HORNSBY HEIGHTS

PUBLIC SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Last updated January 2016

Audience and Applicability

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership 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, monitor part or whole day absences.

Objectives – Policy Statement

The Education Act (1990) requires the parents of a child of compulsory school age to enrol them at a government school or a registered non-government school, or to register them with the Board of Studies for home schooling.

The Act also requires parents to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school. It is an offence for parents to fail to meet these obligations unless they can show they have a defence (for example, illness or accident). Parents convicted of this offence may be fined for each offence.

# Responsibilities and Delegations

*Parents and Carers*

* If your child is absent from school for any amount of time please send a note with the child on the day he/she returns explaining the absence.
* If you know that your child is going to be away for longer than two days, please telephone the school and the message will be passed on to the class teacher. You must still send a written note on their return.
* Extended leave may be applied for via a Certificate of Exemption Form available at the school office. The Department of Education only permits Principals to approve leave for valid reasons such as illness, accident or compelling family difficulty. All parents who remove their children must inform the office and those who comply with the Certificate of Exemption must provide evidence of flights, if overseas travel is required, or statutory declarations as required by the Principal. Removal of children from school outside these conditions may illicit the attention of the Home School Liaison Officer.
* All children who are late must report to the office before going to the classroom. **An adult present explaining the lateness is necessary**. If you are unable to bring your child to the office or to phone confirming the reason for your child’s lateness, please provide your child with a note explaining the reason for lateness.
* It is expected that children attend for full days, however, if you collect your child from school early, please report to the office first. Please note that anyone collecting your child from the school early must be 18 years or over and must have authority from the parent/carer. This can be in the form of written permission or a phone call to the office.

*School Staff*

* providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students’ sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
* recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
* maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
* implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.
* providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

**Maintenance of Attendance Rolls**

Classroom teachers maintain the class roll. (Refer to Appendix A regarding the correct codes for the teacher to maintain the attendance roll). Class rolls are to be submitted by 9:30am in the morning. Class rolls are managed in ESR Momentum. Full and partial absences are to be recorded in the roll using the appropriate symbols and codes. Students who are late or who leave early are issued with a Partial Absence Slip which must be given to the teacher so that the partial absence can be recorded. Teachers record partial absences in the class roll and store the Partial Absence Slips. Teachers are to send a note home when students are absent and return without one. Absence slips should be completed by the class teacher and given to student on their return. This is recorded in the notes section of the absence check as a record of note being sent. When the class teacher is absent the paper copy of the roll should be marked by the casual, unless a neighbouring teacher is able to log them in. Note should be made in form that it is submitted by casual.

**Monitoring**

Regular roll checks will be made by the Stage Supervisor, Principal and Home School Liaison Office (HSLO) to ensure that all students maintain an acceptable attendance pattern. Each fortnight stage supervisors will check class absences. Checks will be made to identify students who have repeat absences, explained or unexplained. Stage Supervisors will follow up absences and may require classroom teachers to produce evidence of communication with parents/carers. If a classroom teacher is concerned about lack of attendance or consistent lateness they must seek advice from their Stage Supervisor so that rectification measures can be taken or a referral made to the HSLO. Stage supervisors are responsible for contacting parents if the reasons are still unexplained or a large number of absences continue, following teacher follow-up.

Absences that are consistent but considered unexplained due to non-exemption, can be noted on the roll, with explanation.

**Parent Awareness of the Importance of Attendance**

Throughout the year there are several opportunities to raise parent and community awareness of the need for excellent attendance and the impact of poor attendance on academic performance. These include:

* Inclusion of a session on attendance during Kindergarten Orientation.
* eNews reminders on the importance of attendance and need to inform the school of any absences.
* Inclusion of a session on attendance at the parent information night in Term 1.
* Letters sent to parents asking them to explain their child’s absence from school
* Staff communicate the need to provide a written explanation of all absences.
* Staff communicate the need to apply for a Certificate of Exemption when students require leave for extended periods of time e.g. for overseas travel. Where the number of days applied for are less than 50, the parents will need to complete a General Exemption Form for the principal to sign and keep on record. For periods of 50 days or more the School Education Director will sign. The Department of Education only permits Principals to approve leave for valid reasons such as illness, accident or compelling family difficulty.

**Procedures for Dealing with Unacceptable Attendance**

Hornsby Heights Public School implements a wide range of strategies to support the regular attendance of students. These strategies include letters, phone calls, interviews and individual attendance plans where needed.

**Poor Attendance Pattern:** *Consecutive Days Absent*

1. Class Teacher identifies the student/s that have been absent two consecutive days and contacts the child’s parent/carer to seek explanation. Class teacher must continue trying to contact until explanation is received.
2. If a child’s family is unable to be contacted staff must notify their Stage Supervisor. Stage Supervisor is to assess the case and make an informed decision.
3. Classroom teacher to follow up absence on return.
4. If no explanation is received, classroom teacher is to send home absence note (white one) asking for explanation. If no explanation is received, teachers must report to Stage Supervisor.

**Poor Attendance Pattern:** *Consistent Lateness*

1. If a student is late more than once in a week or if there is a repeated pattern of lateness, Class Teacher contacts the parents to ask for an explanation and to inform of importance of school attendance and promptness.

*If lateness continues:*

1. Class Teacher starts LAMP to monitor attendance. Record all phone conversations and outcomes on the LAMP (Appendix B).
2. Class Teacher notifies Stage Supervisor of concern and arranges to meet with parent/carer.
3. Class Teacher and Stage Supervisor meet with parent/carer to discuss their concerns and strategies to assist students arrive on time, for example Attendance Charts, etc as part of this monitoring process (Refer to Appendix D).
4. Send letter (Refer to Appendix E).
5. Refer to HSLO (Refer to Appendix C). HSLO works closely with the school to ensure these procedures are followed and where appropriate makes further contact with parents and guardians in an effort to improve the attendance of students.

**Appendix A.**

**Manual Attendance Registers:** *Class Rolls*

* Please use a black pen only in rolls.
* No correction fluid to be used. Draw a neat line through any mistakes.
* Initial the roll every day, ensure colleagues do so on days they mark your class roll.
* The symbol **X** is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.
* Students who are new enrollments:
  + - rule a red arrow to their first day 🡪
    - mark their first day with an **X**
* Students who change schools:
  + - rule a red line to the last day with an arrow 🡨
    - rule a red line through the student’s name
    - mark their last day with an **X**
    - record number of absences in Pupil Record Card
* After 7 days mark all unexplained absences with an **A** above the **a,** however attempt to gain an explanation by sending letters home.
* Record all partial absences with **Pa**. Details of all partial absences must be recorded in the back of the roll. The reason symbol for the partial absence must be recorded above the **Pa**.
* Staff Development Days and Public Holidays are to be marked with broken lines.
* Record reason for regular absences if they are due to medical reasons i.e. Speech Pathology, Dr Appointments, etc, in the Special Notes section of the roll.
* Complete the ‘Role Absences Explained’ sheet for those students who are absent for an extended time period with explanation but not exempt. These students are marked with capital **A**.

**Symbols:** *When a Student is Absent*

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| **a** | The student was absent the whole day. |
| **Pa** | The student was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded. |

**Symbols:** *To explain an Absence*

**Note:** The following symbols at to be recorded above the **a** or **Pa** symbol as appropriate.

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| **A** | The student’s absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no notice has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of the absence. |
| **S** | The student’s absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical appointment. In these cases:  - a medical certificate is provided or  - 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. |
| **L** | 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:  - 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. |
| **E** | The student was suspended from school. |
| **M** | The student was exempted from attending school. |
| **F** | Senior student participating in flexible timetable not present because they are not required to be at school. |
| **B** | The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake:  - work experience  - school sport (regional and state carnivals)  - school excursions. |
| **H** | The student is attending two or more education settings for a period of time (shared enrolment). This symbol is recorded where a student accesses a specialist educational setting on a sessional or full-time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as:  - tutorial centre and programs  - behaviour schools  - juvenile justice  - Hospital schools. |

**Appendix B.**

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| **T1** | **a** |  | **pa** |  |  | **Family Name:** |
| **T2** | **a** |  | **pa** |  | **HOME SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM** |  |

**school: HORNSBY HEIGHTS p.S**

**Lateness and Attendance Monitoring Program 2014 (LAMP)**

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| **Term 1** | | **M** | **T** | **W** | **T** | **F** | **Student Details** | **Term 2** | | **M** | **T** | **W** | **T** | **F** |
| **1** | 27/1 | PH | SDD |  |  |  | **Name (First):** | **1** | 28/4 | SDD |  |  |  |  |
| **2** | 3/2 |  |  |  |  |  | **Year:** | **2** | 5/5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3** | 10/2 |  |  |  |  |  | **DOB:** | **3** | 12/5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4** | 17/2 |  |  |  |  |  | **Parents:** | **4** | 19/5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5** | 24/2 |  |  |  |  |  | **Caregiver:** | **5** | 26/5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6** | 3/3 |  |  |  |  |  | **Address:** | **6** | 2/6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **7** | 10/3 |  |  |  |  |  |  | **7** | 9/6 | PH |  |  |  |  |
| **8** | 17/3 |  |  |  |  |  | **Ph (Hm):** | **8** | 16/6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **9** | 24/3 |  |  |  |  |  | **Ph (Wk/Mb):** | **9** | 23/6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **10** | 31/3 |  |  |  |  |  | **Emergency:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **11** | 7/4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Intervention**

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|  | **Action** | **Suggested Actions** |
| **Step 1** | **By CRT** | **3-4 interventions max. 3 to 4 weeks max.** |
|  |  | **Discuss attendance and decide on reward for 5 consecutive days attendance; record on back eg points/award/ individual incentive** |
|  |  | **Monitor daily – if absent, phone parents asap to ascertain reason – record on back** |
|  |  | **Parent contact if no improvement – record on back and attach minutes of meeting to this sheet and copy in student file** |
|  |  | **After 3 weeks good attendance, discontinue lamp but monitor.** |
|  |  | **If no improvement after 3-4 weeks, refer to executive.** |
| **Step 2** | **+Executive** | **2-3 weeks max.** |
|  |  | **Student interview** |
|  |  | **Parent Meeting.** |
|  |  | **Send letter home re poor attendance – attach copy to this sheet and copy to student file.** |
|  |  | **After 3 weeks good attendance, discontinue lamp but monitor.** |
|  |  | **If no improvement after 3-4 weeks, refer to Principal** |
| **Step 3** | **+Principal** | **1-2 weeks max.** |
|  |  | **Parent meeting-** |
|  |  | **If no improvement, Letter 1 to parent – attach copy to this sheet and copy to student file** |
|  |  | **CWU report - copy to student file** |
|  |  | **Referral to HSLO team if no improvement** |

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| PC = Phone call PI = parent interview SI = student interview  HV = Home visit L = Letter sent home R = reply received  AR = attendance review EA = Encouragement Award EM = Email  SMS – Text Message |

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**Appendix C.**

**Application for Home School Liaison Program Support**

* Please fax completed applications to Student Welfare Consultants at

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* Incomplete applications cannot be accepted
* HSLO intervention can only proceed when a range of school based interventions have been implemented and this application has been signed by the student welfare consultant
* Please attach the copy of ***Example letter 5*** sent to the parents/carers.
* The form must be **signed** by the principal or relieving principal.

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| **Section A: Student Details** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Surname: | |  | | | | | | | | | | Given Names: | | | | | | |  | | | | | | | | | |
| Date of Birth: | | | | |  | | | | | | | Sex: | | | Male **□** | | | | | | | Female**□** | | |  | | | |
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| Date of Enrolment: | | | | | | | | | | Year / Class: | | | | | | ERN: | | | |  | | | | | | | | |
| Background: Aboriginal / TSI:**□** | | | | | | | | | | | | | Language Background Other than English **□** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |
| Language spoken at home: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Address: | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Post Code: | | |  | | | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Name of parent / carer: | | | | | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Phone: | | (H): | | | | | | | (W): | | | | | | | | (M): | | | | | | |  | | | | |
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| Total whole day student absences (from student record card): | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **K** | **Year**  **1** | | | **Year**  **2** | | **Year**  **3** | | | | | **Year**  **4** | | | **Year**  **5** | | | | **Year 6** | | | **Year**  **7** | | **Year 8** | | | **Year**  **9** | **Year**  **10** | |
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| **Section B: Record of Student’s Attendance**  **Absences for current and previous term\*** | | | | | |
| Sick | Leave | Unexplained | Exemption | Suspension | Partial Absences |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| \* Please attach a copy of the attendance register / OASIS printout indicating the student’s attendance for this period. | | | | | |

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| **Section C: School Intervention** | | | | | |
| Please attach attendance improvement plan strategies & interventions that have occurred. Please outline interventions that have occurred (attach additional sheets if required): | | | | | |
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| Support personnel involved with the student and family: | | | | | |
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| Other agencies involved: | | | | | |
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| **Section D: Known Risk Factors** | | | | | |
| Has the student a history of violence? | | | | | Yes/No |
| Has the student been long suspended for violence? | | | | | Yes/ No |
| Have the student’s parents or other people living with the student behaved aggressively towards the school? | | | | | Yes/No |
| Has the Inclosed Lands Act been issued to prevent the student’s parents or other people living with the student from entering the school? | | | | | Yes/No |
| Other |  | | | | |
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| Principal’s signature: | |  | Date: | \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ | |

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| **Section E: To be completed by regional attendance staff**  Risk assessment conducted by:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Risk assessment report ***MUST*** be attached before the case is activated.\*  Entered onto caseload (database):\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ School notified:\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ | | | | |
| HSLO / ASLO allocated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Manager HSL program: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Name Signature Date  Preliminary investigation assigned to (HSLO)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Name Date | | | | |
| Proceed with intervention: | Yes / No |  |  |  |
| Approval to commence casework \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Signature Date | | | | |
| \* Yes: Within **5 school days** an attendance improvement plan is to be developed | | | | |
| Plan developed: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Form **Letter 3** sent \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Date  Within 20 days, plan is to be reviewed to check engagement \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Date  If no parental engagement **and** continued poor attendance, matter to be referred for prosecution.  **Form B** sent \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Form  **Letter 4** sent \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Date Date  **\*No:** reason(s) for declining application for support: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **and,** HSLO provided additional strategies to school ( within 5 days) \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Date | | | | |

**Appendix D.**

***Hornsby Heights Public School***

Date:

Dear Mr / Mrs \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

Please be advised that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s attendance is a matter of concern. Attending school regularly is important for students to access all learning opportunities. The school would like to implement a range of strategies to encourage \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s full attendance at school.

Please attend a meeting to discuss this matter on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

It is important that you work with us to resolve this matter.

Regards,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Martin Naylor

**Principal**

**Hornsby Heights Public School**

**Appendix E.**

***Hornsby Heights Public School***

***Date***

***Name***

***Street address***

***Suburb NSW 2…***

Dear Mr / Mrs \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I refer to the attendance of your son / daughter, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, at school.

The *Education Act (1990)* requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on each day that the school is open for instruction. If children are absent from school, parents are required to provide the school with an acceptable explanation within seven days of the absence.

You have previously been advised that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s attendance is a matter of concern. The school has implemented a range of strategies to encourage \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s full attendance at school without success.

I am obliged to report apparent unresolved non-compliance with the *Education Act (1990)* to the local manager of the region’s Home School Liaison Program for further investigation by a home school liaison officer to help resolve the matter. The local manager will consider if further action is necessary. This may include the development of an Attendance Improvement Plan with specific targets, strategies and timelines.

If you do not meaningfully engage in the plan andthere is no improvement in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s attendance during this time, the matter may be referred to the Department’s senior officers for possible legal action.

It is important that you work with us to resolve this matter.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Martin Naylor

**Principal**

**Hornsby Heights Public School**

**Appendix F.**

***Hornsby Heights Public School***

Dear Mr / Mrs \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

**Late Arrivals**

The Home School Liaison Officer has recently completed a roll check and noticed that your child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is continuing to arrive late for school.

Repeated lateness results in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ missing daily messages and time to prepare for the day's activities without additional stress of being late. The Education Reform Act (1990) requires parents to ensure their children maintain attendance at all times that the school is open.

A habit of lateness will be increasingly difficult for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to overcome and in later years may have implications for their further study and employment.

Please attend a meeting to discuss this matter on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

It is important that you work with us to resolve this matter.

Regards,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Martin Naylor

**Principal**

**Hornsby Heights Public School**