

Attendance Matters

Purpose:

Students attendance, along with effective teaching, has the greatest influence on student engagement and achievement. All students must be present at school so that they can participate and engage in learning. High attendance is also crucial for making and maintaining social groups and friendships.

Irregular attendance is an early indicator of problems. Students with high absenteeism are less likely to succeed in their learning. If a student misses five school days a term, or one day a fortnight, they will miss the equivalent of one year of school over 10 years. As the level of absenteeism grows, the difficulty to re-engaging in learning can grow exponentially.

Parents must ensure they have the means to get to school and home again on time, that they have adequate supervision to get to school, that any issues are communicated to the school promptly and that they have a good breakfast and lunch to see them through the day.

Procedures:

- All students of Otago Girls' High School are expected to attend every class, every day as well as whanau time, assemblies and other school activities.
- Attendance will be recorded for each student on a period by period basis, and unexplained absence will be followed up by the Attendance Officer, Whanau Teachers and Deans
- Attendance information will be included in students reports. Where there is concern regarding attendance, the school will communicate this to parents/caregivers at the time.
- Heads of Departments and Deans will identify at risk students and monitor the attendance of those students.
- A range of procedures will be followed when students are identified as truant.
- Emergency closure procedures will ensure parents/caregivers are informed, and the welfare of students is guaranteed, if the school needs to close at short notice.

Attendance Procedures for Parents:

- Where possible, all appointments should be made outside of school hours. Where an appointment during school hours is unavoidable, the student must bring a card or signed note to the attendance office before school, or at interval, to get a dated exeat pass. Their year level Dean's permission is required for any other exeat. Dean's permission is required for a lunchtime exeat. Year 13 students are exempt from this requirement.
- Whenever possible, parents/caregivers will be encouraged to advise the school of an impending absence ahead of time. When this is not possible, then parents/caregivers will be asked to inform the school as soon as possible after the event e.g. by phone on the day of the students illness. Absences should be notified to the school attendance office between 8:15 and 9:15am on each day of absence.
- In addition to a verbal explanation from a parent/caregiver over the phone in response to the office's call, the following methods of explaining student absences, either before or


after the event, will be accepted from parents/caregivers:

- i. a phone call or face-to-face explanation
- ii. a signed note
- iii. a medical certificate or appointment letter from a health professional

Note: Parents are requested to provide

the student's name and form class
the date of and reason for the absence

- If a student feels ill they are to report to the school office. Staff will assess the appropriate care of the student. Parents must be contacted before a student can go home.
- Overseas holidays during term time constitute unjustified absence and will be dealt with as such.
- In cases of chronic illness above 15 half-days absences per term, a current medical certificate must be supplied to the attendance officer, covering the period of illness. There may be a referral to the Health School.
- Consequences for unjustified absences from school include attendance referrals, referral to the Dean or Guidance Counsellor, meeting with the Principal and referral to the truancy services (Otago Youth Wellness Trust).

Signed by Principal - 12.02.2024 	Date to be reviewed - November 2026
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