



Attendance Policy

Related Policies

Enrolment Policy for Catholic Systemic Schools
Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy

Purpose

This policy describes:

- The responsibilities of Mt Carmel School in encouraging attendance, reporting and dealing with absenteeism as determined in the Education Act 1990 (the Act)
- The statutory obligations of parents under the Act
- The record-keeping procedures required to ensure that attendance data is credible and accurate

Attendance records may be required as proof of a student's enrolment and attendance for a variety of purposes, such as eligibility for Youth Allowance or matters being dealt with by the Family Law Court.

Policy

This policy outlines the responsibilities of schools in the NSW Catholic School System (the System) regarding student enrolment and attendance.

Definitions

Attendance Records

Any and all hard copy documents or electronic records, which in some way record both the attendance and non-attendance of a child at school, scheduled sessions at the school and/or an approved educational course

Compulsory School Age

A child is of compulsory school age if the child is at least 6 years old and under the age that the first of the following happens: the child completes Year 12 or the child is 17 years old

Exemption Certificate

Is a certificate issued by the School Principal or the NSW Minister for Education exempting a child from the requirement to be enrolled with an education provider or registered for home education; or the full-time participation requirement

Parent

Includes a guardian or other person having the custody or care of a child

Student

A person who is enrolled as a student in a school in a NSW school in accordance with the Education Act 1990



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Procedures

Enrolment Procedures and Register of Enrolment

The School maintains an enrolment register, MAZE, that is regularly updated and retained permanently, in accordance with CE policy. MAZE records the following student information:

- Name, age and address
- The name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination
- For students older than six years, previous school or pre-school situation
- Where the destination of a student above 6 and below 17 of age is unknown, evidence that the Department of Education and Training (DET) Officer with home school liaison responsibilities has been notified of the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parent's names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist Officers to locate the student, and any known occupational health and safety risks associated with contacting the parent s or student

Parents/carers will be asked to update student residential data at the beginning of each year.

At the time of enrolment, proof of residency, in the form of an electricity account, tenancy agreement, current driver's licence or similar must be shown to the Principal, or the Principal's delegate. Proof of age and identity (e.g. a birth certificate or passport and immunisation records) must also be shown to the Principal, or the Principal's delegate, at the time of enrolment

The name under which the student is officially enrolled must be the birth certificate name of the student. If, however, one of the following conditions apply, the Principal can enrol students under an alternative name or change existing records to indicate the new name:

- A signed consent from both parents indicating approval to use the new name is provided
- A court order is provided authorizing the use of the new name
- A statutory declaration is provided by the enrolling parent indicating that the child has had no contact with the other parent for a period of five years and his or her whereabouts is unknown
- A signed consent from one parent and proof that the other parent is deceased. This can take the form of a statutory declaration by the enrolling parent or a death certificate
- A birth certificate issued in the new name
- Proof of adoption



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Where one of the above conditions cannot be met, no change of name is to be made and the parent requesting the name change is to be informed that no change will be made until one of the conditions can be met. If a parent raises a concern about their child being known under another name with the Principal, the parent must be advised that a further change would only be made if there is a court order or written agreement of both parents.

Unique Identification Numbers

Each student, upon enrolment, is assigned a unique student identification number. This identifying number remains the same throughout the student's education at Mt Carmel.

Keeping of registers and records of attendances

As a requirement of registration, Mt Carmel must keep a register of attendance at school of all children. This must be in a form approved by the Minister for Education, using the common code for the attendance registers of all NSW schools. The Act requires that a record of attendance of a student must be kept for every day when the school is open for attendance and this information may be maintained in print or electronic form.

Mt Carmel currently uses the CE endorsed electronic roll, Student Care. Staff members are able to access the roll with their network login credentials. The following steps describe the Agreed Practice to be followed in marking and maintaining each class roll:

Marking the Roll

The class roll is to be marked daily by the attending classroom teacher as soon as practicable in the morning upon the commencement of classes, but by 9:30am, at the latest. Attendance is also to be recorded for the afternoon. If a class begins the day with a specialist teacher (for example, Japanese or Library), this teacher is responsible for marking the class roll. In the event of a power failure, Internet outage or some other circumstance that renders Student Care inaccessible, the attending teacher will mark daily attendance on the printed list in the front of the class Roll and Notes folder, and an absentee slip is to be sent to the front office in the Office Bag. This information must be transferred to the electronic roll as soon as possible. If a class is to be split for the day, a supervising teacher must first mark the roll, and details of the class split must be sent to the office.

Late Arrival/Early Departure

All students arriving late or departing early are to be signed in or out via the front office. As part of this procedure, front office staff will record the time of arrival or departure directly into Student Care. Late slips presented to the classroom teacher upon arrival are to be stored with the student's other absentee notes in the Roll and Notes folder.



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Relief / Non-regular teaching staff procedures

Relief staff must mark daily attendance on the printed Manual Roll in the front of the class Roll and Notes folder. Any absences are to be recorded on an absentee slip, which is to be sent to the front office in the morning office bag. Front office staff will enter absentee data into Student Care prior to printing the daily absentee report. Absent class teachers should cross check the roll upon their return to work.

Absentee Notes and Codes

All student absences require explanation from a parent or legal guardian. Upon the receipt of such information, the roll is to be amended using the appropriate code. (See Appendix 1 for a list of Attendance Register Codes and their explanations.) When absentee notes are received by the classroom teacher they are to be stored in the class Roll and Notes folder in a sleeve designated to each individual student. If an explanation of absence is not provided immediately upon a student's return to school then an Absentee Reminder Note is to be sent home. If an explanation for a student absence is not received within seven days, the absence should be coded as Unexplained.

Storage of Rolls and Notes / Compliance

Each class is to be given a folder for storage of weekly attendance summaries and absentee notes. The first sleeve of this folder is to contain a print-copy of the class list to be used as a manual roll by relief teachers or when Student Care is temporarily inaccessible. Weekly attendance summaries, printed every Friday by office staff, are to be stored, in order, behind the manual roll. Each student in the class is to have a designated sleeve in the folder for storage of their own absentee notes. These notes are to be collated in date order each term and affixed with a coverslip to facilitate cross checking against the roll. At the conclusion of each term, teachers must ensure that all absences have been correctly coded according to their corresponding absentee notes, and that the print copy exactly matches the electronic roll. Any weeks that have been amended since the time of original printing must be reprinted and the originals placed in the secure document disposal bin in the office. Weekly attendance summaries then need to be signed as accurate by the classroom teacher, fixed together in week order, returned to the Roll and Notes folder and forwarded to the Assistant Principal for certifying. At the end of the year, the class roll and notes are archived in accordance with Catholic Education Commission guidelines.

Student Information / Privacy

Student Care presents present a significant amount of student information to teachers, all of which is to be considered sensitive. It is therefore essential that staff using Student Care for attendance adopt appropriate measures to ensure students or other unauthorised individuals do not have access to the logged-in application. In addition to good technology practices, measures may include:

- Logging out of the application or locking the device when not in use



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- Taking special care not to have the screen of the device presented on a large □ display

Compulsory attendance of school age children

Under Section 22 of the Act, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child who is of compulsory schooling age is enrolled at a school and attends:

- The school on every day, and during the times on every day, when school is open for attendance
- Every activity of the school (including attendances at an approved educational course) that the school requires the child to attend

Parents must have a reasonable excuse for not complying with the compulsory attendance requirements in the Act. If parents do not have a reasonable excuse they are liable under the Act and guilty of an offence

Examples of a 'reasonable excuse' for a child's absence might include:

- Illness, including recovery from major illness, injury or medical condition
- Medical or dental treatment
- Bereavement
- Religious or cultural observation
- Family holidays or extended visits overseas
- Attendance at a wedding
- Attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings
- Participation in sanctioned debates, eisteddfods, sports, musical or theatrical productions not directly arranged by the school
- Participation in territory, interstate, national or international sporting event or equivalent
- Sanctioned extended absence in relation to children of travelling families

In the even that Mt Carmel School becomes aware of a student or parent wilfully not undertaking the compulsory schooling requirements, the school must inform Catholic Education, prepare relevant documentation and make a notification to the DET Regional Office Manager Home School Liaison about the attendance issue.

Exemption from Compulsory School Attendance

Parents are required to seek exemption for their child if they wish for them to not participate in compulsory schooling for a period of time. Certificates of Exemption from the compulsory education requirements may be granted by the Principal (and cannot be delegated), the Director of Catholic Education, or the Minister of Education. It is expected that any application for exemption will indicate that the exemption is in the best interests of the student in the short and long term, and that alternatives have been considered. Exemptions from school attendance cannot be granted retrospectively.



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The Principal is allowed to approve up to 100 days in a 12-month period and may grant exemptions due to:

- Exceptional circumstances such as health reasons where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not possible or appropriate
- Employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events for short periods of time

Exemptions can no longer be granted for family holidays or travel during school time.

Parents may apply to the Principal for exemption using the Application for Exemption from Attendance at School (NSW) form. If the exemption is granted the school issues a Certificate of Exemption to the parents. A copy of the Certificate of Exemption from School (NSW) form can be found on the CEO intranet and a copy must be attached to the student's records

Principals must not approve an exemption for any student who has an outstanding child protection issue, without first consulting the CEO Child Protection Officer, Human Resource Services. A risk assessment of the leave must be discussed before decision on exemption can be given

Application for exemption for longer than 100 days must be forwarded to the Catholic Education Office, to be sent to NSW DET for Ministerial approval.

References

School Attendance Legal Action Guidelines

http://www.cecsw.catholic.edu.au/images/Legal_Action_Guidelines.pdf

School Attendance Register Codes 2015

<http://www.cecsw.catholic.edu.au/images/Register%20Codes%204a.pdf>

National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting

<http://www.cecsw.catholic.edu.au/images/National%20Standards%20for%20Student%20Attendance%20Data%20Reporting%20-%20FINAL%20Nov%2012.pdf>

Procedures for Student Attendance in NSW Catholic Systemic Schools

Forms

Absentee Reminder Note

Application for Extended Leave

Certificate for Extended Leave

Approved by:	Mt Carmel School Yass Leadership Team
Implementation Date:	February 2015
Review Date:	November 2017
School Contact Officer:	Gaye McManus



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Appendix 1:

School Attendance Register Codes 2015

2015 Attendance Register Codes Definitions

Only the following attendance register codes **must** be used to record the:

- explanation of student absence, and/or
- variation in student attendance.

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence	
Symbol	Meaning
A	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal. It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.
S	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">- 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 student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.
L	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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- travel in Australia and overseas- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.
E	The student was suspended from school



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School Attendance Register Codes 2015

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used to record a variation in attendance (not counted as an absence for statistical purposes)	
Symbol	Meaning
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
F	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- HSC Pathways Program- Best Start Assessments- Trial or HSC examinations- VET courses
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, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- work experience- school sport (regional and state carnivals)- school excursions- student exchange
H ^{1, 2}	The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- tutorial centre and programs- behaviour schools- juvenile justice- hospital schools- distance education

¹ Note: In most cases this code will only be used by Department of Education and Communities schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools.

² Note: **For Catholic Schools use "F" not "H" for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.**



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School Attendance Register Codes 2015

Recording the duration of an absence or variation in attendance

In addition to recording the reason for an absence or the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the absence or variation must be recorded.

Manual Attendance Registers

Department of Education and Communities schools that maintain manual attendance registers and do not use electronic means for maintaining student attendance must use the following symbols with the appropriate attendance register code for recording the reason for absence or a variation in attendance:

- a** - The student was absent on that day.
- Pa** - The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

Note: The symbol X is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

Electronic Attendance Registers²

For **Department of Education and Communities schools** using electronic means for maintaining student attendance (OASIS, EBS4 or compliant third party systems), when recording a partial absence, the precise time of arrival and/or departure must be documented.

When information is transferred to OASIS from other compliant electronic systems, or from manual attendance registers, whole day absence (a) will be shown as W and partial absence (Pa) will be shown as P.

² Note: This only applies to Department of Education and Communities Schools.