Marri Mittigar

Student Attendance Policy

1 Marri Mittigar is a Special Assistance School offering Years K-10 of the NSW curriculum in a welcoming school led by trauma-informed practices. The school takes steps to address each student's cultural needs in safety and care, offering optimal teaching and learning environments. This allows all children and young people every opportunity for success and excellent attendance is a key to academic success.

2 The NSW Registration Manual requires the Head of Marri Mittigar to keep a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the daily attendances of all children at the school. The NSW Registration Manual requires the school to provide a safe and supportive environment by maintaining a student attendance register.

Daily Attendance Register

3 Marri Mittigar keeps a register of the daily attendance of all students at the school in electronic form. Attendance registers are in a form approved by the Minister for Education, and compliant with the New South Wales Attendance Register Codes.

4 The school applies the Minister's common code.

5 The register of daily attendance records the following information for each student:

5.1 daily attendance

5.2 absences

5.3 reasons for absences

5.4 documentation to substantiate reasons for absences.

6 The attendance register also includes information about any students granted an exemption from attending school. Refer to *Exemption from Attending School Policy* below.

Monitoring Daily Attendance

7 Marri Mittigar will implement the following systems and procedures to monitor the daily attendance of students and identify absences from the school:

8 Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that they notify the school to explain the absence of their child on any particular school day. Notification may be provided via email or by telephoning the school and should be made before the start of the school day.

9 Class teachers take the class roll promptly at the start of the school day by 8.45 and at the end of the day by 3pm.

10 All absences are recorded digitally using Engage. They flow through to the Receptionist and are cross-checked against the absentee notifications that have been provided to the school that day.

Analysing Student Attendance Data

11 Marri Mittigar monitors student attendance data.

12 Repeated absences are raised at weekly wellbeing team meetings.

13 Unexplained Student Absences are followed up in the first instance by the Head of School before 10am. A text message is sent to the student's parents/guardians notifying them of the absence and requesting them to immediately contact Marri Mittigar.

14 Where the absence remains unexplained, the matter will be followed up by the Head of School.

15 Where parents/guardians repeatedly fail to inform the school of absences, the Head of School will contact them directly to seek an explanation and to remind them of their obligation to report absences.

16 All information in relation to unsatisfactory attendance is recorded on students' files, and information with respect to attendance is provided in each student's school Report.

17 At Marri Mittigar, we monitor attendance every day. Our cut-off point starts below 90% attendance, then 85% and once students have lower than 80%, the Head of School provides a warning letter (provided there are no extenuating circumstances that have resulted in poor attendance). Then intervention strategies will be put in place to help the student improve their attendance. Late arrival will also be recorded and included in the attendance calculations.

18 All medical absences of three days or more from school should be accompanied by a medical certificate from a registered doctor, together with explanatory communication from the parent/guardian.

19 Head of School will be proactive in notifying students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements and counselling support offered.

20 Marri Mittigar considers a student at risk of not meeting minimum course attendance if, after each term:

20.1 the student has not achieved 85% attendance

20.2 despite intervention and appropriate counselling, the student continues to have absences that are not due to compassionate or extenuating circumstances.

Unsatisfactory Attendance Intervention Strategies

21 Students for whom schooling has not been part of their past experience or part of their home context, may find particular difficulties in acculturating to the expectations of school life and academic study. Attendance may suffer. A compassionate and flexible approach to poor attendance is needed and incentives to attend daily. Marri Mittigar staff will work to ensure that school is a safe and joyful place for students to come each day, where every child is known by name, warmly greeted, and their needs and interests catered for.

22 Marri Mittigar has implemented the following strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance and student engagement in school and learning:

22.1 The school encourages parents/guardians to understand their obligations to ensure their child attends school daily, and to not condone absences for unauthorised reasons such as birthdays, shopping and other leisure activities.

22.2 Regular meetings are conducted between the Head of Marri Mittigar and staff, as appropriate, to coordinate responses to student absences.

22.3 Students with persistently low attendance will be monitored, and personalised strategies will be considered to increase their attendance and/or engage them in continuing education programs. For students requiring more intensive support, one-on-one meetings and alternative arrangements may be organised in consultation with parents/guardians and community leaders. Interpreters may be required at these meetings.

22.4 Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the school will request medical certificates for the absences and will consult with parents/guardians regarding the health care needs of the student.

22.5 All required reports will be made to the relevant settlement service (SSI, Red Cross or Marist 180) if the student is in out of home care, or, Community Services Child Protection Helpline, and/or contact will be made with the Child Wellbeing Unit if there are safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns in relation to student attendance.

22.6 The role will be taken at the start of each period to watch for truancy. Outer school gates will be secured during the day as a preventative measure for students running away and for road safety.

Records of the Register of Daily Attendance

23 The register is retained for a period of seven years after the last entry is made, and copies of information in the register are stored off-site at regular intervals.

Exemption from Attending School Policy

24 The NSW Education Minister has delegated the power to principals of non-government schools, to grant and cancel a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances.

25 The NSW Registration Manual requires the Head of Marri Mittigar to have in place and implement policies and procedures for exercising the Minister's delegation and to maintain records of the exercise of the above delegation including copies of all certificates issued under the delegation.

Exemption from School Procedures

26 Marri Mittigar has developed policies and procedures for exercising the Minister's delegation of power with respect to certificates of exemption, in accordance with the Exemption from School – Procedures published by the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

Compulsory School Age in NSW

27 A child of compulsory school age must attend school. In NSW "compulsory school age" includes all children between the ages of six years and the minimum school leaving age of 17 years.

28 All students must complete Year 10. After Year 10 and until they turn 17, students must be:

28.1 in school, or registered for home schooling, or

28.2 in approved education or training (e.g. TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship), or

28.3 in full-time, paid employment (average 25 hours/week), or

28.4 in a combination of work, education and/or training.

28.5 Exemptions from Attending School

29 A child of compulsory school age may only be absent from school, without a reasonable excuse, if they are granted a certificate of exemption from attending school.

30 Reasons for granting exemptions from being enrolled in and/or attending school include:

30.1 exceptional domestic circumstances (including the health of a child where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate)

30.2 the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under Public Health Legislation

30.3 employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events for short periods of time

30.4 where a student has completed Year 9 and, before completing Year 10, has obtained a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship.

30.5 For more reasons and further detail refer to *Exemption from School – Procedures*.

Who Can Grant an Exemption?

31 The Minister has delegated to the Head of Marri Mittigar the power to grant a certificate of exemption for a maximum total of 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student. A full school day is six hours.

32 The Head of Marri Mittigar must ensure that exemptions granted for part-day absences do not accumulate to over 100 days in a 12-month period.

33 In other circumstances a certificate of exemption may be granted by the Minister for Education or their delegate.

Test for Granting Certificates of Exemption

34 The Head of Marri Mittigar may grant a certificate of exemption if they are satisfied that conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable that such a certificate be granted.

Maintenance of Attendance Register

35 Marri Mittigar keeps a register of the daily attendance of all students at the school in electronic form.

36 Exemptions for school-based programs must be indicated in the attendance register with the code M.

Conditions of Granting Certificates

37 Certificates of exemptions granted by the Head of Marri Mittigar must:

37.1 include the specific conditions that apply to the exemption

37.2 state that the exemption may be cancelled if these conditions are not met or cease to apply

37.3 specify the dates for which the exemption has been granted, including the hours of program participation in the case of a part-day exemption period.

38 The original certificate of exemption must be provided to parents/guardians, and a copy must be attached to the student's record.

39 Records of the exercise of the exemption delegation, including copies of all certificates of exemption issued under the delegation, are retained by the school and stored in the Head of Marri Mittigar's office.

40 Certificates of exemption issued by the Head of Marri Mittigar may be cancelled by the Head of Marri Mittigar.

References:

NESA Independent Schools Manual as published on the pubic Department of Education website NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools Manual

Version control:

Policy owner	Director Marri Mittigar School	
Version number	Date reviewed	Reviewed by and comments
2.0	12/03/2026	DLRC Administrative changes

Next review due
March 2029