



Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Broken Bay

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR THE DIOCESAN SCHOOLS SYSTEM

April 2017



1. INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) works with schools to ensure this objective is realised. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff members monitor student attendance daily including part or whole day absences in order to meet both duty of care and legislative requirements.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure that all schools are aware of their responsibilities with respect to managing, recording, reporting and monitoring student attendance
- provide guidance to systemic schools on how to implement the *Procedures for the Management of Student Attendance in the Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System* (the 'Procedures').

3. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all schools, primary and secondary, within the Diocesan Schools System (DSS).

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Section 22 of the NSW Education Act (1990) (the 'Act') states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age (6 to 17 years) to cause the child:

- to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government school or a registered non-government school, or
- to be registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and to receive instruction in accordance with the condition to which the registration is subject.

All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of age, are expected to attend the school whenever instruction is provided.

Section 24 of the Act requires that principals keep a register in a form approved by the Minister of Education daily attendances of all children at the school. Attendance registers must be available for inspection during school hours by a NESA Inspector or by any authorised person.

NESA sets out minimum standards of compliance for non-government schools as documented in the *Registration systems and Member Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual* (the 'Manual'). With regard to student attendance, the Manual states that schools must have in place and implement policies and procedures in relation to student attendance with specific reference to processes for monitoring attendance and strategies to improve attendance.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Parents are responsible for:

- enrolling their child(ren) of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school or registering them with NESA for home schooling
- ensuring that their child(ren) attend school every day the school is open for instruction
- providing, to the school, the reasons for the absences of their child(ren) promptly and within seven days taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their child(ren).
- participating and engaging in actions/processes/meetings that are used to help maintain or improve regular school attendance of their children and address issues of non-attendance.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:

- the approved NSW attendance register codes prescribed by the Minister of Education are implemented correctly and accurately
- clear information is provided
 - on a regular basis, to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
 - to the CSO Child Protection Team about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance
- attendance records
 - are maintained in a diocesan-approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students
 - include details of transfers and exemptions
 - are at all times accessible to the Director of Schools, the CSO Child Protection Team and a NESA Inspector
- school-based procedures are developed in accordance with the *Diocesan Attendance Policy and Procedures* that
 - reflect the school's local practices in the administration of the requirements
 - support teachers in addressing issues of student non-attendance
- school staff are trained to:
 - maintain the highest standard of roll marking
 - know how to interpret and use the approved NSW attendance register codes
 - understand their obligations to follow up absences
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and appropriate intervention strategies are implemented to optimise regular school attendance and include
 - the development of documented plans, in consultation with parents, to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern
 - accessing medical certificates, in the case of illness
 - engaging with external agencies if required to support the regular attendance of a student.

Principals have the authority to:

- grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness
- grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student providing certain conditions are met
- accept other explanations of absence
- decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence, or a proposed absence.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

- The Director of Schools is responsible for:
 - ensuring schools maintain accurate records of student attendance in a form approved by the Minister of Education
 - ensuring that regular audits of school attendance procedures take place and that principals are supported in this activity
 - ensuring that attendance improvement plans are implemented for students who are identified by schools as chronic non-attenders
 - making recommendations about cases of non-attendance or failure to enrol a school aged child at school, in the first instance to the Catholic Education Commission NSW
 - approving the participation of a student in an alternative education program.
- The Director of Schools has the authority to grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student providing certain conditions are met.

8. MONITORING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Schools, with support from the CSO, monitor the regular attendance of students and develop and implement strategies to support students with identified attendance issues in accordance with the *Procedures*.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Procedures for the Management of Student Attendance in the Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System](#)
[Pastoral Care Policy](#)

10. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every five years.

11. POLICY DATED

Policy date of completion of formulation and adoption	May 2016
Date of current edition of policy	April 2017
Date of next review	February 2022

Authorised by
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