



Macarthur Girls High School

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential, and increase their career and life options. Schools in partnerships with parents are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

The *Education Act 1990* states that it is the parent's duty to ensure

- their children aged between 6 and 17 years are enrolled in a school
- their children who are enrolled at school attend every day the school is open for instruction.
- they provide an explanation for absences to the school within 7 days from the first day of any period of absence through means such as telephone call, written note, text message or email. Failure to do so will result in an unjustified absence being recorded.
- they work in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school. This includes communicating with the school if they are aware of issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with school.

While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, record and monitor part and whole day absences. The DoE attendance policy can be found at

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy?refid=285839>

Policy

The encouragement and maintenance of regular school attendance remains a core responsibility of the Principal and teachers at Macarthur Girls High School. The promotion and encouragement of full school attendance is part of Macarthur Girls High School's award system.

The need for all staff to carefully and accurately monitor student attendance is paramount as absence may be symptomatic of deeper underlying problems. All staff will be trained in MGHS attendance monitoring systems and processes.

Macarthur Girls High School will:

- provide clear information via the school website, to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister as a legal document
- ensure attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.
- have processes to monitor and follow up student absences.
- ensure students with attendance concerns have their learning and support needs addressed in consultation with parents.
- Ensure students with frequent absences explained as being due to illness have consultation with parents regarding the health care needs of the student. Medical Certificates may be sought. If there are ongoing concerns, approval may be sought to contact the student's doctor so the school has all relevant information regarding the student's health care needs and for strategies to be developed to ensure regular attendance.
- ensure all school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.

- report to the Community Services or contact the Child Wellbeing Unit or complete [the Mandatory Reporter Guide](#) where attendance concerns are identified.
- 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.

have the authority to:

- grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- accept other explanations for absence and record the absence as "L"
- decline to accept an explanation for absence and record the absence as unjustified
- grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student provided certain conditions are met (See the *Exemption from School - Procedures*).
- grant part-day exemptions from school for periods totalling up to 100 days in a twelve month period (See the *Exemption from School - Procedures*).
- 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*).
- 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.

Outcomes

Absences are explained within seven calendar days of their occurrence and accurate records are maintained

The school has a record of explanations for all absences as a way of ensuring that students are absent from school only when they are unwell or have another acceptable reason for missing school.

Date created: September 2017

Review date: by September 2018

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION / PROCEDURES

The NSW Government has determined that parents, caregivers or persons having custody of a child are responsible for the regular attendance of that child at school until the child is 17 years of age. All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend school whenever instruction is provided, as stated in the NSW Department of Education School Attendance Policy, 2015.

The need for careful and accurate school monitoring of student attendance is paramount as absence may be symptomatic of deeper underlying problems such as:

- physical abuse
- serious illness in the family
- death in the family
- drug abuse – parent / student
- poverty
- child exploitation
- delinquency
- neglect
- difficulty in transporting child to school
- parent may condone absences
- sexual abuse

Related policy and guidelines include:

- [Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures \(pdf 328 kb\)](#)
- [Exemption from School - Procedures \(pdf 348 kb\)](#)
- [Supporting Student Attendance Guidelines \(The Home School Liaison Program\) \(pdf 727 kb\)](#)
- [Application for Home School Liaison Program Support \(pdf 533 kb\)](#)
- [Attendance Register Codes \(pdf 70 kb\)](#)
- [Special Circumstance Register \(pdf 86 kb\)](#)
- [Enrolment of Students in NSW Government Schools: A Summary and Consolidation of Policy](#)
- [Exemptions from Enrolment and Attendance at School - Frequently Asked Questions \(pdf 104kb\)](#)
- [Absentee Notices \(pdf 96kb\)](#)
- [Phone Intervention Program Guidelines \(pdf 72 kb\)](#)
- [Exemptions from Enrolment and Attendance at School - Frequently Asked Questions \(pdf 104kb\)](#)
- [Absentee Notices \(pdf 96kb\)](#)

Program

The Principal is responsible for the development and effective implementation of attendance policies and procedures that are compliant with the School Attendance Policy, 2015. The Department of Education Policy forms the foundation and basis by which the Macarthur Girls High School Attendance Policy and procedures are created and implemented.

All teachers have a legal responsibility to maintain accurate rolls of student attendance, both during Roll Call and all lessons. This is a Duty of Care requirement. SENTRAL is the system used to record and collect student attendance data.

At Macarthur Girls High School, three areas have been identified to assist in student attendance monitoring.

1. Daily school attendance
2. Truancy – Full day and Fractional truancy
3. Punctuality/Lateness to lessons

Macarthur Girls High School expectations, responsibilities and requirements for student attendance will be communicated to all stakeholders through a number of ways, including our school website and app, student information booklet, P&C meetings, stage meetings and e newsletters. The encouragement and maintenance of regular attendance for each student will ensure students at Macarthur Girls High School maximize their learning potential.

The implementation of the Macarthur Girls High School Attendance policy with associated procedures ensures the provision of consistent systems across the school to meet Department of Education Policy. It provides clarity to all stakeholders - students, parents and staff about expectations, responsibilities and requirements for student attendance at this school.

Procedures

Daily school attendance

The school day starts with a warning bell at 8:55am. All students and staff are expected to be in their learning space by 9:00am (second bell). All students must be in roll call, ready for their scheduled roll call by the 9:00am bell.

Late arrival to school

A student, who arrives after 9:00 am, is required to go directly to Reception to sign in to school. Late students are required to present a written explanation from parents/caregivers, unless an exceptional circumstance has occurred on the way to school. In such situations, a note explaining this lateness to school is to be provided to their roll teacher on the next school day.

A signed note from a parent will be used to determine the partial absence as explained, however, a member of the senior executive will determine if the reason for leave is justified or unjustified.

Following the sign in process in Reception, late students must then report to the late room to explain their reason for lateness. Students with unacceptable and unexplained reasons, such as poor personal organization, will be required to attend detentions. Additional interventions such as parent/caregiver contact/interview may be implemented for those students who display continued patterns of lateness without a satisfactory reason, in consultation with Attendance Monitors, Year Advisers, Stage Executive and Stage Leaders.

Persistent Lateness Monitoring

- Students arriving late three times within a two-week cycle will be issued with an afterschool detention.
- Parents of students who fail to attend a designated detention will be contacted by Head Teacher Student Wellbeing/Stage Leader.
- If the lateness pattern shows no improvement parents will be requested to attend an interview with HT Student Wellbeing and Stage Leader.
- Intervention of the Principal if problem persists.
- Further consequences, in consultation with the Principal, could include suspension if students have failed to follow school policy and directive

Early Leave

A student who wishes to be granted approval for Early Leave must have a note signed by her parent/caregiver requesting permission for the student to leave at the stated time. The student must take this note to the relevant Stage Leader before 8.40 am. Upon granting Early Leave, the Stage Leader will determine if this leave is justified or unjustified.

The note will be signed and dated by the Stage Leader. The student presents the note to Reception and is issued with an "early leavers pass". This pass is to be shown to the class teacher before leaving class. The student must report to Reception, with her ID card, to "swipe out" before leaving the school grounds. The "early leavers pass" must be carried by the student as evidence of approval and can be required to be shown to the Police upon request. A student places herself at risk and beyond the duty of care of teachers if she leaves the school without permission. Failure to follow these procedures may result in disciplinary action as per truancy procedures.

Study Periods

Year 12 and Year 11 students who have no lessons at the start of the day (period 1) must arrive at school on time for roll call.

All students must be in the Library for their study periods and sign in. No other venue, such as the quadrangle or Rose Garden, is to be used for study periods, unless explicit instruction is given by the Stage 6 leader or Principal. During study periods students are expected to meaningfully engage in study, homework or assessment tasks in their pursuit of personal success.

Senior students who have finished their timetabled lessons for the day are given the privilege to undertake their study period(s) at home, following written parental/carer approval being received by the school. All students are required to register their departure at Reception using their ID card and select as their reason 'Flexible Timetable' at all times unless instructed by the school differently.

Truancy – Full day and Fractional truancy

Truancy is the absence of a student from school without the knowledge or permission of their parent or caregiver. Full day truancy is when a student is absent for the full school day, without appropriate permission. Fractional truancy is defined as a student absenting herself for part of a school day without consent.

Full day truancy

Students identified as being absent for a full day without parental authority (whole day truancy) will be managed by the relevant Stage Leader.

The stage leader will:

- Interview the students
- Contact the parent/carer and undertake an interview (this may be by telephone)
- Place the student on a monitoring booklet/card
- Sign the student in to school at the commencement of each day
- Follow-up with parents/carers at the end of the monitoring period regarding attendance
- Contact parent/carer on any occasion the student is absent whilst on the monitoring booklet

Parents will:

- Attend school for an interview with the Stage leader
- Sign the attendance monitoring card/booklet each day
- Notify the school on any day when the student is absent with their permission
- Provide written explanation for any absence the student has

Fractional Truancy

Before identifying as a fractional truancy matter, classroom teachers need to check the SENTRAL record for students in sick bay or having early leave passes issued. When marking the Period roll (PxP on SENTRAL), students who are not in class are to be marked as absent, and follow-up procedures implemented. No student is to be marked as "present" unless they are physically sighted by the teacher, or have the permission of the teacher to be out of their class.

Classroom teachers have a responsibility to:

- Mark the PxP roll accurately for every lesson
- Investigate the whereabouts of students not in class indicated as being present on the daily roll
- Inform their supervisor of the discrepancy created by individual students being absent when they should be present in class
- Complete the appropriate record on SENTRAL regarding the discrepancy in attendance

Head teachers/supervisors have a responsibility to :

- Investigate reasons for absence
- Place students on detention or other sanction related to their absence from class
- Contact families about the unauthorized absence from class
- Document actions taken on SENTRAL

- Inform Stage Leaders of issues regarding attendance for individual students
- Place students on faculty based monitoring processes for at least 2 weeks

Punctuality/lateness to lessons

Students are expected to be punctual to all lessons and roll call. This will ensure maximum learning time for all students in each class. It is also vital for students to understand that punctuality is a basic expectation for life beyond school. To assist students in this understanding, it is important that a consistent process is used to improve student punctuality. When a student arrives late to class, the teacher needs to use discretion in relation to movement times and [consequences implemented](#).

Consequences of lateness to class include:

- Detention at lunchtime
- Catching up missed work in own time
- After school detention
- Contact with parents

Important Information Regarding Leave/Absences Types of Absences

- All absences which are supported by a written explanation within 7 calendar days (5 school days) of return to school are recorded as “explained leave”. If the Principal/delegate deems the reason for absence to be appropriate the absence is declared to be “Justified”
- An absence is marked as unexplained and unjustified if parents have failed to provide an explanation to the school within 7 calendar days (5 school days). Presentation of an explanation after this time is not sufficient grounds to alter the reason for leave code on the roll.
- sick leave will be granted to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness (Attendance Register Code ‘S’). Students are to provide a note from the parents explaining reason of leave on first day of return to the school. A medical certificate will be required for leave exceeding 3 or more absences.
- an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student. An exemption from school attendance for students wishing to participate in employment in the entertainment industry for periods totaling up 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student. An exemption from school attendance for students participating in elite Sports or elite Arts events for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student. For students participating in elite arts or elite sporting programs who are required to attend regular activities/training during school time an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School must be completed and submitted to the principal for approval prior to commencing the program. (Accredited elite sports programs include national and international sports organizations which run camps for athletes and national sports squads in which students have been selected to participate. They also include talent identification programs run by the NSW Sport and Recreation).
- Principals may record absences using the ‘L’ Code for compulsory school age students who have provided an explanation of the absence accepted by the principal. Additional days for students not of compulsory school age may be recorded at the principal’s discretion. This may be due to:
 - holidays/travel during school time (If exceeding 10 days a separate application for leave form must be completed prior to the travel dates)
 - 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
 - recognized religious festivals or ceremonial occasions which are identified as pertaining to days of strict observance and may preclude a practicing student from school attendance. Identification of such recognized days must be stated on the signed absent note from parents.

Explained – Unjustified absence

The Principal or other delegate may decide that the explanation provided by parents or caregivers does not justify their absence (full day or part day) and has not been in the educational interests of the student. This absence is recorded as explained unjustified. Such explanations can include those not listed above and holidays or travel

during school time which exceeds 10 days.

Extended leave (travel or holiday)

- i. From the beginning of 2015, Family holidays and travel are no longer considered under [the Exemption from School - Procedures](#). Travel outside of vacation periods is now counted as an absence for statistical purposes.
- ii. A Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel should not be issued where the principal is aware that the student has been the subject of contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit or a Community Services (Family and Community Services) report and for whom unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm remain
- iii. Principal/delegate should not accept a reason for travel during school term if it is not in the best interests of the student. Educational, social and participation reasons, which should be specified on the Application
- iv. Travel is considered to be domestic or international travel for the purpose of a family holiday, family business, bereavement or other reasons, which should be specified on the application
- v. Principal/delegate should consult with parents about the intention of the travel and in the case of family holidays encourage parents to take holidays with their child during school vacation periods.
- vi. Where the Principal/delegate considers that the travel is appropriate during school term, the principal should issue the parent with an Application for Extended Leave – Travel for completion and inform the parent that if the Application is accepted, the absences will be recorded as “L” - Leave
- vii. Principal/delegate should request travel documentation, such as travel itinerary or e- ticket,
- viii. Principal/delegate should ensure that parents are assisted with the completion of the Application and provide a translation service if required
- ix. When travels period exceeds one school term access to Distance Education must be considered. Refer to [Distance Education: Enrolment Procedures 2014](#)
- x. Principal/delegate may decline to accept a parent’s Application for Extended Leave – Travel. In this case the parent must be advised in writing. Refer to the sample: Declining an application for a certificate of extended leave at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/school-attendance-policy?refid=285839>
- xi. If a student or students do not return on the date specified, the Principal/delegate must ensure the parents are contacted to establish the whereabouts of the student. If contact cannot be established, then the Principal/delegate should follow processes associated with an Application for Home School Liaison Program support
- xii. On accepting a parent’s application for extended leave, a Certificate of Extended Leave - Travel must be issued. The original certificate will be provided to the parent and a copy of the certificate placed in each student’s record.
- xiii. An Application for Extended Leave form, Certificate of Extended Leave and example letter for declining an application are available at the following location.

Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures (pdf 328 kb), pages 23-27

Non- Acceptance of explanation for an absence

The Principal/delegate may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence. The parent should be advised in writing that the explanation has not been accepted and a reason for the decision provided. An “A” Code is used for an unjustified absence.

Frequent absences due to illness

- Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness consultation with parents must occur regarding the health care needs of the child.
- The Principal/delegate may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged. Where principals have concerns about medical certificates being produced for absences, they can ask the parent to request that the doctor write on the certificate the statement ‘this child is unfit for school’ with specified dates included.
- Where The Principal/delegate have ongoing concerns, they can request the parents’ consent to

contact the doctor. If the request is denied, or if the principal is still not satisfied with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as 'unjustified'. (Attendance Register Code 'A') and follow procedures such as contacting the HSLO.

People

Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Monitoring Team

The Attendance Monitoring Team reviews students' attendance. The Attendance Monitoring Team consists of the HT Student Wellbeing, Attendance Monitors, Year Advisers, Stage Head Teachers and Stage Leaders. The Team will be provided with patterns of attendance from Attendance Monitors to identify trends in absenteeism and determine strategies to address the issues. An Attendance Monitoring Team meeting for each stage will be led fortnightly by HT Student Wellbeing. Reports include:

- Absence: by year, attendance %, individual profile, total number of whole day absences, partial absences, unexplained absences or other upon request. HT Student Wellbeing follows up students at risk.
- A fortnightly 85% student attendance report and student follow ups will be provided by the Attendance Monitors to Year Advisers, Head Teacher Student Wellbeing and the stage leaders.
- Further Action plans and parent contacts discussed.

Head Teacher: Student Wellbeing

Head Teacher: Student Wellbeing is responsible for monitoring students' attendance patterns and managing the welfare of those students who have been identified 'at risk'.

Head Teacher: Student Wellbeing has the responsibility to:

- manage student attendance processes
- coordinate meetings with Stage Attendance Monitors
- inform Year Advisers, School Executive and Stage Leaders of emerging issues in relation to attendance
- follow up student non-compliance attendance policy instances
- refer students at risk to Stage Leaders including the history of events
- refer students with attendance issues to HSLO or relevant agencies.
- meet with HSLO and other agencies' personnel to discuss student attendance issues.
- record conversations regarding attendance with students, parents/carers as a "data record" in the school's SENTRAL records

Attendance Monitor

Attendance Monitor is to support students in maintaining regular attendance. By maintaining regular attendance students are able to maximize their learning opportunities. This document should be used in conjunction with the Macarthur Girls High School Attendance Policy. An Attendance Monitor is allocated to each Year Group.

The Attendance Monitors have the responsibility to:

- ensure punctual attendance of students to roll call
- visit designated roll classes regularly.
- interview students who are emerging as 'at risk' (e.g. repeated lateness, unexplained absences, other attendance concerns), documenting discussions and outcomes as a "Data record" on SENTRAL.
- create attendance reports for review.
- meet fortnightly with the HT Wellbeing to provide feedback on identified attendance concerns.
- assist in organization and supervision of Roll Call groups at assemblies.
- make referrals to Head Teacher Student Wellbeing and the relevant Year Adviser when a student is identified as "welfare concern" using the SENTRAL notifications system.
- award merit certificates to students for punctual and regular attendance to Roll Call (individuals and classes) based on SENTRAL data.
- inform students of 100% attendance awards.
- record conversations with students, parents/carers as a "data record" in the school's SENTRAL records

Year Advisers

Year Advisers are responsible to support attendance monitors by informing them of major wellbeing concerns impacting attendance of individual students. They also need to communicate all concerns with Head Teacher: Student Wellbeing and their Stage Leader requesting further action if required. **Year Advisers** have the responsibility to:

- follow up welfare attendance concerns identified by Attendance Monitors and HT Student Wellbeing.
- contact parents/carers where appropriate and inform outcome to Head Teacher Student Wellbeing, Attendance Monitor, Stage Executive, Stage Leader.
- acknowledge 100% attendance, in conjunction with the Attendance Monitors.
- record conversations with students, parents/carers as a "data record" in the school's SENTRAL records

Stage Executive

Stage Executive have the responsibility to:

- support Attendance Monitors and Year Advisers in managing implementation of PRIDE program
- support Attendance Monitors and Year Advisers in managing attendance issues
- contact parents regarding absentee notes and interviewing students, if required by Year Advisers.
- record conversations with students, parents/carers as a "data record" in the school's SENTRAL records

Stage School Administration Officer (SAO)

Stage School Administration Officers (SAO) have the responsibility to:

- Phone the parent/caregiver if student is absent for three consecutive days and no communication has been made to the school from home, by no later than the fourth day of an absence
- make relevant parties aware of student attendance concerns they have.
- record conversations with students, parents/carers as a "data record" in the school's SENTRAL records

Parents/Caregivers

Parents/Caregivers of a child of compulsory school-age have the responsibility to:

- explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven school 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. Phone notification is acceptable.
- provide a note first day back to school.
- Inform the school of any issues which may impact on the attendance of their daughter

Staff Specific Responsibilities

Roll teachers

Teachers should ensure that normal classroom management procedures are applied in the roll call period. They should insist on students arriving promptly and engage in PRIDE activities. All attendance issues must be handled with confidentiality, sensitivity and with respect. Roll teachers have the responsibility to:

- mark students with an X (using the physical roll) for their first day of attendance each year
- Have Students "Sign in" on a physical roll on their first day of attendance each year.
- Have students "sign out" on their last day of attendance each year, through the school "sign out Procedure.
- Mark an electronic roll using the SENTRAL roll mark system each day.
- identify students as absent by placing 'a' in the day of their absence.
- count students to check the accuracy of the roll. Number present **Must** be equal number on roll
- request notes from students for absences; both full and partial absences.
- request notes from students for unexplained lateness.
- place absence and late explanation notes securely in the roll folder.
- Submit the electronic roll at the conclusion of the roll mark period (before 0905hrs)
- read Mac Matters (daily messages) aloud to students.
- hand out any information to individuals or groups that has been placed in roll folders for distribution.
- alert the relevant Attendance Monitor of students with continued absences or noted patterns where no explanations have been received or there are ongoing concerns.

SASS

The role of SASS is to support Roll teachers, Year Advisors and executive in ensuring records are accurate and in monitoring attendance of students. SASS are responsible for assisting management of attendance in a stage specific area: They

- Prepare roll folders, including roll list and roll mark procedures, for commencement of the school year.
- Maintain accuracy of rolls by inserting explanations for absence according to the approved DoE roll marking codes to the SENTRAL attendance register
- Transcribe physical rolls to SENTRAL electronic rolls when necessary
- Prepare a list of absences for Staff requiring this list daily (Principal/Deputy Principals/Year advisors/Attendance monitors)
- File all absence notes in student files/scan to student data on SENTRAL
- Provide necessary copies of reports and rolls to Principal for signing off
- Ensure all records are archived annually in accord with DoE policy

Stage Executive

Stage Executive have the responsibility to:

- Be responsible for the implementation of stage PRIDE programs. (PRIDE Program, not attendance?)
- Assist in organization and supervision of Roll Call groups at assemblies.
- Provide assistance to Roll Call Teachers during the roll call period.
- Assist Attendance Monitor follow-up of students with poor attendance patterns or who fail to provide explanations for absences
- Support Head Teacher Student Wellbeing, Attendance Monitors, Year Advisors and Stage Leaders resolving student attendance concerns.
- Contact parents/caregivers as required. Record contact and discussion points as a “data record” in SENTRAL
- Award merit certificates/PRIDE awards to students for punctual and regular attendance to roll call (individuals and classes)

Stage Leaders

Stage leaders oversee the management of attendance of students in their stages by liaising with Head Teacher Student Wellbeing and HSLO. Stage leaders are also responsible to support Head Teacher Student Wellbeing by attending parent meetings where required to discuss attendance concerns. **Stage Leaders** have the responsibility to:

- Provide overall supervision of students in their stage.
- Manage ‘Non-Compliance’ and identify students’ at risk due to continued attendance issues.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher Student Wellbeing to discuss student attendance concerns.
- Follow-up students with habitual lateness, including involving parents/caregivers in finding ongoing solutions to this lateness. Record contact with parents/caregivers and resolution of issues using the “data record” feature of SENTRAL

Review, evaluation and reporting

Overall school attendance rates will be reported annually as part of the ASR. Individual student attendance profiles will be reported to parents/caregivers as part of the twice yearly academic reporting process. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Wellbeing Team, with adjustments being made where applicable.