



096-PP-PBS Attendance Policy

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that PBS students abide, as appropriate, by the requirements of:
 - a. The National Code 2007 as per Standard 11– Monitoring Attendance.
 - b. the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual Requirements (3.8)
- 1.2 This policy applies to all local and international students enrolled in all courses offered through PBS.

2.0 Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Principal of PBS will:
 - a. ensure that staff and students are aware of this policy and that staff implement its requirements
 - b. maintain a register of enrolments and daily attendances of all students in a form approved by the NSW Minister of Education (School Attendance Policy PD20050259 NSW Student Welfare Directorate 2010) in accordance with the Education Act 1990 section 24
 - c. ensure that parents are informed that it is their responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and explain absences of their children from school promptly
 - d. make the Attendance Register available for inspection during school hours by a Board inspector or by any authorised person who may require the Principal to furnish a copy of the Register or any part of it
- 2.2 Teachers have the responsibility to mark rolls accurately each day.
- 2.3 The Admissions Manager is responsible for the identification of students whose attendance is:
 - a. causing concern at less than 90% but at least 80%, or
 - b. unsatisfactory at less than 80%
- 2.4 The Student Services Officer is responsible for developing an intervention program for students whose attendance is less than 90% or is likely to become less than 90%
- 2.5 Teachers and the Student Services Officer are responsible for advising students of their attendance requirements, raising attendance issues with the Deputy Principal and promoting high attendance for all students
- 2.6 Students are responsible for:
 - a. informing the Deputy Principal of any anticipated non-attendance
 - b. contacting PBS by phone prior to the commencement of classes in the case where illness or other emergency situation prevents



- attendance
- c. providing written evidence explaining the reason for any absence
- d. Maintaining satisfactory attendance as per VISA requirements.

3.0 Requirements

- 3.1 The Admissions Manager will keep a register of all enrolments on Denbigh
- 3.2 The register of enrolments will be retained for a minimum period of five (5) years before archiving
- 3.3 The register of daily attendances will be retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made
- 3.4 A review of attendance will take place by the Student Services each Monday in order to identify students at risk of unsatisfactory attendance
- 3.5 Attendance is recorded and calculated on scheduled contact hours attended by a student during a designated study period
- 3.6 Student attendance will be monitored by the Student Services Officer every 5 days to assess student attendance using the following method
 - a. Calculating the number of hours the student would have to be absent to fall below the attendance threshold for a semester e.g. number of study days x contact hours x 20%. [For example, an eight week semester with 5 contact hours a day would equal 200 contact hours. 20% of this is 40 hours.]
 - b. Any period of exclusion from class will not be included in student attendance calculations. See Q.13 and 14 for [Standard 13 – Deferring, suspending and cancelling enrolment](#).
- 3.7 Attendance is recorded on a weekly basis through the Denbigh student information management system
- 3.8 All students are expected to attend 100% of all scheduled activities including excursions, assemblies, sporting activities or any other activity that is part of their learning experience
- 3.9 Students must attend at least 80% of scheduled course contact hours to achieve satisfactory attendance (Stdnd 11.1a)
- 3.10 Students at risk of breaching Pal Buddhists School's attendance requirements will be counselled and offered any necessary support when they have absences totalling 25 % of any study period.
- 3.11 Students will be informed by the Principal PBS, Deputy Principal and/or the Student Services Officer of the importance of satisfactory attendance, and the implications of unsatisfactory attendance, at Orientation sessions and other student meetings as appropriate
- 3.12 Students whose attendance falls below 85% will be sent a **496-LR-PBS Attendance Warning Letter – below 85%** prepared by the Student Services



Officer and authorised by the Admissions Manager

- 3.13 Any student whose attendance has not been restored to at least 85% within 20 days after receipt of **496-LR-PBS Attendance Warning Letter – below 85%** will be sent a **327-LR-PBS Attendance Consultation Meeting** letter by the Student Services Officer requiring them to attend a counselling session and make a written agreement (**446-FM-PBS Counselling Form**) for better attendance
- 3.14 Students required to improve their attendance through the **446-FM-PBS Student Counselling Form** must restore satisfactory attendance within a period of 20 working days. During this period the Student Services Officer and / or the Deputy Principal will be available to assist in resolving any academic, personal or interpersonal issues that might be affecting attendance
- 3.15 Students may also be required to comply with a **217-FM-PBS Progress Improvement Plan** if unsatisfactory attendance (students whose attendance is below 80%) is linked with issues relating to student discipline
- 3.16 Students whose attendance less than 80% after the implementation of the written agreement will be advised by the Admissions Manager in writing via **452-LR-PBS Intention to Report Notice** that they will be reported to the Secretary of AGDoE for unsatisfactory attendance. This notice will also contain details of the **003-PP-PBS Student Complaint and Appeals Policy** should the student wish to appeal the intention to report (Stnd 11.3e,11.6)
- 3.17 The Admissions Manager will notify AGDoE via PRISMS that the student has not achieved satisfactory attendance as soon as practicable (Stnd 11.7) in the case where the student:
- a. attendance is not at least 80% after the Counselling interview
 - b. chooses not to access the **003-PP-PBS Student Complaint and Appeals Policy** within the 20 working day period commencing three days after the date of the **452-LR-PBS Intention to Report Notice**
 - c. withdraws from the appeal process, or
 - d. the appeal process is completed and results in a decision which supports PBS. Students will not be reported for failing to meet the 80% threshold where:
 - e. the student produces documentary evidence clearly demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances e.g., medical illness supported by a medical certificate, and
 - f. has not fallen below 70% attendance.
The method for calculating 70% attendance is the same as that outlined in 3.6. with the following change; number of study days x contact hours x 30%.
 - g. If a student is assessed as having nearly reached the threshold for 70% attendance, the principal will assess whether a suspension of studies is in the interests of the student as per Pal Buddhist School's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.
 - F. If the student does not obtain a suspension of studies under the Pal Buddhist School's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy,



and falls below the 70% threshold for attendance, the process for reporting the student for unsatisfactory attendance (breach of visa condition 8202) will occur as outlined in 3.16 – 3.17 above.

3.18 The register of enrolments will be maintained through the Denbigh information system

3.19 The register of daily attendances may be maintained through a manual system.

4.0 **Changes to Codes Commencing 2015**

4.1 The Minister for Education has approved changes to the use of the use of the Attendance Register codes for 2015.

4.2 The changes implement the ACARA National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting. ACARA developed the National Standards to establish nationally consistent parameters for the collection and reporting of student attendance data.

4.3 Holidays: As part of the implementation of the National Standards, holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods will now be included as absences. **A Certificate of Exemption can no longer be granted for this purpose.** Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. If travel during school term is necessary the following considerations apply:

- If the principal **accepts** the reason for the absence, the absence will be marked as “L”
- If the principal does not believe the absence is in the student’s best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence is unjustified and will be recorded as “A”
- If the period of absence is in excess of 50 days, the student may be eligible to enrol in Distance Education.

For that period the student’s enrolment transfers to the distance education school.

Note: A student cannot be enrolled in more than one school concurrently (including Distance Education)

5.0 **Other Codes**

5.1 The recent changes changes to the Attendance Register Codes include the redefinition of some codes:

- The “F” code is no longer only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable. The code now includes students participating in programs and assessments such as: HSC Pathways Programs, Kindergarten entry assessments (e.g. Best Start), trial or HSC exams or VET courses.
- The “B” code includes student exchange and allows for some additional flexibility around its use.
- The “H” code is used when a student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to attend an alternative educational setting on a



sessional or full time basis.

- The “A” code is to be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the Principal. It is at the principal’s discretion to accept or reject the explanation provided.
- If a student’s absence is due to sickness the “S” code is used. The principal may request a medical certificate in addition to an explanation if the explanation is doubted or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.

5.2 BOSTES requires that student records should be kept for six years after the student has turned 18 years of age.

6.0 Attendance recording procedure

- 6.1 The symbol “X” will be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term
- 6.2 The symbol “a” will be used if the student is absent on that day
- 6.3 The symbol “Pa” will be used if the student was late or was absent for part of the day. (the time of arrival or departure must be recorded)
- 6.4 The following symbols are to be recorded above the “a” or “Pa” symbol as appropriate.

Symbol	Meaning
A	The student’s absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal. It is at the principal’s discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.
S	The student’s absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.
L	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - misadventure or unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to the school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - travel in Australia and overseas



	- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.
E	The student was suspended from school
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
F	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- HSC Pathways Program- Best Start Assessments- Trial or HSC examinations- VET courses
B	The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- work experience- school sport (regional and state carnivals)- school excursions- student exchange
H	The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- tutorial centre and programs- behaviour schools- juvenile justice- hospital schools- distance education

Note: Late students.

- Tutor Group teachers mark the rolls for the day
- Late students are sent to the Student Services Officer before admission to class to be issued with a class entry pass. Teacher records lateness on role.
- No late student is to enter class without such a pass.
- Late arrival at School will be recorded and will be included in attendance calculations.

5.0 Recording the duration of an absence or variation in attendance

5.1 In addition to recording the reason for an absence or the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the absence or variation must be recorded.

6.0 PBS Daily attendance marking procedure

At the beginning of each day Tutor Group teacher will:

- 6.1 mark rolls accordingly with approved Attendance register Codes (Electronic Attendance Registers)



- 6.2 record attendances on the roll, marking any students who are absent and the reason for absence
- 6.3 amend the roll as appropriate in the case where a student has 5 consecutive days of unexplained absences
- 6.4 forward the completed daily roll to the Student Services Officer

7.0 Each class teacher will:

- 7.1 note any absences from class against their list of student for that class
- 7.2 cross check with the Student Services Officer at the conclusion of each lesson to confirm that any student absent from their class was also absent at the initial Roll Call class

The Student Services Officer will each day:

- 7.3 follow up on absences by phone on the completion of initial roll call
- 7.4 record the details of absent students for follow up with the Deputy Principal
- 7.5 place daily attendance sheets in the appropriate folder for school records
- 7.6 inform Tutor Group teachers of any written evidence provided by students explaining absence in order for rolls to be amended

All absences from school should be accompanied by a medical certificate, an explanatory communication from the student's carer or evidence that leave has been approved by the Principal/Head of School. This note should be handed to the Tutor Group teacher or the Student services officer

- 7.7 identify any patterns of student absenteeism and inform the Deputy Principal
- 7.8 identify any inconsistencies between the initial roll call attendance data and class absence during the day
- 7.9 place documentation received by students in the student's file

At the end of each week, the Student Services Officer will:

- 7.10 refer students with unexplained absences to the Deputy Principal for further counselling as required
- 7.11 record details of factional truants to the Deputy Principal
- 7.12 inform the parent or guardian in writing in the case where a student has been investigated and found to be absent for 5 consecutive days without explanation



At the end of each term the Student Services Officer will:

7.13 Transfer information regarding unexplained absences into the student's file

8.0 Absenteeism intervention procedure

In the event of a student being recorded as absent without prior notification, the Teacher marking the roll will:

8.1 inform the Student Services Officer, or other designated staff member, as soon as practicable so that the student can be contacted by phone and / or email to seek an explanation for the absence

On receipt of this information the Student Services Officer will:

8.2 attempt to contact the student by phone immediately after being informed of a student's absence

8.3 attempt to contact the student's emergency contact or agent (or parent, guardian, Homestay contact for students under 18 years) in the case where the student cannot be contacted

8.4 send a **255-LR-PBS Student Absentee Notice** to the student's last known address after 3 days without contact requesting the student to make contact with the Deputy Principal

8.5 request the Admissions Manager to report the student through PRISMS as an Active/Inactive Withdrawal for Cessation of Studies in the case where the student:

- a. cannot be contacted after a period of 5 days
- b. fails to return to class after a period of granted deferment and no contact has been made with, or information received from the student

Note: (a) Students who are under 18 years will also have their CAAW withdrawn.

(b) In the case where the location of an PBS student is under seventeen (17) years of

age in unknown, a NSW Department of Education and Training Home School Liaison

Officer (HSLO) will be notified of the situation (Located at Sydney Region, St Peters Office on 9582 5800). This notification will include the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known occupational health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents or student. Details of this notification will be included in Denbigh.

9.0 Attendance review procedure

The Admissions Manager will:

9.1 analyse attendance each week to identify and list students whose attendance



is below 90% or whose attendance is erratic

9.2 provide the Student Services Officer and Deputy Principal with this list of students

9.3 send a **496-LR-PBS Warning Letter – below 85%** to students whose attendance is below 85% informing them:

- a. that they have a VISA obligation to maintain attendance to at least 80%
- b. of the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- c. that they have the option of discuss any issues regarding their attendance with a teacher, Deputy Principal or Counsellor
- d. they have 20 days to restore their attendance to 85%

9.4 send a **327-LR-PBS Attendance Consultation Meeting** letter to any student whose attendance, after 20 days from the sending of **496-LR-PBS Warning Letter – below 85%**, has not been satisfactorily restored. The letter will include:

- a. the requirement for the student to attend a Counselling interview to discuss the reasons for their absences
- b. the details of this interview (time, location and attendees)
- c. the need to make a written agreement for satisfactory attendance
- d. PBS's intent to proceed with a Notification of **452-LR-PBS Notice of Intention to Report Non-compliance with VISA Conditions** should they not attend the interview.

9.0 Attendance Counselling procedure

The Deputy Principal will, prior to the meeting with the student:

- 9.1 review the student's academic progress over a study period
- 9.2 request the involvement of the Counsellor or Student Services if the reason for non-attendance are of a nature that warrants their involvement

The Deputy Principal will, during the counselling session:

- 9.3 discuss the circumstances contributing to the unsatisfactory attendance
- 9.4 remind the student that satisfactory attendance is a student visa requirement and that if attendance falls below the required level the student will be reported
- 9.5 remind the student that their student visa is at risk of being cancelled
- 9.6 develop a written agreement, signed by the student, for the immediate resumption of satisfactory attendance
- 9.7 advise any student that they will not be reported to DIBP at this point but will be reported if the written agreement is not fulfilled

10.0 Procedure for reporting unsatisfactory attendance to DIBP

The Admissions Manager will:



- 10.1 provide a weekly attendance update of the student's attendance to the Principal PBS, Deputy Principal, Counsellor and Student Services Officer as appropriate
- 10.2 send to the student a **452-LR-PBS Notice of Intention to Report Non-compliance with VISA Conditions** (if attendance remains below 80% after the completion of the written agreement):
 - a. outlining the attendance requirements that need to be fulfilled in order to prevent the notification to DIBP
 - b. indicating that the student must respond in writing within 5 days giving reason as to why a report should not be submitted via PRISMS
 - c. referring the student to the **003-PP-PBS Student Complaint and Appeals Policy** procedures should the student wish to question the decision

Note: If the student chooses to access the **003-PP-PBS Student Complaint and Appeals Policy** and subsequently appeals the intention to report, PBS will not take further action until the Appeal process has been completed.

- 10.3 facilitate the Appeal process as per **049-PP-PBS Academic Appeals Policy** in the case where the student has lodged an appeal within 5 working days
- 10.4 report the student via PRISMS if:
 - a. the student does not respond to the **452-LR-PBS Intention to Report Notice** within 5 working days
 - b. the Appeal is unsuccessful using **524-LR-PBS Intention to Report - Appeal Denied Letter**OR
 - c. inform the student using **275-LR-PBS Intention to Report - Appeal Successful Letter** that no report will be sent to DIBP as the appeal has been upheld.

11.0 **Definitions**

- 11.1 PBS – Pal Buddhist School
- 11.2 Satisfactory attendance – PBS requires attendance at a minimum of 80% scheduled course contact hours
- 11.3 Projected attendance: Current actual attendance plus maximum remaining attendance divided by the total scheduled hours for the term
- 11.4 Consecutive days absent: For fulltime students this refers to five consecutive days of classes missed. For part-time students, this refers to five consecutive days of classes OR two weeks of classes missed, whichever comes first. An example for the part-time student situation is if a student has classes on a Monday and Thursday, after missing two Mondays and two Thursdays they will be considered to have fulfilled the five consecutive absence criteria.
- 11.5 Below 90% attendance warning letter: A letter sent by the Admissions Manager to any student whose attendance falls below 90% but at least 85%. This letter is a reminder to the student that satisfactory attendance needs to be



maintained.

- 11.6 Below 85% attendance Warning letter: A letter sent to any student whose attendance falls below 85%. The student has a designated period in which to resume satisfactory attendance
- 11.7 Attendance Interview letter: A letter sent to any student who has not resumed Satisfactory attendance after the designated time requiring the student to attend an interview and make a plan to resume satisfactory attendance
- 11.8 Medical Certificate: a medical certificate for PBS purposes requires the medical Provider code to be present. Alternative therapy practitioner certificates etc. therefore do not qualify
- 11.9 AGDoE: Australian Government Department of Education
- 11.10 PRISMS: Provider Registration and International Student Management System
- 11.11 Intention to Report Notice: a letter advising students that they have breached the 80% attendance requirement and that they have (a) 5 days to respond in writing and (b) a 20 working day period commencing three days after the date of the Intention to Report notification to appeal the Intent to Report should they choose to appeal the Intent to Report
- 11.12 Satisfactory course progress: Completing of NEAS, BOSTES NSW or VET training package requirements for the course of study in question
- 11.13 *Compassionate or compelling circumstances* - circumstances beyond the control of the student that are having an impact on the student's progress through a course. These could include:
- serious illness, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
 - bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents
 - major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring their emergency travel that has impacted on their studies
 - a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (these cases should be where possible supported by police or psychologists' reports)
 - where the school was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit
 - inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa

For other circumstances to be considered as compassionate or compelling, evidence would need to be provided to show that these were having an impact on the student's progress through a course.

- 11.14 *Expected duration* – the length of time it takes to complete the course studying full-time. This is the same as the registered course duration on CRICOS.



- 11.15 *School day* – any day for which the school has scheduled course contact hours.
- 11.16 Attendance System: In-house student database which records attendance being Denbigh
- 11.17 Regular assessment of attendance: ‘Regular assessment’ means that attendance should be assessed frequently enough that a provider is able to make judgments about the student’s level of attendance in each study period. The provider must be able to determine when a student is at risk of not attending at the required level and when a student has actually fallen below the required level for that study period. In determining how often to assess attendance, providers should bear in mind the length of their study periods – if their study periods are short (for example six weeks), attendance will need to be assessed more frequently than for longer study periods (for example a six month semester).
- 11.18 Compassionate or Compelling circumstances: are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student’s course progress or wellbeing. PBS will make this determination of assessment at its discretion and grounds (supported by appropriate evidence) may include:
- a serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
 - bereavement of a close family member such as a parent or grandparent (documented evidence required)
 - a major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel
 - a traumatic experience which may include, for example, involvement in or witnessing of serious accident or crime and that these cases are supported by a psychologist’s report.
- 11.19 Circumstances that do not qualify as being compassionate or compelling include: attendance at social functions (such as weddings or other celebrations) accommodation, travel or other personal arrangements that need to be finalised family or other relationship issues (other than that stated above in 9.12).

12.0 References

- 12.1 The National Code Standard 11 Attendance Monitoring
- 12.2 003-PP-PBS Student Complaint and Appeals Policy
- 12.3 049-PP-PBS Academic Appeals Policy
- 12.4 217-FM-PBS Progress Improvement Plan
- 12.5 255-LR-PBS Student Absentee Notice
- 12.6 275-LR-PBS Intention to Report – Appeal Successful
- 12.7 524-LR-PBS Intention to Report – Appeal Denied
- 12.8 327-LR-PBS Attendance Consultation Meeting
- 12.9 452-LR-PBS Notice of Intention to Report Non-compliance with VISA Condition
- 12.10 478-LR-PBS Attendance Warning Letter – below 90%
- 12.11 496-LR-PBS Attendance Warning letter – below 85%
- 12.12 Australian Government Department of Education (AGDoE)
- 12.13 Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)
- 12.14 NSW Department of Education and Communities
- 12.15 Standards 9,10,11 Course progress and attendance policy (80% Attendance)



13 Revision History

2015

Review Date: December

No	Date	Description of modification
1	3/03/2015	Initial Policy