Includes: Sickness, medical and dental treatment	<b>S</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Medical – Appointment (*Please also refer to current Covid-19 Guidelines)</b>  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.	<b>A/L</b>	<b>To be determined*</b>
<b>Parent Choice</b> Parent explained, with a reason that is not covered by other approval codes.	<b>A/L</b>	<b>To be determined*</b>
<b>Bereavement</b> Includes funeral, death in the family, and absence due to the death.	<b>L</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Holiday (Extended Leave – Travel)</b> Student does not attend school due to student/family holiday.	<b>A/L</b>	<b>To be determined*</b>
<b>Transport Issues</b> Transport issue, including traffic or missed bus.	<b>A/L</b>	<b>To be determined*</b>
<b>Self-Isolation (<i>Please also refer to most recent Covid-19 Guidelines which you may request from the school</i>)</b> 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.	<b>F</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<p><b>*To be determined</b> - 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.

## **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 Departure (Partial absences) for all students**

The following outlines the approved policy and procedure for students who seek to leave the school any time before the final bell. All students must sign out at the Attendance Window in A Block (or from Sick Bay) for any/all departures, in all circumstances.

### **Students in Years 7 to 10 – Unaccompanied departures not permitted**

In all instances, including where a parent has entered an Attendance Note in Compass or has sent an email to the school advising of an early departure, Year 7 to 10 students may not depart the school unaccompanied.

All students must be signed out at the Attendance Window by a parent or approved emergency contact (as listed in Compass).

Alternatively, the parent may give consent for a family member or family friend to take the student home. This consent must be in writing and the parent will be contacted to confirm the validity of the email or note.

Students in Years 7 to 10 who are unwell (and have been assessed by our nurse):

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. The student must be escorted by a parent or approved guardian.

Alternatively, the parent may give consent for a family member or family friend to take the student home. This consent must be in writing and the parent will be contacted to confirm the validity of the email or note.

### **Students in Years 11 and 12 – Unaccompanied departures will be considered on a case-by-case basis**

- Year 12 students may only leave school grounds if they have no more scheduled classes for the rest of the day.
- Year 11 students are not permitted to depart even if they have no more scheduled classes for the rest of the day (they should go to the library for study).
- Year 11 and 12 students may not depart between periods even if they have a study period.
- If a student is leaving unaccompanied for TAFE, it will be indicated on their timetable. The student may not sign out ahead of the indicated time.
- All unwell students in Year 11 and 12, must be escorted by a parent or approved guardian.

In most instances, including where a parent has entered an Attendance Note in Compass or has sent an email to the school advising of an early departure, Year 11 and 12 students may **not** depart the school unaccompanied. They must be signed out at the Attendance Window by a parent or approved emergency contact (as listed in Compass).

Alternatively, the parent may give consent for a family member or family friend to take the student home. This consent must be in writing and the parent will be contacted to confirm the validity of the email or note.

If a parent would like their Year 11 or 12 student to depart unaccompanied, they must provide a note to the school which is to be **reviewed and approved by a Deputy Principal**. Students will only be signed out on their own if they have a note signed by a Deputy Principal.

Students in Years 11 and 12 who are unwell (and have been assessed by our nurse):

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. The student must be escorted by a parent or approved guardian.

Alternatively, the parent may give consent for a family member or family friend to take the student home. This consent must be in writing and the parent will be contacted to confirm the validity of the email or note.

Students cannot drive themselves home when they are 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.

#### **Accompanied Students - Early departures on a Thursday for appointments or other unavoidable reasons**

If an early departure on a Thursday is unavoidable, students may **not** depart the school unaccompanied. This includes where a parent has entered an Attendance Note in Compass or has sent an email to the school advising of an early departure.

All students must be signed out at the Attendance Window by a parent or approved emergency contact (as listed in Compass).

Alternatively, the parent may give consent for a family member or family friend to take the student home. This consent must be in writing and the parent will be contacted to confirm the validity of the email or note.

#### **Unaccompanied Students - Early departures on a Thursday for appointments or other unavoidable reasons**

*\*Please also refer to the Early Departure Section of this policy document for more information on early departures for unaccompanied students.*

Unaccompanied students in Years 9 and 10 are not permitted to leave school.

Unaccompanied students in Year 11 may, in certain circumstances, be given permission by a

Deputy Principal to leave unaccompanied. If an unaccompanied departure is required, the student must present a note to the Deputy Principal for approval before school on Thursday morning.

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

### **PE Department Review (Accompanied and unaccompanied Early Departures)**

If a student leaves the school on a Thursday afternoon for an appointment and they have not provided evidence of that appointment when signing out, they will be contacted the following day by the PE Department to review their absence.

If a student leaves the school on a Thursday afternoon for another unavoidable reason and they have not provided a valid explanation when signing out, they will be contacted the following day by the PE Department to review their absence.

## **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](mailto: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.

<b>If a student is only missing just...</b>	<b>that adds up to...</b>	<b>which is...</b>	<b>and over 13 years of schooling, that is...</b>
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...

<b>If a student is only missing just...</b>	<b>that adds up to...</b>	<b>which is...</b>	<b>and over 13 years of schooling, that is...</b>
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 will not 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 textbooks, 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](https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/related-documents/reg_codes.pdf)