

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. RATIONALE

This Student Attendance Policy applies to all enrolled students in Years K-12, including students enrolled in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in each student's academic and personal growth. The Education Act requires that children of school age resident in Australia are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school, unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence/distance education, or have been granted an exemption by the Education Department.

The Central Coast Steiner School acknowledges that education is a sequential process. Regular school attendance is actively promoted and monitored in our ongoing commitment to the best possible learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students.

2. AIM

This Policy aims to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by requiring that all students attend school regularly, without unnecessary or unexplained absences. Students are required to attend school within the school hours, arriving punctually and remaining at school for the entire day.

RECORD KEEPING

The Education Act requires that the Principal of a registered non-government school keeps a register of enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school. The Central Coast Steiner School maintains a register of enrolments and a register of daily attendances in electronic form. Copies of the information in the register of enrolment and the register of daily attendance are stored securely off-site and backed up at regular intervals using the electronic School administration system (Compass).

4. ENROLMENTS

The Central Coast Steiner School maintains an electronic register of enrolments that includes the following information for each student:

- name, age and address
- the name and contact phone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- date of enrolment
- the date of leaving the school and student's destination where applicable
- for students older than six (6) years, previous school or pre-enrolment situation

5. ATTENDANCE

The Central Coast Steiner School:

- monitors the daily attendance/absence of students, including punctuality
- identifies absences from school and/or class(es)

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- follows up unexplained absences
- notifies parent(s) and/or guardian(s) regarding poor school and/or class attendance
- transfers unsatisfactory attendance information and correspondence to student files

The Central Coast Steiner School maintains an electronic register of daily attendance that includes the following information for each student:

- daily attendance, which is to be recorded by noting daily absences
- absences
- reason for absences and late arrivals/early leave

Documentation to substantiate reason/s for absence are maintained in student files.

The Central Coast Steiner School ensures that the attendance register and class rolls are kept in a secure and accessible location in the administration office. Codes are entered according to the *ACARA National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting*.

The following codes are used:

- **A:** Student absence is unjustified
- **S:** Absence due to illness
- **L:** Approved Leave
- **E:** School suspension

Symbols to be used to record a variation in attendance are:

- **M:** The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
- **B:** The student is absent from the school on official school business.
- **F:** A flexible timetable is in place
- **H:** The student is attending school in another setting because they have no choice e.g. a hospital school
- **P:** The student was absent for part of the day. Times of arrival and departure are recorded.
- **X:** The symbol X is used to show the first day and the last day of the school term that the student attended.

The register of enrolments is retained for a minimum period of five (5) years before archiving. The register of daily attendances is retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry is made.

At the weekly College of Teachers meeting, 'Attendance Issues' is a standing item on the agenda. Any concerning trends, or risks of non-achievement identified by the teachers are followed up appropriately by administrative staff, teachers and the Principal.

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6. PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:

Attendance expectations are explicitly addressed in the enrolment interview and in the Student and Parent/Guardian Codes of Conduct. Upon enrolment, and at regular intervals such as parent/teacher nights and by using the school newsletter, Compass, parents/guardians are

informed that education is a sequential process and that regular attendance, including punctuality, is expected. The School therefore requires that:

- All enrolled students attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds - such as illness- exist for them to be absent.
- Parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Leaves of absence must be applied for and approved by the Principal one week prior to the leave being taken. Unjustified leave will be recorded as a student absence (A).
- Parents/guardians are requested to phone the school by 9.00 a.m. to inform the school that their child will not be in attendance. If a student will be arriving late, parents/guardians must call the office no later than 9.30 a.m. to inform them of their expected arrival time. If this phone call is not received, the school will phone/text the parents/guardians.
- All students who arrive after 9 a.m. must sign in at the office. Their late arrival is recorded.
- To explain an absence, parents/guardians may send a note, send a text, email to the school, use Compass or phone the school either on the day of absence or on the following day.
- Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide written or verbal notification or return a completed absence form to the school explaining why an absence has occurred within seven days. Documentation of this written or verbal notification is kept on the student file.
- Where a student is absent for a prolonged time due to illness, a home learning program will be arranged to maintain continuity of learning.
- Parents/guardians are requested to take their holidays within designated school holiday times. Parents/guardians intending to take holidays outside designated school holiday times are requested to apply for leave with the Principal and inform the class teacher/year guardian at least one week prior to leaving. A formal leave approval will be required to be completed one week prior to the holiday period being taken.
- Parents/guardians of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences and/or late arrivals will be contacted by the Principal, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences. An Attendance Management Plan may be developed and implemented. This is monitored by the Principal. Should the Attendance Management Plan be unsuccessful, the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) Student Services will facilitate an Attendance Conference, and uphold accountability to the Attendance Management Plan.
- When exiting a student from the Central Coast Steiner School, parents/guardians must provide details of the new enrolment or the home-schooling registration number.
- When a student leaves the school and their destination is unknown, the Central Coast Steiner School sends a letter requesting information to the last known address. In cases where no response is received, a notification is sent to attendance@dec.nsw.edu.au. The Principal then contacts the officer responsible for Home-School Liaison and notifies of the student's name, age and last known address.

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7. UNEXPLAINED ABSENTEE PROCEDURES

The School administration has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school by keeping a daily electronic register for each class. The School administration has a further responsibility to ensure that all unexplained absences are investigated and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. All student absences are recorded electronically in the morning by teachers using the School administration system *Compass*. If a student is marked absent:

1. The School administration will text or phone parent/guardian (home, mobile and work numbers) on the first and second day if absence is unexplained. If by the third day there is no explanation for the absence, then a follow up phone call is made.
2. The School will phone emergency contact numbers on the third day if a student is still absent and unexplained.

Unexplained absences are investigated, and any concerns are communicated to the Principal. High levels of absenteeism/late arrivals or early leave are also notified to the Principal. Follow up processes include requiring parents to submit supporting documentation such as medical certificates and developing an Attendance Management Plan.

In partnership with the parents/guardians, the Principal instigates an 'Attendance Improvement Plan' where required.

Concerns for child welfare are addressed by the Principal according to mandatory reporting obligations.

8. TRANSITION AND SUPPORT PROCESSES

In cases where absenteeism is the result of school refusal, mental health issues etc. the Principal/Deputy Principal communicate with the parents/guardians to develop and implement strategies to minimise absences and support a transition back to regular school attendance.

Transition Plans, Attendance Improvement Plans and risk assessments are developed in liaison with psychologists/welfare professionals and Student Services consultants from the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) where appropriate.

9. LEAVE PROCEDURES

Where the parents/guardians of a student of compulsory school age seeks *Leave from Attendance* at school or an exemption from enrolment, the school will process the application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education and Communities:

- Applications for Leave less than 100 days in a year or a request for an Exemption from Enrolment in order to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship will be considered by the Principal who exercises the Minister's delegation.
- Parents will submit the application and supporting documentation to the School Principal

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- The School Principal will consider the application in accordance with the criteria in the guidelines from the NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- Where the application is supported, the Principal will provide the original Leave/Exemption certificate to the parent/guardian/s.
- Copies of the application and exemption certificate or notification are kept on the student's file.
- Where the application is not supported, the Principal will notify the parents in writing of the unsuccessful outcome using the format from the guidelines. If the leave is taken, it will be recorded as unjustified (A)
- Applications for Exemption from Enrolment will be processed with the assistance of the Association of Independent Schools Student Services and in accordance with Section 25 of the Education Act 1990.
- The school will send applications to the Minister's delegate at the Student Welfare Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- The Minister's delegation and copies of applications and exemption certificates should be filed in the School's attendance records and in the student files.
- Applications for Leave of more than 100 days can be granted on application by the Director, Public Schools NSW.

10. EVALUATION

These guidelines will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. Any revisions will be communicated, and the guidelines are accessible to all relevant parties.

Reviewed: 14/02/2024

Related Policies:

- [Child Protection Policy](#)
- [Student Enrolment Policy](#)
- [Guidelines and Codes of Conduct for Parents and Guardians](#)