

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES 2020

1. RATIONALE

- 1.1 This policy establishes the requirements for student attendance at Catholic Education Diocese of Wagga Wagga (CEDWW) schools. Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential and increase their career and life options. Compliance with this policy allows schools, students and parents to meet their obligations under the NSW *Education Act 1990*. This policy is intended to be enacted in consultation with school attendance procedure documents and relevant supporting documents.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 This policy governs all students enrolled within a CEDWW systemic school, both Primary and Secondary.
- 2.2 Students must attend the school they are enrolled in for the times required by that school unless:
- 2.2.1 The student is unwell or otherwise unable to attend **or**
 - 2.2.2 The student has sought and received a notification of approval for exemption or leave from the school's Principal and/or the Director of Schools. When considering the number of days, applications for exemption or leave are accrued over a school year.
 - 2.2.2.1 Principal approval is required for exemption or leave of 10 to 20 days.
 - 2.2.2.2 CEDWW Attendance Officer investigation is required for leave of 20 to 50 days before principal approval.
 - 2.2.2.3 CEDWW Attendance Officer investigation is required for leave of 50 or more days before Director of Schools approval.
 - 2.2.2.4 See applications for exemption or leave forms: [Application for Extended Leave \(L\) Form - Travel](#) or [Application for Exemption from Attendance - Exceptional Circumstances / Employment Entertainment Industry / Elite Sport](#) and [Application for Partial Day Exemption](#).
- 2.3 Pursuant to Section 24 of the Act, every Principal must keep a daily Attendance Register in a form approved by the Minister. CEDWW uses Compass. For example, see [Compass Attendance Work Instructions & Guide](#).
- 2.4 Principals must make the Attendance Register available to any authorised person when requested during school hours. CEDWW uses Compass to generate reports for example see [Compass Attendance Work Instructions & Guide](#).
- 2.5 Student attendance and absences must be recorded on the Attendance Register:
- 2.5.1 Primary schools - CEDWW requires roll marking three times per school day.

2.5.2 Secondary schools - requires roll marking at the beginning of the school day and at the commencement of each lesson by the supervising teacher.

2.6 This Attendance Policy and Procedure document and the school Attendance Procedure document must be available on the school website.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Duty of Students

3.1.1 On enrolment, all students are to be made aware of attendance requirements.

3.1.2 Attend school for the days and hours the school is open for instruction except under the circumstances of approved exemption or leave.

3.1.3 Attend all classes on time.

3.1.4 Ensure collaboration in matters regarding their attendance and health and well-being.

3.1.5 For the purpose of this policy and CEDWW the following attendance levels are defined as:

Excellent	95% and above
Regular	90% - 94.9%
Emerging	80% - 89.9%
Chronic	70% - 79.9%
Complex	Less than 70% or continually below expectations.

3.1.6 Excellent and regular attendance levels are expected.

3.2 Duty of Parents

3.2.1 The definition of parent for the purpose of this document includes a guardian or other person having the custody or care of a child.

3.2.2 On enrolment, all parents and students are required to give an undertaking that they will support and work in partnership with the school and CEDWW regarding the policies and procedures concerning their child's attendance.

3.2.3 In accordance with Section 22 of the Act, ensure their child of compulsory school age is enrolled in a government or non-government school or is registered for home schooling with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) unless an approved application for exemption is received. See [Application for Extended Leave \(L\) Form - Travel](#) or [Application for Exemption from Attendance - Exceptional Circumstances / Employment Entertainment Industry / Elite Sport](#).

3.2.4 Parents must adequately explain their child's absence from school at the earliest opportunity and no later than seven (7) days from the first day of absence:

- 3.2.4.1 Notifications within two (2) business days from an absence can be recorded using Compass. See [Compass Attendance Work Instructions & Guide](#).
 - 3.2.4.2 All other notifications within the seven (7) days from the first day of absence can be given by phone, email or in written form.
 - 3.2.5 The definition of compulsory school-age is a child who is above the age of six years and below the minimum school leaving age.
 - 3.2.6 The minimum school leaving age is (whichever first occurs):
 - 3.2.6.1 The age at which a child/young person completes year 10 and meets the conditions set out in 3.2.7 **or**
 - 3.2.6.2 Reaches 17 years of age.
 - 3.2.7 A child who completes Year 10 of secondary education but who is below the minimum school leaving age of 17 years is still of compulsory school-age unless the child participates on a full-time basis (minimum 25 hours per week) in:
 - 3.2.7.1 Approved education or training
 - 3.2.7.2 Employment **or**
 - 3.2.7.3 A combination of paid training and employment
- See [Leaving School Before 17 - Special Circumstances](#).

3.3 Duty of Staff

- 3.3.1 Ensure attendance and engagement with all training provided by the school or CEDWW regarding attendance.
- 3.3.2 It is critical that information recorded by staff regarding attendance is complete and accurate. The information must meet accountability, audit and privacy requirements under The NSW *Education Act (1990)*, CEDWW and the school policies and procedures.
- 3.3.3 All school staff are required to become familiar and comply with the school and CEDWW's attendance policies and procedures.
- 3.3.4 Ensure that attendance registers are marked three times daily in primary schools and at the beginning of each session in secondary schools in accordance with relevant CEDWW and school policies and procedures. See [Compass Attendance Work Instructions & Guide](#).
- 3.3.5 Monitor student attendance and notify the Principal or delegated officer when student attendance does not meet satisfactory attendance levels as required by school procedures.
- 3.3.6 Ensure when documenting student attendance concerns they are in line with CEDWW, school and Compass procedures.

- 3.3.7 Implement strategies identified by the Principal or delegated officer to support regular attendance of their students.

3.4 Duty of Principals

- 3.4.1 It is the duty of Principals to:

- 3.4.1.1 Provide clear information which may be communicated in newsletters and enrolment documents to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
See [Student Non-Attendance and Legal Action Guidelines](#).
- 3.4.1.2 Ensure that school staff are adequately trained and fulfil their obligations regarding attendance including the importance of accurately recording, monitoring and promoting regular attendance.
- 3.4.1.3 Monitor and ensure the maintenance of attendance records and registers in a format approved by the Minister. See [CEDWW school admin attendance tasks via Compass](#) and [Compass and School Attendance Register Codes](#)
- 3.4.1.4 Record absences using the codes identified in the [Compass Attendance Work Instructions & Guide](#).
- 3.4.1.5 Implement effective measures to monitor and address student absence.

See:

- 3.4.1.5.1 [Appendix 1: Student Absentee Policy Process Flowchart](#)
- 3.4.1.5.2 [CEDWW school admin attendance tasks via Compass](#)
- 3.4.1.5.3 Section 3.4.2-3.4.8 of this Policy and Procedures document
- 3.4.1.5.4 Parent Communication Letters [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7a](#) and [7b](#) 'Attendance' (soon to be available in Compass).
- 3.4.1.6 Review applications for leave or exemption for 10-20 days in any 12 month period and refer applications for greater than 20 days to CEDWW as required by 2.2.2. See [Application for Exemption from Attendance \(M\) Form - Exceptional Circumstances/ Employment Entertainment Industry/ Elite Sport](#) and [Application for Partial Day Exemption](#)
- 3.4.1.7 Comply with obligations under mandatory reporting requirements including considering the threshold of significant harm as stated by Department of Communities and Justice. Educational neglect may be a factor in determining overall risk. Follow protocols outlined in the [Mandatory Reporter Guide \(MRG\)](#), [Student Wellbeing School Response and Procedure Document](#), and [Student Non-Attendance and Legal Action Guidelines](#). If in any doubt regarding well-being concerns, appropriate responses and/or MRG outcomes, employees are highly encouraged to contact a CEDWW Child Protection Team member or CEDWW Safeguarding Officer for clarification and advice.

- 3.4.2 For a student who is frequently absent, Principals are responsible for:
- 3.4.2.1 Investigating adequate evidence to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan *and*
 - 3.4.2.2 Ensuring the implementation of an Attendance Improvement Plan.
See: [Attendance Improvement Plan Template](#), [Attendance Improvement Plan Template - Student Sample](#), and [Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Documentation](#).
- 3.4.3 If a student has an unusual, rapid decrease of attendance, consider an immediate intervention in consultation with the Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Committee. See [Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Committee Meetings](#).
- 3.4.4 It is the duty of Principals to ensure consultation occurs with parents regarding the cause of frequent absences which may include the health and/or wellbeing of their child.
- 3.4.5 If appropriate, documents such as medical certificates, statutory declarations, leave and exemption applications, etc. are to be sought to approve explained absences or to contribute towards plans to support attendance. These must be kept on the student's file and made available on request by an authorised person.
- 3.4.6 If appropriate where there are ongoing concerns, approval will be sought from parents to contact the student's doctor to ensure all relevant information regarding the student's health care have been provided. See [M1 - Authority to Release Medical Information](#) and [M2 - Principal to Doctor/Health Professional Requesting Discussion of Student's Health](#).
- 3.4.7 When appropriate, consultation is to include School and Community Workers regarding the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- 3.4.8 For complex issues Principals are to provide support in consultation with parents and the CEDWW Attendance Officer, to further address the wellbeing, mental health and learning needs of students. See [Student Wellbeing School Response and Procedure Document](#).
- 3.4.9 Principals are to enter exclusions and suspensions appropriately on the attendance register. See [CEDWW - Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion Policy](#).
- 3.4.10 Principals are to consult with CEDWW for students who are to complete education under special circumstances for example attending Juvenile Justice (unenrolling), flexible learning or partial schooling under a wellbeing plan. In these circumstances Principals should contact CEDWW Attendance Officer.
- 3.4.11 Principals are able to consider applications for exemption or leave for reasons not outlined e.g. Public Health warnings. Under these circumstances, Principals should contact the CEDWW Attendance Officer.
- 3.4.12 Principals are to ensure a Leaving Form is completed if a student is unenrolled before the compulsory school age using the appropriate form:

3.4.12.1 School developed Leaver's Form:

3.4.12.1.1 Under the conditions of 3.2.7. See [Leaving School Before 17 – Special Circumstances](#) or

3.4.12.1.2 If the destination of a student is unknown when they leave school, a [Student Destination Unknown Notification Template](#) must be completed and returned to the CEDWW Attendance Officer for the matter to be referred to the Department of Education.

3.5 Duty of Attendance Officer

3.5.1 It is the duty of the CEDWW Attendance Officer (Registration and Compliance) to:

3.5.1.1 Support and inform Principals to understand and carry out their obligations under the Act within the guidelines of CEDWW.

3.5.1.2 Support Principals to monitor the regular attendance of students and develop and implement strategies to support students with identified attendance issues.

3.5.1.3 Support and inform the CEDWW Student Wellbeing Committee to understand and carry out their obligations under the Act in regards to attendance.

3.5.1.4 Consult, investigate and provide information as required to the Director of Schools from all relevant agencies.

3.6 Duty of CEDWW Director of Schools:

3.6.1 The CEDWW Director of Schools has the delegated authority to:

3.6.1.1 Grant exemptions from attendance at school totalling 50 to 100 days in a 12-month period under Section 25 of the *Education Act 1990*.

See [Application for Exemption from Attendance Exceptional Circumstances / Employment Entertainment Industry / Elite Sport](#) and [Application for Partial Day Exemption](#).

3.6.1.2 Grant leave from school attendance from 50 to 100 days in a 12-month period for students wishing to take leave ([Application for Extended Leave \(L\) Form - Travel](#)).

3.6.1.3 Approve the exemption of a student from enrolment due to inability to participate in school at a satisfactory level. Examples include long-term medical illness affecting attendance, inability to attend for extended periods, unsuitability of student due to other considerations.

See [Application for Exemption from Enrolment Form \(M\)](#).

4. Basis of Discretion

- 4.1 Decisions on the management of student chronic non-attendance is at the discretion of the Director and subject to consultation with CEDWW and school personnel.

5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

5.1 Related Acts

- [Education Act 1990 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#)

5.2 Documents and Forms

- [Appendix 1: Student Absentee Policy Process Flowchart](#)
- [Application for Exemption from Attendance - Exceptional Circumstances/Employment Entertainment Industry/Elite Sport](#)
- [Application for Exemption from Enrolment Form \(M\)](#)
- [Application for Extended Leave \(L\) Form - Travel](#)
- [Application for Partial Day Exemption](#)
- [Attendance Improvement Plan Template](#)
- [Attendance Improvement Plan Template - Student Sample](#)
- [CEDWW school admin attendance tasks via Compass](#)
- [Compass Attendance Work Instructions & Guide](#)
- [Leaving School Before 17 - Special Circumstances](#)
- [M1 - Authority to Release Medical Information](#)
- [M2 - Principal to Doctor/Health Professional Requesting Discussion of Student's Health](#)
- [Pastoral Care Wellbeing Committee Meetings](#)
- [Student Destination Unknown Notification Template](#)
- [Student Non-Attendance and Legal Action Guidelines](#)
- [Student Wellbeing School Response and Procedure Document](#)

5.3 Template Parent Communication Attendance Letters

- [Template Letter 1: Emerging Absenteeism Identified - Initial Notification to Parent of Unexplained/Unjustified Absences](#)
- [Template Letter 2: Chronic Absenteeism - First Request to Attend an Attendance Planning Meeting \(APM\)](#)
- [Template Letter 3: Complex Absenteeism \(<80%\) Satisfactory Attendance not Achieved - 2nd Request to Attend an Attendance Planning Meeting \(APM\)](#)
- [Template Letter 4: Continuing Complex Absenteeism - Advising Parent/Carer of Pending Further Action for Failure to Attend School](#)
- [Template Letter 5: Continuing Complex Absenteeism - Attendance not Meeting Satisfactory Levels Request to Make Appointment for Compulsory Schooling Attendance Meeting](#)
- [Template Letter 6: Notice of Abandonment of Enrolment Pending - DCJ & DEC are Notified](#)
- [Template Letter 7a: No Response from Parents - Enrolment is Abandoned and Notification to DCJ & DEC is Undertaken](#)
- [Template Letter 7b: Enrolment is Abandoned and Notification to DCJ & DEC is Undertaken](#)

5.4 Related Policies

- [CEDWW - Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion Policy](#)
- [Enrolment Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

5.5 Related Sites

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parent Committee](#)
- [CEDWW Safeguarding Children Documents and Files - Live Updates](#)
- [Attendance Lifts Achievement: Building the Evidence Base to Improve Student Outcomes: The Smith Family Research Report March 2018](#)
- [Lifting School Achievement Through Attendance](#)
- [Making Every Day Count: Effective Strategies to Improve Student Attendance in Queensland State Schools](#)

- [Mandatory Reporter Guide \(MRG\)](#)
- [NESA Safe and Supportive Environment](#)

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters contained therein in so much as any aspect of this policy may appear to be in conflict with another diocesan, system or school-based policy, then precedence is to be given to this policy. The NSW Education Act (1990) takes precedence to this policy.

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APPENDIX 1 - Student Absentee Policy Process Flowchart

%'s are given as an indication ONLY. Principal discretion is required.

Daily: Monitor and Respond to Student Absence(s)

Class Teacher: EVERY session, complete roll accurately on Compass. Follow school procedures for inconsistencies.

Principal: Analyse fortnightly Student Attendance Summary Reports to identify emerging absenteeism.

Emerging Absenteeism Identified (<85%)

Contact parent to raise concern regarding unexplained/unjustified absences using **Letter 1** or chronicled phone call. If decrease in attendance is very unusual, initiate early intervention from well-being team.

Chronic Absenteeism (<80%)

Contact parent to book an Attendance Planning Meeting (APM). Send **Letter 2** to confirm. During APM, consult with parent(s), student & principal/delegate to develop Attendance Improvement Plan (Template).

Chronic Absenteeism (<80%) - 2nd Request to Attend/No Improvement

If failure to attend scheduled APM stated in letter 2 and/or there is no improvement in attendance, make contact to confirm 2nd APM. Send **Letter 3** by REGISTERED MAIL. Consider mandatory reporting (MR).

Complex Absenteeism (<70%) - 3rd Request to Attend/No Improvement

If failure to attend APM OR attendance still not acceptable, school to contact CEDWW. Send **Letter 4**. CEDWW investigates case & supports school to conduct an APM and develop AIM. Engage MR protocols.

Continuing Complex Absenteeism (<70%) - Advise Parents of Further Action.

Send **Letter 5** to parents in consultation with CEDWW to contact re Compulsory Student Attendance Meeting (CSAM). CEDWW notifies the Department of Communities and Justice. Engage MR protocols.

Failure to meet Attendance Requirements - Pending Abandonment of Enrolment

Send **Letter 6** to parents in consultation with CEDWW to contact re Compulsory Student Attendance Meeting (CSAM). CEDWW notifies the Department Education. Engage in MR protocols.

Failure to meet Attendance Requirements - Enrolment Abandoned

If **no** response throughout the whole process, in consultation with CEDWW Attendance Officer send **letter 7a** (rare). In other cases, in consultation with CEDWW Attendance Officer, send letter 7b. Engage in MR.