



Greta Public School



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

every student, every day



Attendance Handbook

Attendance matters

Everyday counts, as regular attendance helps students to:

- develop a sense of belonging
- develop and maintain friendships
- be more engaged at school
- progress with their learning
- be more aware of career and life options.



Missing just **one day a fortnight** can amount to **four weeks of lost learning over a year**. Over a student's school life, this can equal one year of missed learning.

A team approach to supporting attendance at GPS

Establishing a school team with responsibility for attendance ensures the involvement of the whole school community in developing a whole school approach to improving attendance.

Supporting positive school attendance is a shared responsibility – everyone has a role.

Our school attendance team is as follows:

Sharon Morris – *Principal*

Gillian French & Sharon Crooks – *Assistant Principal Curriculum & Instruction*

Sharon Crooks & Ellen Arvanitis – *Assistant Principals*

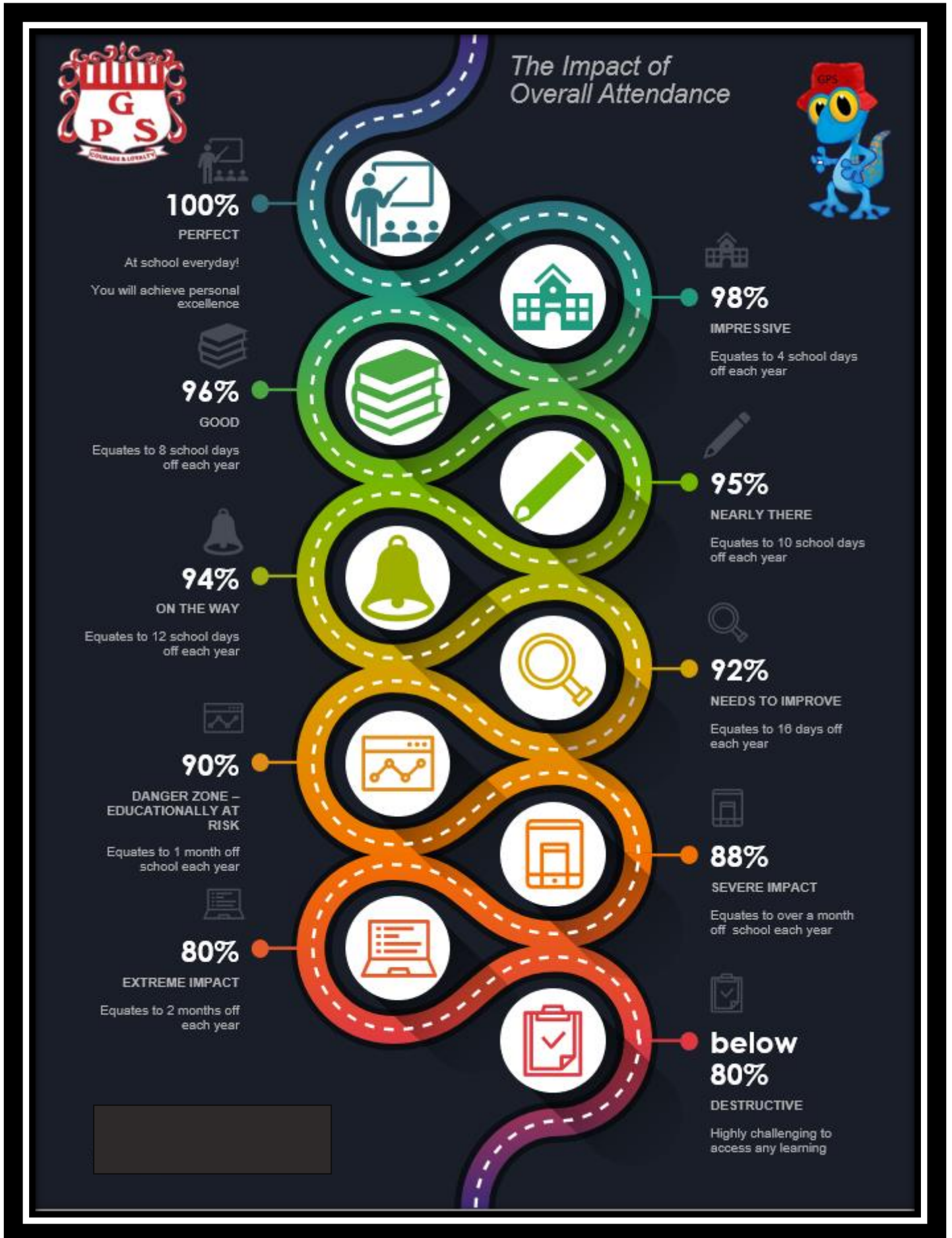
Kathryn Hogan – *Learning and Support Teacher*

Cherie Clemson – *School Psychologist*

All classroom teachers form part of the attendance team through the monitoring of their student's attendance each day. Classroom teachers have ongoing conversations regarding why attendance matters and explain reward systems we have in place.



Attendance Road Map





Let's reward attendance



As students walk through the gate each day, they write an Attendance H.E.R.O ticket for being here, every day, ready and on time.

This ticket then goes into a fortnightly draw at assembly, where 4 students are drawn out to receive an ice-cream voucher.



The class that has the highest attendance each fortnight will receive the attendance trophy at assembly.

At the end of the year, the class with the highest overall attendance will have a special reward that is negotiated at the beginning of each school year, so that students know what they are working towards.



Every 5 weeks, families will be sent home a letter detailing the attendance percentages your child/children are sitting at for the term and for the year overall (*see attendance road map on page 3 for further details*).

Students who have **at or above 90% attendance** each semester will be invited to our end of Semester attendance rewards.



Students who have an overall attendance percentage of **100%** for the year will receive an attendance medal during the Presentation Day Awards Ceremony at the end of the academic year.

Individual roles to support attendance

Students

Students can help by:

- knowing what class activities are on which school day (for example, which day is sport or library) or having a copy of your timetable.
- making sure they are ready for each school day: uniform, books, bag, lunch.
- chatting with family, a friend or teacher if they have concerns about attending school, or something is making it difficult to get to school.
- asking a teacher for help if schoolwork is challenging.

Regular attendance at school helps your child to maximise their potential.

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers can help foster positive attendance habits by:

- helping your child learn the importance of punctuality and routine.
- ensuring your child arrives on time from the start of the school day, ready to participate in learning.
- reducing disruption to learning where possible, by planning any necessary appointments outside of school time.
- promptly communicating any absence to the school (within 7 days of the first day of any absence).
- working with the school to encourage and support regular attendance.
- asking for help as soon as you need it or when your child is reluctant to attend school.

When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier, and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

Teachers

Teachers will support attendance by:

- following our school's attendance procedures and the School Attendance Policy.
- maintaining accurate attendance records around justified or unexplained absences.
- monitoring and following up student absences.
- addressing the learning needs for students with attendance concerns.
- ensuring Child Protection requirements are adhered to for any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student.
- notify other teachers of students from the same family when a parent verbally explains absences.
- following through the action plan when someone asks for help.

Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility.



School Leaders

School leaders will encourage regular attendance by:

- providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- ensuring the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences.
- ensuring school staff, including new staff and casual teachers, are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school
- ensuring Child Protection requirements are adhered to for any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for any student.

Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

Home School Liaison Officers (HSLO)

Home School Liaison officers will:

- support attendance of compulsory school age students, between six and 17 years.
- monitor attendance registers, suggesting areas for development with school-based procedures and identifying emerging issues or concerns.
- support schools with the development and implementation of school-based strategies and school plans to improve attendance.
- collaborate with School Service staff in the resolution of attendance issues.
- provide advice to School Services and school staff on matters related to attendance; this may include information about attendance professional learning available to department staff.
- liaise with community, government and non-government agencies.

Home School Liaison Officers create the connection between students, parents, school and agencies so that students have the best possible opportunity to engage with their learning.



What if my child has to be away from school?

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g., attending a funeral)

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide the school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, we may contact you to discuss the absence.

What are the percentages that cause us concern?


95%-100%	90%-94.9%	80%-89.9%	50%-79.9%	0%-49.9%
No attendance concerns. Department of Education attendance target.	At risk of becoming an attendance concern. Classroom teachers encourage students to aim for at least 95% attendance.	Attendance Concern Monitored by classroom teachers. Phone calls home and contact with families where necessary, to support an improvement in attendance.	Attendance Concern Monitored closely by school attendance team. Families contacted by Assistant Principals and/or Principal where necessary.	Attendance Concern Learning & Support Team (LST) referral, face to face LST meeting with family and possible HSLO referral. Families contacted by Assistant Principals and/or Principal.

 **EVERY MINUTE COUNTS...**

When your child misses just...	that equals...	which is...	and therefore, from Kindy to Year 12, that is...
10 minutes a day	50 minutes of learning each week	Nearly 1½ weeks per year	Nearly ½ a year of school
20 minutes a day	1 hour and 40 minutes of learning each week	Nearly 2½ weeks per year	Nearly a year of school
½ hour a day	½ a day of learning a week	4 weeks a year	Nearly 1 ½ years of learning
1 hour each day	1 whole day of learning each week	8 weeks per year or nearly a term a year.	Over 2 ½ years of learning

Your child's best learning time is at the beginning of the day...

Check the time your school starts. DON'T BE LATE!





Department of Education School Attendance Policy

This policy sets out the requirements for the attendance of students in NSW government schools.

1. Policy statement

1. Section 22 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of [compulsory school-age](#) to cause the child:

(a) to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or

(b) to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

2. All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.

3. Section 24 of the Act requires principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister. Attendance registers must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board Inspector or by any authorised person.

2. Audience and applicability

1. This policy applies to all public schools, excluding preschools.

3. Context

1. Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

2. Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility.

3. This policy should be read in the context of the [Enrolment of Students in NSW Government Schools – A Summary and Consolidation of Policy](#) and the [General Enrolment Procedures \(PDF 303.86KB\)](#).

4. Responsibilities and delegations

1. Parents

1. It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to cause the child:

1. to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or

2. to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

2. Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school. An explanation for absence must be provided to the school within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence.

2. Principals

1. must provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

2. must ensure the school has effective measures in place to monitor and follow up student absences.

3. or their delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and **within two school days of an absence being unexplained** if contact has not already been made. An absence is unexplained if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 days.

4. are responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.

5. must ensure that for students with attendance concerns, the learning and support needs of those students are addressed in consultation with parents.

6. are responsible for ensuring that when frequent absences are explained as being due to illness that:

1. consultation occurs with parents regarding the health care needs of the student

2. medical certificates are sought for the absences

3. where there are ongoing concerns, approval is sought from parents to contact the student's doctor so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs



4. strategies are developed to ensure regular attendance at school.
2. must ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.
3. must ensure that any matter relating to school attendance where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise for a student:
 1. consideration is given to the requirements of the [Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy](#)
 2. all required reports are made to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or contact made with the Child Wellbeing unit (as required by the [Mandatory Reporter Guide](#)).
4. have the authority to:
 1. grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
 2. accept other explanations for absence and record the absence as 'L'
 3. decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
 4. grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (see the [Exemption from School - Procedures](#))
 5. grant part-day exemptions from school for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12-month period (see the [Exemption from School - Procedures](#))
 6. grant exemption from enrolment for students who have completed Year 9 and have the required approval to complete their education in special circumstances through an apprenticeship or traineeship (see the [Exemption from School - Procedures](#)).

3. Directors, Educational Leadership

1. have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from attendance at school under Section 25 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) totaling up to 100 days in a 12-month period.
2. support schools to maintain accurate records of student attendance in a form approved by the Minister.
3. approve the participation of a student in an alternative school-based program, leading to full-time attendance, prior to part-day exemption from attendance at school being granted by the school principal (see the [Exemption from School - Procedures](#)).

4. Executive Directors, School Performance

1. have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from attendance at school under Section 25 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#) totaling more than 100 days in a 12-month period.
2. have the delegated authority to grant exemptions from enrolment at school under Section 25 of the [Education Act \(1990\)](#), provided certain conditions are met.

5. Director, Child Protection Services

1. has the delegated authority to grant exemptions from school attendance for any period of time, for students wishing to participate in employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite arts or sporting events. Principals are also able to consider applications for exemption in these circumstances. Principals should contact the Director, Child Protection Services if advice is needed on compliance with employment regulation of the Children's Guardian or exemption is sought for participation in a large-scale production.

5. Monitoring and review

1. Schools, with support from attendance officers (home school liaison officers and Aboriginal student liaison officers), monitor the regular attendance of students and develop and implement strategies to support students with identified attendance issues.
2. The Director, Child Protection Services is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reviewing its effectiveness every three years.

6. Policy contact officer

1. Student Attendance and Educational Neglect Advisor
02 7814 293

