



## ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### 1. Purpose

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Regular student attendance at Gumma Place is fundamental to student learning, wellbeing, and connection to the school community. As a NESA-registered Special Assistance School operating within the ShoreTrack Ltd framework, Gumma Place is committed to a trauma-informed, culturally safe, and strengths-based approach to attendance — recognising that many of our students have experienced complex barriers to consistent school engagement.

This policy sets out the standards and procedures for:

- Maintaining a student enrolment and attendance register in an approved format
- Monitoring daily attendance and absence of students
- Identifying, responding to, and following up absences
- Clarifying the statutory obligations of parents/carers, the Principal, and relevant staff
- Implementing strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance in a trauma-informed manner
- Communicating effectively with families, carers, and relevant agencies

### 2. Scope

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This policy applies to all enrolled students at Gumma Place, all school staff, and the families and carers of enrolled students. It operates in accordance with the Education Act 1990 (NSW), NESA requirements, and ShoreTrack Ltd organisational policies.

Gumma Place acknowledges that its student cohort includes young people who are disengaged from mainstream schooling, and may face significant personal, social, or family challenges. Attendance strategies are implemented with sensitivity, flexibility, and a commitment to maintaining trust-based relationships with students and families.

### 3. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

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This policy is informed by the following legislation and regulatory requirements:

- Education Act 1990 (NSW) — compulsory schooling obligations
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) — child protection reporting
- NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual — Section 3.8 attendance register requirements
- ShoreTrack Ltd Child Protection Policy
- ShoreTrack Ltd Code of Conduct

## 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Compulsory school age</b>	Children who are 6 years old (on or before 31 July) until they complete Year 10 or turn 17, whichever comes first (Education Act 1990, NSW).
<b>Explained absence</b>	An absence for which the school has received a satisfactory explanation from a parent or carer within 7 days of the first day of absence.
<b>Unexplained absence</b>	An absence for which no satisfactory explanation has been provided to the school within 7 days.
<b>Unjustified absence</b>	An absence for which an explanation has been received but not accepted by the Principal.
<b>Poor attendance</b>	Attendance at a level low enough to significantly affect student learning and school engagement. For reporting purposes: below 90% attendance triggers internal review; below 75% triggers mandatory reporting to DCJ.
<b>Attendance Improvement Plan</b>	A documented, collaborative plan developed between the school, student, and family to address barriers to attendance and set agreed strategies.
<b>Compulsory Schooling Conference</b>	A formal meeting convened when other attendance improvement strategies have not been successful, involving relevant parties including the Home School Liaison Officer.
<b>HSLO</b>	Home School Liaison Officer — a Department of Education and Training officer who assists schools in improving student attendance.

## 5. Responsibilities

### 5.1 Parents and Carers

It is the legal duty of the parent or carer of a child of compulsory school age to:

- Ensure the child is enrolled at, and attends, a registered school — or is registered for home schooling with NESAs
- Provide the school with an explanation for any absence promptly and within seven (7) days of the first day of absence
- Communicate proactively with the school if the child is experiencing ongoing difficulties attending
- Participate in the development of Attendance Improvement Plans where attendance concerns are identified
- Engage with the school's trauma-informed, collaborative approach to attendance support

### 5.2 Principal

The Principal of Gumma Place (or their authorised delegate) is responsible for:

- Providing clear, accessible information to students and families regarding attendance expectations and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- Ensuring effective systems are in place to monitor and follow up student absences
- Contacting parents or carers promptly, and within two school days, of an absence being unexplained

- Ensuring attendance records are maintained in an approved format that accurately reflects each student's attendance
- Ensuring that for students with attendance concerns, learning and support needs are addressed in consultation with families
- Ensuring that when frequent absences are attributed to illness: consultation occurs with parents regarding health care needs; medical certificates are sought; and where ongoing concerns exist, approval is sought to liaise with the student's treating practitioner
- Ensuring all staff are informed of attendance requirements and their obligations to monitor and promote regular attendance
- Ensuring that any attendance matter giving rise to child safety, welfare, or wellbeing concerns is responded to in accordance with the ShoreTrack Child Protection Policy, including making required reports to the Child Protection Helpline
- Ensuring attendance data informs the school's broader wellbeing and learning support planning

The Principal has the authority to:

- Grant sick leave for absences satisfactorily explained as illness
- Accept other explanations for absence and code accordingly
- Decline to accept an explanation for absence and code the absence as unjustified
- Grant exemptions from school attendance for periods of up to 100 days in a 12-month period where conditions are met
- Grant part-day exemptions from attendance for up to 100 days in a 12-month period

### **5.3 All School Staff**

All Gumma Place staff are responsible for:

- Accurately recording attendance and absence at the commencement of each session using Sentral
- Promptly notifying the Principal or attendance officer of any attendance concerns or patterns they observe
- Maintaining a trauma-informed, non-stigmatising approach when discussing attendance with students and families
- Contributing to Attendance Improvement Plans and associated support strategies

### **5.4 Attendance Officer / Administration**

- Recording all advised absences, late arrivals, and early departures in Sentral
- Contacting families and informing the Principal when a student has three or more consecutive unexplained absences
- Maintaining the student attendance register in line with NESA requirements
- Recording attendance documentation in student files in Sentral

## **6. Attendance Recording Procedures**

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### **6.1 Daily Attendance Register**

The Principal of Gumma Place is required to maintain an enrolment and attendance register in a format approved by the Minister, in accordance with Section 3.8 of the NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual. The register must include all information required by NESA for each enrolled student.

## 6.2 Absence Notification Procedures

The following step-by-step procedure applies to the recording and management of absences:

- Parents or carers are advised of attendance and absence obligations and procedures during interview and on enrolment at Gumma Place through writing and verbally.
- Parents or carers are asked to contact the school office or driver by 9.00am on any day their child will be absent, by SMS or email.
- Office staff record the advised absence in Sentral noting date, time, parent/carer name, student name, reason for absence, and notification method (SMS/email/in person).
- If an absence is marked in the roll and has not been notified to the office by 9.30am, office staff are responsible for contacting the parent or carer to determine the student's whereabouts. Contact is made by SMS requesting an explanation after 3 consecutive days.
- An absence is recorded as unexplained if no satisfactory explanation is received within seven (7) days of the first day of absence. It is recorded as such in Sentral.
- The Admin Officer informs the Principal when a student has three or more consecutive unexplained absences.

## 6.3 Late Arrivals and Early Departures

All late arrivals and early departures must be reported to the school office at the time of drop-off or pick-up recording:

- Date and time
- Reason for partial attendance

The partial absence is also recorded in Sentral by administration staff.

## 7. Attendance Register Codes

Attendance is recorded using the standard NESAs-approved codes in Sentral. The following table outlines key codes used at Gumma Place:

Code	Description	Notes
<b>B</b>	School Business	Offsite, in attendance
<b>S</b>	Sick	Absence satisfactorily explained as illness; authorised by Principal
<b>L</b>	Leave	Other satisfactory explanation accepted by Principal
<b>Unexplained</b>	Unexplained	No explanation received within 7 days
<b>Explained</b>	Explained	Explanation received on the day
<b>A</b>	Unjustified	Explanation received but not accepted by Principal
<b>E</b>	Suspended	Young people who have not followed the Common Ground practice on a number of occasions
<b>Timed</b>	Appointment	In and out and in again
<b>Late</b>	Late Arrival	Student arrived after roll marking
<b>Early</b>	Early Departure	Student left before end of session

<b>M</b>	Exempt	Student given formal permission not to attend partial or fulltime
<b>PL</b>	Principal Leave	Accepted by Principal
<b>WE</b>	Work Experience	Accepted by Principal
<b>W</b>	Absent	Satisfactory explanation accepted by Principal

## 8. Poor Attendance — Identification and Response

### 8.1 Definition

Poor attendance is defined as attendance at a level low enough to significantly affect student learning and engagement. Gumma Place acknowledges that, given the nature of our student cohort, attendance patterns must be interpreted within the context of each student's individual circumstances, history, and wellbeing needs.

Attendance thresholds triggering escalated response are:

1. Contact parents
2. Below 70% Internal attendance plan
3. Below 50% HSLO

If we have a concern of risk or harm and or where collaborative approaches have not resolved the matter DCJ will be contacted for neglect of education

### 8.2 Illness-Related Absences

Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the Principal must ensure:

- Consultation occurs with parents and carers regarding the student's health care needs
- Medical certificates are sought for illness-related absences
- Where ongoing concerns exist, approval is sought from parents/carers to liaise directly with the student's treating medical practitioner
- Strategies are developed collaboratively to support regular attendance, including any reasonable adjustments required to accommodate health needs

### 8.3 Attendance Improvement Process

When poor attendance is identified, the following graduated response applies:

- Stage 1 — Internal Review: The class teacher or attendance officer notifies the Principal. An informal conversation with the family is initiated to understand barriers and offer support.
- Stage 2 — Attendance Meeting: Parents or carers are invited to a meeting with the class teacher and Principal. An Attendance Improvement Plan is developed collaboratively, documenting agreed strategies, support measures, and timelines.
- Stage 3 — Home School Liaison Officer Referral: If attendance does not improve following Stage 2, the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) from the Department of Education is notified and engaged to assist.
- Stage 4 — Compulsory Schooling Conference: If all prior strategies fail to resolve the matter, a Compulsory Schooling Conference is convened, involving the family, Principal, HSLO, and any relevant support personnel.

- Stage 5 — Formal Action: If families do not engage with the Compulsory Schooling Conference or attendance remains unsatisfactory, a formal letter advising of further action is issued. Copies of all correspondence are documented and filed on the student's file. Referral to DCJ may be required where attendance falls below 70% and neglect of education is evident.

Throughout all stages, Gumma Place's approach remains trades based and relationship-centred. The goal is to support re-engagement, not to penalise students or families facing genuine hardship.

## 9. Child Protection and Wellbeing

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Any attendance matter that gives rise to concerns about a student's safety, welfare, or wellbeing must be managed in accordance with the ShoreTrack Child Protection Policy. This includes:

- Giving consideration to child protection obligations under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Making all required mandatory reports to the Child Protection Helpline (13 36 27)
- Documenting all concerns, actions taken, and outcomes in the student's confidential file

Gumma Place staff are trained in recognising indicators of abuse, neglect, and other welfare concerns, and are mandatory reporters under NSW legislation.

## 10. Exemption from Enrolment or Attendance

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### 10.1 Exemption from Enrolment

An exemption from enrolment at school may be granted in the following circumstances:

- A parent formally requests authority not to enrol their child

### 10.2 Exemption from Attendance

An exemption from school attendance may be granted where:

- The delegate is aware of existing child protection concerns such that non-attendance is in the child's best interest
- It is clearly demonstrated that an exemption is in the student's best interest and that Distance Education is more appropriate

### 10.3 Exemption Procedures

- Parents or carers submit the application and any required supporting documentation to the Principal.
- Applications for exemptions exceeding 100 days in a year are forwarded to the Minister's delegate at the NSW Department of Education.
- Where the application is supported, the Principal provides the original exemption certificate to the parent(s) or carer(s).
- Where the application is not supported, the Principal notifies the family in writing using the required format.
- Copies of all applications, exemption certificates, and notifications are retained on the student's file and in the school's attendance records.

## 11. Documentation and Record Keeping

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The following documentation standards apply:

- All attendance records are maintained in Sentral accessible to the Principal at all times

- Student attendance registers are maintained in the format required by NESAs
- All unsatisfactory attendance is documented and stored in the student's individual file
- Attendance Improvement Plans are co-signed by the Principal and parent/carer, and filed on the student's file
- All formal correspondence relating to attendance is on Sentral in student files
- The Minister's delegation and copies of exemption certificates are filed in the school's attendance records

## 12. Policy Administration

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in relevant legislation, NESAs requirements, or school operational needs. Review is the responsibility of the Principal, in consultation with ShoreTrack Ltd leadership and relevant staff.

Document Control	
Document Name	Attendance Absence Policy and Procedure
Document Owner	Gumma Place
Frequency Review	Within 5 years of approval date
Approved	Principal
Date Approved	March 2026
Status	Current
Point of Contact	Principal
Review Date	March 2027