



## School Attendance Procedures

Updated February 2023

*“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. 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. Schools, in providing a caring teaching and learning environment, which addresses the learning and support needs of students, including those with additional learning and support needs or complex health conditions, foster students’ sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.”*

School Attendance Policy

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

Shoal Bay Public School Attendance Policy has been developed to comply with the *DEC School Attendance Policy (2015)* and *Student Attendance in Government Schools: Procedures. (2015)*

### School Attendance Procedures:

#### i) Teacher Role/ Responsibility-

- Mark roll each day according to *Roll Marking Procedures*.
- Follow-up absence explanations according to *Roll Marking Procedures*.
- Monitor consecutive day absences according to *Roll Marking Procedures*.

School rolls are legal documents that must be marked daily by the first **TEACHER** supervising the class each day on entering the classroom. The Sentral program is to be used by all teachers, including casuals, to mark the roll as follows:

- If a child is absent, in Sentral, click once on the date column and find the name of child in the corresponding row. A menu will pop up. It will already have “Whole Day” and “Unexplained” highlighted. Click on the absent drop down box and choose unjustified.

If this is correct, click OK. If you have a note explaining why the child is absent choose reason from drop down box:-

**Unjustified    Leave    Sick    Exempt    Suspended    School Business    Shared Enrolment**

marking the roll click once on “**Submit Roll**”, then click on OK in the pop up box. If there are no absences you still need to click “**Submit Roll**”.

### Marking Procedures

When a child brings a note in explaining an absence the teacher should:-

● **If for the current week** - Note on the roll the date, type of leave (whole or partial) and the reason
**Unjustified**
**Leave**
**Sick**
**Exempt**
**Suspended**
**School Business**
**Shared Enrolment**

- **If for the previous week**: - Note on the roll the date, type of leave (whole W or partial P) and the reason as above.
- **Absences beyond 7 days cannot be altered**. Record on note "Unable to process due to time constraints. Date Received / / .

#### **Notification from parents/carers**

- Record in Sentral. If a parent/carer gives an explanation, eg head lice, flu, vomiting, please note in the comments section.
- Sign and date the note and send to the office in *attendance folder*.
- Verbal notifications by parents/carers are acceptable and should be recorded in the roll. Write "verbal" in the comments. (APPENDIX 2). Write the staff member that took the verbal notification.
- Teachers responsible for students attending whole or part day out of school activities, including sport and debating, will supply the names of the students participating to the office on the day before the activity. The supervising teacher will supply an adjusted attendance record to the office on return to school (**including teacher signature**).
- Negotiated Part Day Exemption (A part day exemption program, negotiated between the parent and the school, where the student attends part of each school day, with the aim to return to full time attendance – must be approved by the Director, Public Schools NSW). Student is marked present if they attend for the time negotiated (marked as exempt (M) when not required to be at school (exempted)). Partial absence recorded if the student is absent for any time they are negotiated to be attending school.
- Special circumstances registers are to be used on days on which there is part or full day industrial action involving teachers, approved school development days, days on which the school is inaccessible due to natural occurrences such as fire or flood. The Sentral roll is not to be marked on these days. The special circumstance register should specify the date and times of the variation, indicate the reason for the variation, list the students attending on that day and be signed by the teacher maintaining the register and attached to the hard copy of the roll.
- An application for 'Exemption from Attendance at School' should be considered if a student is absent due to a family holiday or illness. Only the Principal may grant an exemption. Exemptions cannot be granted retrospectively. Teachers should discuss possible exemption applications with the Principal. The code for exemption, 'M', should not be entered on the roll for the period that the exemption has been approved. Principals can approve up to 100 days in a 12 month period.

#### **Absence**

- On the day a child is absent a message will be sent to parents via the Sentral messaging system.

#### **Late Arrival/Early Departures**

- Students must present a *late arrival/early leaving pass* to the teacher before entering or leaving class. These are obtained from the office by the parents/ carers.
- No adjustment to the roll is necessary as office staff will make this adjustment on the roll when note is collected.

#### **Two Day Consecutive Leave without Explanation**

- If any student is absent for two days without explanation, then on the afternoon of the second day, the SAM/SAO is required to contact the family to enquire as to the reason for the absence. The SAM/SAO should record the reason for absence on the roll with their initials. If unable to contact the parent a record of this attempt should be recorded. (APPENDIX 1)

#### **Student Absence Note (APPENDIX 3)**

- On the day a student returns to school after an absence, if they do not supply a note signed by the parent/carer regarding their absence, the teacher should supply them with this form to take home for completion. Teachers should fill out the name and date of absence/s only. Once the note is returned to school, mark in roll as per marking procedures above.

#### **Request for Medical Certificate (APPENDIX 7)**

- In accordance to the NSW Department of Education 'Compulsory school attendance- Information for parents' document, Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness.

#### Roll Marking Symbols

<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>Symbols to be used where students are absent from school</b>	
<b>a</b>	the student was absent on the day
<b>Pa</b>	The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival and/or departure must be recorded
<b>Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence from school</b>	
• These absence codes <b>are</b> counted towards the school's attendance data	
<b>A</b>	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no notice has been provided by parents within seven school days of the absence.
<b>S</b>	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"> <li>• a medical certificate is provided or</li> <li>• 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 duration of the absence is more than four days.</li> </ul>
<b>L</b>	Principals may record up to 15 days in a school year for students of compulsory school age who have provided an explanation of the absence which has been accepted by the principal. Additional days for students not of compulsory school age may be recorded at the principal's discretion. This symbol is recorded where a student's absence is due to reasons accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• misadventure or unforeseen event</li> <li>• participation in special events not related to the school</li> <li>• domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member</li> <li>• attendance at funerals.</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	The student was suspended from school
<b>Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence from school</b>	
• These absence codes are not counted towards the school's attendance data	
<b>M</b>	The student was exempted from attending school. An exemption must be applied for prior to the student's planned absence
<b>B</b>	The student is attending official school business. The principal has approved the student leaving the school site for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and state school sport carnivals</li> <li>• School excursions</li> <li>• Links to learning programs</li> </ul>
<b>H</b>	The student is sharing enrolment with another site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutorial centre, behaviour school or juvenile justice centre</li> </ul>

## **PASSWORDS AND ROLL MARKING LEGALITIES**

**NEVER** give your password for Sentral out to anyone, including a casual teacher.

Casuals will mark the roll on Sentral.

All paper rolls will be kept and archived.

### **ii) SAS Staff role/ responsibility:**

- Print late arrivals/ early leaver slips for students to deliver to class teachers on arrival or departure from school. Reason to be provided by parent/ carer – verbally or by note.
- Complete verbal notifications when parents/carers notify of absences via phone or front counter.
- Attach a copy of 'Out of school activities attendance record' to the official attendance register.
- File a copy of negotiated part-day exemption in the student's Record Card.
- Attach a copy of the special circumstance register to the official attendance register
- Notes are filed and kept in the office.
- If any student is absent for two days without explanation, then on the afternoon of the second day, the SAM/SAO is required to contact the family to enquire as to the reason for the absence. The SAM/SAO should record the reason for absence on the roll with their initials. If unable to contact the parent a record of this attempt should be recorded. (APPENDIX 1)
- The adjustments recorded if any errors in roll marking or professional judgement eg. student originally marked absent but later found to be representing the school at a sporting event or notes received for absences prior to that week's roll and partials after the roll has been submitted(Refer to Principal or HSLO if required).
- An 'Absence Report' (official Attendance Register) is generated each Monday for the previous 2 week period, signed by the principal and filed in the office.
- A 'Return of Absences' is completed each Semester as directed.
- Any Departmental adjustments e.g. Exemptions/Transfers/Missing Children File, will be dealt with by Office staff and official notifications will be attached to relevant weeks "Attendance Registers".
- An 85% attendance report provided to Principal to be tables at the Learning Support Committee to check on student attendance and follow up as needed (once a fortnight).

### **Absences**


1. SAO/SAM will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents/ carers promptly AND within 2 DAYS of an unexplained absence occurring. Contact may be made by providing the parent with an Absentee Note, telephone, email or SMS text (continue until contact is made).
2. Teachers notify their AP if not satisfied with the response.
3. Learning Support Committee notified if not satisfied with the response and decision made to monitor or begin LAMP form. (Electronic version will be used).
4. Matter referred to HSLO if further action is required.  
See Appendix 6 for more details on the process of when an electronic LAMP may begin.



### Shoal Bay Public School Contact Log within 2 days of an unexplained Absence

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Student Name	Person contacted	Phone Number	Dates Absent	Reason for Absence Discussion Points Brought up by parent	Verbal Absence Note Completed (Tick Please)	Staff Initial



**SHOAL BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL - VERBAL ADVICE OF ABSENCE**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_


Date/s of Absence \_\_\_\_\_

Reason \_\_\_\_\_

Notified by \_\_\_\_\_

Notification Received By \_\_\_\_\_ Codes S L A

Teacher's Signature ..... Date .....



**SHOAL BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL - VERBAL ADVICE OF ABSENCE**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_


Date/s of Absence \_\_\_\_\_

Reason \_\_\_\_\_

Notified by \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Codes S L A

Teacher's Signature ..... Date .....



**SHOAL BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL - VERBAL ADVICE OF ABSENCE**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Date/s of Absence \_\_\_\_\_

Reason \_\_\_\_\_

Notified by \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Codes S L A

Teacher's Signature ..... Date .....

### Absence Note



..... was absent from school  
 on.....

The Department of Education requires a note of explanation for these absences within seven days of returning to school. In the space below would you please state why your child was absent including relevant dates. Please return the completed note to your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Class teacher .....

**Reason (if more than one date please state reason for each date)**.....

.....

**Signed (parent/guardian)** ..... **Date** .....

### Absence Note



..... was absent from school  
 on.....

The Department of Education requires a note of explanation for these absences within seven days of returning to school. In the space below would you please state why your child was absent including relevant dates. Please return the completed note to your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Class teacher .....

**Reason (if more than one date please state reason for each date)**.....

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**Signed (parent/guardian)** ..... **Date** .....

### Absence Note



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Thank you for your co-operation.

Class teacher .....

**Reason (if more than one date please state reason for each date)**.....

.....

**Signed (parent/guardian)** ..... **Date** .....



Shoal Bay Public School

Excursion notification/attendance record

Excursion: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organising teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional supervising teachers: \_\_\_\_\_

Class/Group attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

Time leaving: \_\_\_\_\_ Time returning: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name	Roll Group	Attendance	Variations to attendance

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_





## Shoal Bay Public School

### Attendance Procedures 2022

Prior to applying for support from the Home School Liaison Program, schools have the responsibility for interventions at different levels:

#### 1. Classroom Teacher Level

- **Accurately mark the roll each day;** including partial attendance and assessing explanation for absence (everyday)
- **Request explanation for absence;** remind students and send a note home (after point of return)
- **Phone call to parents/ Letter sent home endorsed by Principal informing absentee explanations** (once placed on a LAMP). AEO to call home if student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and identified and discussed as an attendance concern.
- **Referral to Assistant Principal or Principal for review at student welfare meetings**
- Where attendance is of concern, **begin a LAMP form.** (Electronic version will be used).

#### **Examples of concern;**

1. There is a regular pattern of absence i.e. every Friday.
2. There is an absence every week – explained or unexplained.  
Partial absences are a regular occurrence i.e. 2/3 per week – explained or unexplained.

**If unsure of what action to take, bring roll or absentee note to Assistant Principal/ Principal and/ complete Learning Support Team (LST) referral.**

**If there is no improvement after one care call by the class teacher (1 entry on LAMP sheet)  
*If there is still NO improvement (within 2 weeks) then;***

#### 2. Executive/ Assistant Principal Level (Student Welfare Co-Ordinator/LaST)

- **Second Care Call by Assistant Principal-** Assistant Principal makes a care call. **Record date of discussion on LAMP form.**  
*If there is still NO improvement (within 2 weeks) then;*

#### 3. Principal Level

- **Letter 1/ phone call to home-** Principal makes contact and sends Letter 1 home. **Record date of discussion on LAMP form.** Monitor for 2 weeks to see improvement.
- **Letter 2 sent home-**Principal sends Letter 2 home. **Record date of discussion on LAMP form.**  
*If there is still NO improvement (within 2 weeks) then;*

#### 4. Informal Meeting

- **Letter 3/informal meeting-**Principal requests that parent/ carer attends a meeting at school to discuss attendance (HSLO can be requested if needed for support for family). Class teacher to be present at this meeting if needed. Discuss strategies for improvement. **Record date of discussion on LAMP form.**  
● *If there is still NO improvement (within 2 weeks) then;*

#### 5. Formal Meeting

- **Letter 4/formal meeting and HSLO referral-** Principal requests that parent/carer attends a meeting at school to discuss attendance. Formal Attendance Plan meeting with HSLO and Principal. **Record date of discussion on LAMP form.**

**If there is still NO improvement (within 2 weeks) then:**

**6. HSLO Caseload**

- **HSLO caseload-** Student is placed on HSLP caseload. School supports HSLO with attendance information.

**7. Secretary Conference**

- **Secretary-**Secretary Conference is scheduled if no improvement.

**LAMPs and the New School Year:**

At the beginning of a new school year, students who were on a LAMP at the end of the previous school year will be monitored for the first 2 weeks of Term 1 and if their attendance has improved they will be removed from a LAMP. The students who still have poor attendance in the first 2 weeks will continue at the stage of the Attendance Flow Chart that they finished on at the end of the previous year.

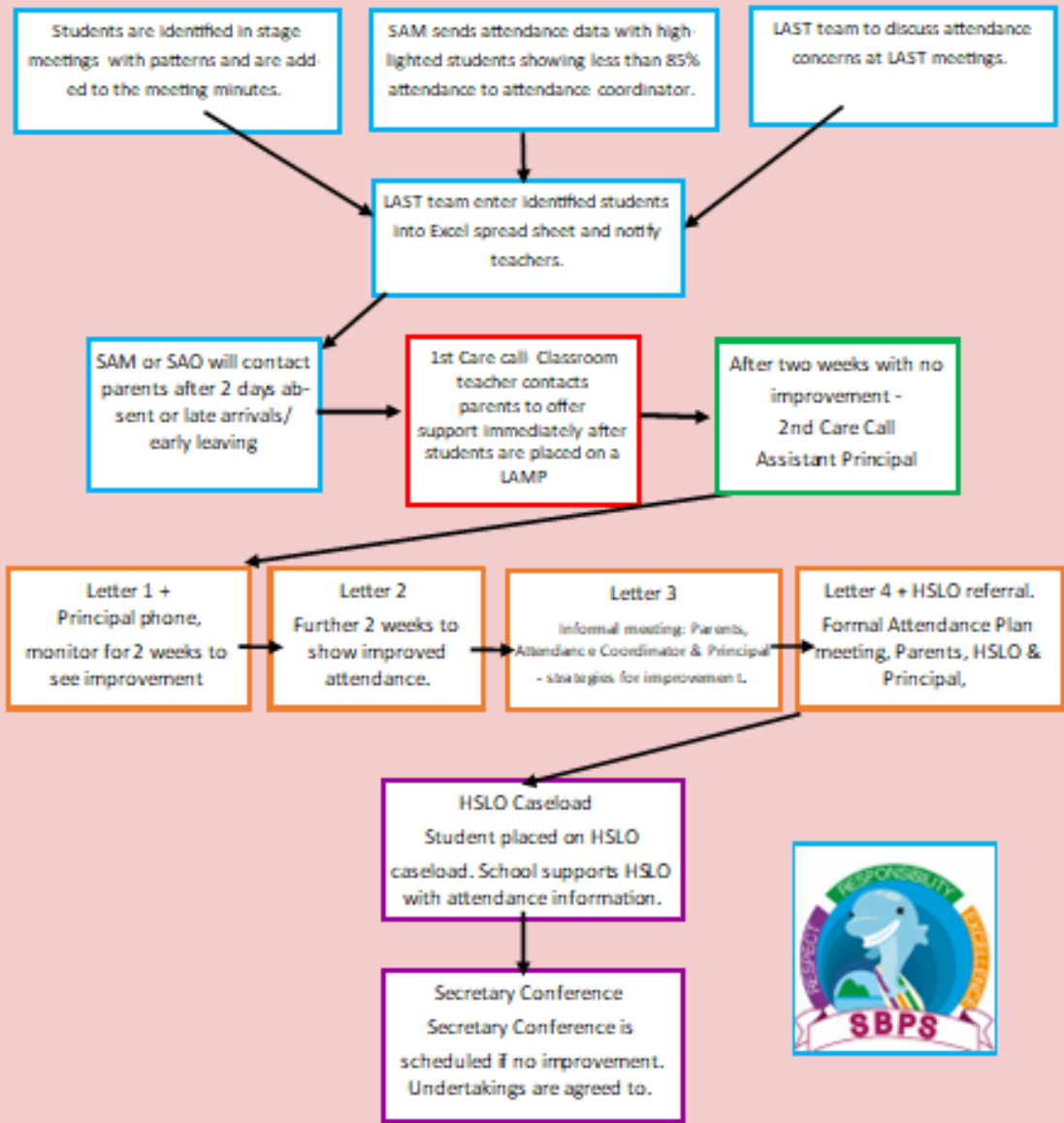
Those students who are on Care Call 1 or Care Call 2 in the previous year, and their Attendance has not improved in the first 2 weeks of the new school year, students will begin the care call process again but with the new Classroom Teacher to establish a new relationship with the parents/caregiver.



# SBPS Attendance Tracking Flow Chart

SAM or SAO will call parents/carers if students are away for 2 unexplained consecutive days.

- Parents/carers to be called on the afternoon of the 2nd day, when students are away for 2 unexplained consecutive days.
- SAM/SAO to record phone calls on Sentral.
- SAM/SAO updates reason on Sentral with their initials.



[https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/en/home/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters---resources-for-schools/Compulsory\\_school\\_attendance\\_parents\\_QAupdate\\_2022.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/en/home/student-wellbeing/attendance-matters---resources-for-schools/Compulsory_school_attendance_parents_QAupdate_2022.pdf)

NSW Department of Education



## Compulsory school attendance

### | Information for parents

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. NSW public schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

#### What are my Legal responsibilities?

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age of 17 years. The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the NSW Education and Standards Authority for home schooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

#### The Importance of arriving on time

Arriving at school and class on time:

- Ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- Helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- Give students time to greet their friends before class
- Reduces classroom disruption

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

#### What if my child has to be away from school?

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral)

education.nsw.gov.au



Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the principal can record the absences as unjustified.

### Travel

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. An Application for Extended Leave may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.

### My child won't go to school what should I do?

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The principal may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

### What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?

It is important to understand that the Department of Education may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- Compulsory Schooling Conferences

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

- Application to the Children's Court – Compulsory Schooling Order

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

- Prosecution in the Local Court

School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

### What age can my child leave school?

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling.

### Working in Partnership

The NSW Department of Education recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

## Days missed = years lost

A day here and there doesn't seem like much, but...



### More information

Further information regarding school attendance can be obtained from the following websites:

#### Policy, information and brochures:

Please visit the Department of Education's Policy Library AND The Department's Attendance Matters Website

#### The school leaving age:

Please visit the Department of Education's Wellbeing and Learning website

#### Do you need an interpreter?

Interpreting services are available on request, including for the hearing impaired. The Telephone Interpreter Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **131 450**. You will not be charged for this service.