



Strategies to Improve Attendance Guidelines

In NSW "compulsory school age" means all children from six years of age are legally required to be enrolled at and attending school or to be registered for home schooling. After they complete Year 10, and until they turn 17 years of age, students then have the following options. They may also be in:

- Full-time further education and training (eg. TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship)
- Full-time, paid employment of an average of 25 hours per week
- A combination of both of the above.

Parents or carers are responsible to make sure their children comply with these legal requirements.

Nowra Anglican College supports parents and carers by monitoring student attendance and helping to address attendance issues when they emerge. The College addresses and discourages student absenteeism with the following measures:

1. **Develop a positive school culture**

Nowra Anglican College has developed a safe and supportive school environment that promotes positive relationships. This includes a strong pastoral environment which assists students to develop their social and emotional intelligence. Measures include programs such as peer mentoring and cybersafety education.

We also place emphasis on the importance of a positive home-school relationship to assist parents to support their child's attendance at school.


2. **Communicate high expectations of attendance**

Nowra Anglican College has developed a clear, inclusive and simple message that promotes high expectations of student attendance. This message is communicated consistently to students and the school community through the Senior and Junior School Handbook, which is issued to each family each year, Student Diary, newsletters and our enrolment package.

3. **Record and follow-up student absences**

Nowra Anglican College has developed follow-up processes for unexplained student absences. Timely follow-up is a key preventative strategy in reducing absenteeism. It makes it harder for students to miss school without being detected. It also enables parents, who may not be aware that their child is absent, to take action. The College maintains the following strategies:

- The school maintains accurate records of the attendance of students in a format approved by the Minister.
- The College Executive inform staff of their responsibilities related to student attendance. They articulate the expectations and responsibilities of every classroom teacher with regards to monitoring and following up of absences during the new staff orientation process in addition to the Senior School and Junior School staff meetings.
- A flowchart outlining each teachers' responsibilities in relation to monitoring and following up of student absences has been developed.
- Contact with parents regarding student absences is documented through meeting



minutes outlining attendance as a concern, copies of letters to parents/carers and notes of phone contact in Edumate.

- Documentation outlining the escalation of attendance concerns requiring further intervention eg a recurring agenda item on the Pastoral Care team meetings, referral to outside agencies and reports to Department of Communities and Justice, Child Protection Helpline, about suspected risk of harm relating to educational neglect.

4. Monitor student non-attendance

The school's attendance data is analysed to identify school and student absenteeism trends. Attendance data is reported to the Commonwealth Government each year.

The College's database Edumate, offers a range of reports and a performance dashboard to assist staff to monitor non-attendance.

Students who have recorded three days of unexplained absences are contacted by the Homeroom teacher in Senior School and the Classroom teacher in Junior School. Records of contact with parents where a three consecutive day absence is recorded are maintained in the College's database.

For extended absences, parents will be contacted by the Year Coordinator or Head of Pastoral Care in the Senior School and the Pastoral Leaders or Head of Junior School in the Junior School. Parents may also be contacted by the Deputy Principal: Wellbeing and Growth regarding student attendance.

5. Provide intervention and support

Even with a supportive school environment, interesting learning opportunities, and clear attendance policy, there will be some students who require additional assistance or encouragement to attend school regularly.

School staff work with these students and their families to help identify the reasons for poor attendance, promote the benefits of attending school, identify attendance and achievement goals, and develop a realistic plan for improving attendance.

Frequent unexplained absences from school may indicate that a student or their family has other issues which need to be addressed before attendance will improve (e.g. access to uniforms, school shoes, or transport).

Staff including the Deputy Principal: Wellbeing and Growth, Heads of School, Pastoral Leaders in Junior School and Year Coordinator in the Senior School as well as one of the School Counsellors will work with students and their families to provide assistance with attendance issues. In these instances, an "Attendance Improvement Plan" is developed in conjunction with family to ensure that specific circumstances surrounding their child's continued absence from school is addressed by the school and family along with any external support agency.

On the rare occasions where there is still no improvement in student attendance the College can enlist further support with the Shoalhaven Police Youth Liaison Officer, the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) or make a notification to the Department of Communities and Justice.

For further information regarding problematic attendance refer to the NSW Education and Communities document: [*Compulsory school attendance Information for NSW Government school principals*](#).

6. Attendance Improvement plans

For students who are not meeting attendance requirements and there is a pattern of school avoidance or refusal then the ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMNT PLAN procedures are followed.