

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

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

The NSW 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. NSW Schools are required to have Student Attendance Policy and Procedures to monitor regular student attendance and to ensure that the records are current, accurate and accessible.

2. REGULARITY OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in each student's academic and personal growth. 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.

This Student Attendance Policy aims to maximise student learning opportunities and achievement 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.

2. RECORD KEEPING

The NSW Education Act requires that the Principal of a registered non-government school oversees 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 details

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5. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The Central Coast Steiner School:

- monitors the daily attendance/absence of students, including punctuality
- identifies absences from school and/or class(es)
- follows up unexplained absences
- notifies Parents/Guardians regarding poor school and/or class attendance
- Maintains documentation of unsatisfactory attendance correspondence in 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 student attendance records are current, accurate and accessible.

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, but not applied for senior students participating in a flexible timetable
- **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.

6. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT

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At the weekly College of Teachers and Faculty meetings, '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. Where required, a formal Attendance Improvement Plan will be instigated, as per our **Student Attendance Procedures**.

7. PARENTS/GUARDIANS RESPONSIBILITIES:

Communicating the School's Student Attendance Expectations

Parents/Guardians are regularly informed that education is a sequential process and that regular attendance and punctuality is expected. Attendance expectations include School events, excursions, camps etc. Communication of the School's attendance expectations takes place in:

- the enrolment interview
- **Parents/Guardians Codes of Conduct**
- **Student Code of Conduct**
- Parents/Guardians /Teacher nights
- the School's Argo newsletter
- reminders via Compass

Explaining non-attendance

The School 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.
- Any student who arrives after 9 a.m. must sign in at the office. The time of their late arrival is recorded.
- Any student who needs to leave school early must be signed out at the office by their Parents/Guardians. The time of their early departure 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.

Requests for Leave/ Holidays

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- 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 must communicate with the relevant teacher/s about how to cover missed work, due dates for assignments etc.

Unexplained and Unapproved Leave

- Parents/Guardians of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences and/or late arrivals will be contacted by the Principal/ Deputy Principal, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- An **Attendance Improvement Plan** may be developed and implemented. This is monitored by the Principal / Deputy Principal. Should the **Attendance Improvement Plan** be unsuccessful, *Independent Schools NSW* Student Services will facilitate an Attendance Conference, and uphold accountability to the **Attendance Improvement Plan**.

Students Exiting CCSS

- 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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8. 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 system, *Compass*, will automatically text Parents/Guardians 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 (home, mobile and work numbers) is made.
2. If the Parents/Guardians cannot be reached, 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/Deputy Principal. High levels of absenteeism/late arrivals or early leave are also notified to the Principal /Deputy Principal. Follow up processes include requiring parents to submit supporting documentation such as medical certificates and developing an **Attendance Improvement 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.

9. 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.

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9. LEAVE PROCEDURES *Leave of Less Than 100 Days*

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.

Leave of Less than 100 Days

- 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
- 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 Parents/Guardians.
- 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).

Leave of More than 100 Days

- Applications for Exemption from Enrolment will be processed following advice from *Independent Schools NSW Student Services* if required, 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.

9. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

- **Student Attendance Procedures**
- **Student Enrolment Policy**
- **Child Protection Policy**
- **Codes of Conduct for Students (Primary and High School)**
- **Code of Conduct for Parents and Guardians**

10. REVIEW

This **Student Attendance Policy** 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



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13/03/2026 - Principal