



ATTENDANCE POLICY

December 2022

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BROKEN BAY

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Rationale

Education in NSW is compulsory. All students from six years of age and under the minimum school leaving age of 17 are legally required to attend school. Students of school age (6 to minimum school leaving age) who are residents in New South Wales are required to be in fulltime attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home schooling, attending shared school settings or are granted an exemption from attendance.

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. Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) central office 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, as a consequence of both their duty of care and legislative requirements.

Guiding Principles and Objectives

- Committing to genuine, professional Catholic Education delivered with care and compassion
- Maximising learning opportunities by ensuring student attendance is optimised
- Working in partnership with parents to promote the regular attendance of students
- Ensuring that all schools fulfill their responsibilities with respect to managing, recording, reporting and monitoring student attendance

Policy Statement

Legislative Framework

Section 22 of the 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 nongovernment 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 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.

Monitoring Attendance

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

Audience

This policy applies to all schools, primary and secondary, within Catholic Schools Broken Bay.

The intended audience is:

- Students
- Parents
- Teachers
- School Support staff
- School Leaders
- School Principal
- CSBB office staff (Governance and Student Wellbeing)
- Director of Schools

Applicability

CSBB System Leaders
CSBB School Principals

Key Responsibilities

Director of Schools

The Director of Schools is responsible for ensuring that systems are in place to:

- maintain accurate records of student attendance in a form approved by the Minister of Education
- ensure that regular audits of school attendance procedures take place and that principals are supported in this activity
- ensure that attendance improvement plans are implemented for the improvement of the attendance of students who are identified by schools as habitual non-attenders
- make recommendations about cases of non-attendance or failure to enrol a child at school, in the first instance to Catholic Schools NSW
- approve the participation of a student in an alternative education program

The Director of Schools has the authority to:

- grant an exemption from school attendance and/or enrolment for any one student providing certain conditions are met
- grant an exemption from school enrolment for:
 - a student who has completed Year 9 at school and who is making an application to complete schooling at TAFE or another registered training organisation through a full-time apprenticeship/traineeship
 - for a student who is completing education under special circumstances provided certain conditions are met

School Principals

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 CSBB Student Wellbeing Partner – Attendance, about students for whom non-attendance is an issue
 - attendance records are maintained in a diocesan-approved format and are an accurate reflection of the student’s attendance
 - attendance records include details of transfers and exemptions and are at all times accessible to the Director of Schools, CSBB Safeguarding Team, CSBB Student Wellbeing Partner – Attendance and NESA Inspectors
- school-based procedures are developed in accordance with CSBB 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 and 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 or 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
- accept other explanations of absence
- decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence, or a proposed absence
- 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.
- grant an exemption from school enrolment for a student who has completed Year 9 at school and has the required approval to complete their schooling at TAFE or another registered training organisation through a full-time apprenticeship/traineeship.

CSBB Teaching and Support Staff

CSBB Teaching and Support Staff are expected to be committed to understanding and complying with the CSBB Attendance Policy and associated Procedures

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

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

Related Resources

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Education Act 1990 (NSW)
- Education Act 2013 (Cth)
- NESAs Registration Systems and Member Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

Related Processes/Procedures

CSBB Attendance Procedures

Related Policies

n/a

Review

The Attendance Policy and related Procedures/Processes will generally be reviewed every five (5) years unless there is a legislative or regulatory requirement to do so earlier.

Approval Date/Revision Schedule

Approved by: Danny Casey – Director of Schools

Date Approved: December 2022

Date of next review: December 2027