



KESSER TORAH COLLEGE

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

School Day Hours

- The KTC school day formally begins at the beginning of davening. Students (including Year 12) are expected to arrive at KTC premises and be ready to daven at that time - regardless of when the student's first class begins. The relevant times are:

Year K – 6 8:20am

Year 7 – 12 (Girls) 8:20am

Year 7 – 12 (Boys) 7:50am

- Students are expected to stay on KTC premises until the end of the school day which currently ends:

Year K - 6 3:20pm (Monday to Thursday); 2:40pm (Friday)

Year 7 – 12 (Girls) 4:00pm (Monday to Thursday); 2:40pm (Friday)

Year 7 – 12 (Boys) 4:00pm (Monday to Thursday); 2:25pm (Friday)

- The school year runs from the first day of Term 1 each year until the last day of Term 4 each year. Attendance on each of these days is compulsory, except on pupil free days, and in cases of illness, injury, personal emergency or pre-approved leave. Under no circumstances is absence from school without the express approval of the Principal or the Principal's delegate permitted. If a student is truant from a class or from school for any part of the school day, he/she will be given an immediate detention. For repeated truancy, the Principal may meet with the relevant student's parents.

Notifying the School of Absences

- Parents must inform the Office or the Roll Teacher by 9:00am of their child's absence from school because of illness, injury or personal emergency on the day that the student is absent. A note signed by the student's parent explaining the absence must be handed to the Office on the day of the student's return to school. Alternatively, an email can be sent to the Office on the day of the absence.
- It should not be assumed that leave will be granted to travel for extended periods of time. The Principal must be notified in writing to request permission for leave, using the form "Parental Application for Exemption from Attendance at School" posted on the KTC website <http://www.kessertorah.nsw.edu.au/attendance.html>. It is a condition of enrolment that each student completes all courses of study required by relevant legislative provisions, KTC and the Board of Studies. Depending on the circumstances, KTC may refuse to approve absences which, in the Principal's opinion, will compromise this requirement. It is recommended that leave be taken, as much as possible, during the term holidays.

- The Principal's PA scans and emails the Exemption from Attendance form to the parents notifying them of the outcome. The Coordinators and Secretary are cc'd on this email. The original Exemption from Attendance form is saved in the students' file, located with the relevant School Secretary.
- Students arriving late to davening must report to the teacher supervising davening and provide an explanatory note signed by a parent. Students arriving late to school after davening must report to the Office and provide an explanatory note signed by a parent. Please provide your late note to the relevant contact person:
 - Primary: Rachelle Smith (Receptionist)
 - Girls High School: Liz Logan (HS Secretary)
 - Boys High School: Davening Supervisor or HS Staffroom
- Students who need to leave school before the end of a school day must provide a note signed by a parent to the Office on the relevant day explaining the reason for early departure. The student must obtain a Leave Pass signed by the Office.
- Medical and other health appointments for students should not be made during school hours. If there is an unavoidable situation where a student needs to attend an appointment during school hours, s/he should provide KTC with a note from home and a letter from the health practitioner to verify this appointment. If this is not done, the student's absence may be treated as truancy.
- Year 12 students are allowed to leave KTC premises after their last period of the day provided they get an exit pass from the High School Secretary.
- If parents have not provided a note and their child's absence has been recorded in Edumate with no reason provided, they will receive an automatic reminder email, generated from Edumate, to complete an attached absence from school notification form. The form must be returned promptly to the relevant school secretary to input into Edumate. If the unexplained absence has still not been updated with a reason after one week, a second reminder email will be generated automatically from Edumate and sent to the parents. This will continue each week until the absence reason has been updated.

Recording Attendance

- KTC electronically monitors and records students' daily attendance, punctuality and absence through the Edumate database.
- Primary Teachers mark the class Roll at the start of Periods 1, 4 (after recess) and 7 (after lunch).
- Each High School teacher marks the Roll on Edumate, at the start of each period
- If a student has an unsatisfactory or poor attendance record, KTC may discipline the student. KTC may also notify parents of poor attendance and record information about the student's attendance on the student's file.
- All notes for absences, late arrivals and early departures that are handed to the Office are filed in the students' file. Student files are located with the Primary Secretary (Years K – 6) and the High School Secretary (Years 7-12 boys and girls).

- High School Students who leave KTC premises without permission will be required to attend a Wednesday afternoon detention. Their parents will be contacted either by email or phone by their relevant STAV. If this happens again, further action will need to be taken depending on regularity and individual cases: Sunday detention in school uniform; parents contacted by Welfare Coordinators; possible in-school suspension; if in year 12, could stand to lose privileges.
- For each late arrival, a High School student accumulates 20 points. Together with other demerit points, once 100 points are reached, the student is required to attend Wednesday afternoon detention for one hour after school. The STAV is responsible for monitoring lateness and must report of any repeat offenders to the Welfare Coordinators who will report to the Principal if and when necessary.

Student On Campus Requirements

- During school hours, students must be in their classroom when the lesson starts and must not leave until the bell has rung. If a student needs to leave the classroom during a lesson and has permission to do so, the student must return to class as soon as possible. If a student does not attend a class and does not have a valid excuse, he/she must attend Wednesday afternoon detention for one hour.
- A student must not enter a classroom where another class is being taught unless permission has been granted by the teacher.
- Students must not wander around on the school oval during P.E. lessons and must remain with their class and participate in all set activities.
- During school hours, students are not permitted to leave the grounds without a Leave Pass or the direct permission of the Principal or an Executive Staff member.

Strategies for Dealing with Consistent and Chronic Absences

IN THE PRIMARY

- **Communication of KTC's expectations of attendance**
 - KTC emphasises the importance of student attendance and punctuality at the beginning of the School Year at Parent Information Evening and again at Parent Meetings during the year. This communication focuses on the close relationship between attendance and student achievement. New student enrolment application forms also highlight the importance of attendance and punctuality.
 - Teachers convey to their students the importance of attendance in keeping up to date with their learning and skills development.
 - From time to time, messages about the importance of attendance are included in communications within the school community including newsletters, assemblies and at staff meetings.

- Jewish Studies teachers also emphasise and reinforce the importance of attendance in relation to the importance of prayers held at the beginning of each day.
- Information about the attendance policy is included in the school handbook and in the information pack for new parents.
- **Record and follow up of absences**
 - Teachers are required to mark rolls three times a day in accordance with school procedures.
 - Timely follow-up is a key preventative strategy in reducing absenteeism and tardiness. This system makes it harder for students to miss school without being detected.
 - Casual teachers take a hand-generated roll and also send this record of attendance down to the office after prayers, after recess and again after lunch.
- **KTC closely monitors students' absenteeism through:**
 - Immediate contact with the parents of students who are absent on a particular day. The receptionist administers these phone calls and records details of conversations held with parents or caregivers.
 - Details related to absenteeism and late arrivals are registered in Edumate
 - Teachers are required to make contact with parents should a student be absent for more than one day.
- **Should a pattern of chronic absenteeism arise, the following steps will be followed:**
 - The teacher will call the parents to explain the school's concern for the student's absence. Parents will be informed that their child may be at risk of:
 - o Developing gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts
 - o Becoming socially isolated
 - The conversation is documented and the relevant Coordinator informed.
 - If there is no improvement in school attendance, the Coordinator will call the parents to reiterate the above concerns and explain that their child's wellbeing may be at risk and that possible child protection issues may arise.

- **Monitoring patterns in absenteeism**
 - Teachers are urged to monitor their students' attendance patterns. The focus is on improving attendance during the last week of term, when there is often a significant increase in absences. Teachers are reminded that learning should continue up to and including the last day of school to avoid truancy and early holiday making.
 - Families are required to apply in writing for school leave from the Principal and are discouraged from taking holidays during the school term.
 - If chronic absenteeism continues, a formal letter will be sent to the parents to address the school's concerns. The letter will also state that if the situation does not improve, the parents will be called in for a meeting with the Coordinator and School Counselor.
 - If the absenteeism continues, the Coordinator will refer their concerns to the Principal who should then determine if there are any reporting obligations for Education neglect.
- **School intervention and providing support**
 - Staff may need to work with these students and their families to help identify the reasons for poor attendance, promote the benefits of attending school, identify attendance and achievement goals, and develop a realistic plan for improving attendance.
 - Students demonstrating chronic absenteeism should be referred to relevant professionals outside of the school (e.g. counselors, psychologists according to individual needs)
 - In conjunction with the parents, the School Counselor will develop Individual Attendance Plans for students with high levels of absences.

IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

- **KTC closely monitors students' absenteeism through:**
 - Administration contact with the parents of students who are absent on a particular day
 - Records kept on Edumate
 - Teacher contact with parents should a student be absent for more than one day
- **Should a pattern of chronic absenteeism arise, the following steps will be followed:**
 - The STAV teacher will call the parents to explain the school's concern for the student's absence. Parents will be informed that such students may be at risk of:

- developing gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts
- being socially isolated

The conversation is documented and the Welfare Coordinators informed.

- If there is no improvement in school attendance, a meeting is set up between the student and the Welfare Department (and if necessary, the Head of Studies and the principal) and
 - Parents are notified about the concerns via a letter.
 - The letter will state that if the situation does not improve, the parents will be called in for a meeting with the Coordinator and School Counselor.
- Should there be no significant improvement, the parents will be called in for a meeting with the Welfare Coordinators as well as the principal and school Counselor to reiterate the above concerns and explain that their child's wellbeing may be at risk and that possible child protection issues may arise.
- If the absenteeism continues, the Principal should then determine if there are any reporting obligations for Education neglect.
- If deemed necessary, the Police Liaison officer will be contacted to intervene and where necessary, Jewish Care may need to be contacted if we feel that the parents are unable to deal appropriately with the situation.