



ATTENDANCE POLICY

January 2026

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BROKEN BAY

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Purpose

The Attendance Policy (Policy) sets out Catholic Schools Broken Bay's (CSBB) position on school attendance in accordance with NESA regulatory requirements and system expectations.

The purpose of this policy is to support CSBB school communities to promote student attendance and sets out the requirements for the attendance of students enrolled with CSBB to ensure compliance with these legal obligations.

Audience

This policy applies to CSBB students, staff and the parent community.

Definitions

Attendance concern is where a student's overall attendance falls below 90%, and the principal (or their delegate) determines that the level of non-attendance places the student at risk in terms of educational progress, social development, or wellbeing.

Compulsory school age is the compulsory school age as defined in s21B of the Education Act 1990 (NSW) as being of or above the age of six (6) and below the age of 17 years.

Delegate is a person authorised by the Minister or Principal to have responsibility for the management of attendance at school.

Exemption from Attendance is temporary exemption from the legal requirement to attend in school.

Exemption from Enrolment is temporary exemption from the legal requirement to be enrolled in school.

Partial Attendance is intended to be a method of maintaining the student in the school environment for a period of time daily so they can attain educational outcomes while meeting their additional needs. Partial attendance is a temporary strategy. It cannot be used as a long-term solution.

Procedural Fairness ensures that decisions effecting individuals are made through a just, transparent and unbiased process.

Minister Approved Attendance Register Common Codes

Absence Codes

A Code = The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven calendar 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 Code = The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases, a medical certificate is provided, or if 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 Code = An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal.

E Code = The student was suspended from school.

Variation of Attendance Codes

M Code = The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.

F Code = The student is participating in a flexible timetable and is not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in:

- HSC Pathways Program
- Best Start Assessments
- Trial or HSC examinations
- VET courses.

B Code = 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:

- work experience
- school sport (regional and state carnivals)
- school excursions
- student exchange.

H Code = 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:

- tutorial centre and programs
- behaviour schools
- juvenile justice
- hospital schools
- distance education.

Policy

School attendance plays a crucial role in enhancing the lives of students. Every day of attendance adds to a student's opportunity to learn, develop and experience success in education. CSBB is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to promote and encourage student attendance to maximise opportunities for student learning growth. All students who are enrolled at a CSBB school are expected to attend each day, unless they are unwell, unable to attend for an approved reason or have been granted an exemption.

CSBB schools, in partnership with families, are responsible for promoting and encouraging the regular attendance of students. 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

- Each person is created in the image and likeness of God.
- The dignity of every member of the school community is respected.
- Student attendance maximises learning opportunities.
- All students who are enrolled at a CSBB school are expected to attend the school each day, unless they are unwell, unable to attend for an approved reason or have been granted an exemption.
- Promoting and encouraging regular student attendance is a core responsibility of schools. Schools exercise this responsibility in partnership with parents.
- All schools have responsibilities in managing, recording and monitoring student attendance.
- Schools will take appropriate action to follow up student absences and respond promptly to any school attendance matter if there is a belief it threatens student wellbeing or safety.

Objectives

- Students regularly attend school so that they can maximise their learning growth.
- Schools, in partnership with parents, promote and encourage student attendance.
- Parents understand their responsibilities regarding student attendance.
- Schools understand their responsibilities in managing, recording, reporting and monitoring student attendance.
- Schools regularly monitor and support students with poor patterns of attendance.
- Schools respond to school attendance matters promptly where there are concerns about student wellbeing or safety.

Keeping the Attendance Register (Roll)

Principals or delegated staff members must accurately record student attendance and absence on the attendance register (roll) for each day the student is enrolled. Schools must use the Minister approved common codes in the attendance register.

Recording Absences

All absences must be recorded as unexplained unless another explanation is provided and accepted before the attendance register (roll) is marked. Any unexplained absence must be followed up to notify the parent/carer of the absence and seek an explanation. The reason for an absence must be added to the roll within 7 calendar days of the absence.

Following up unexplained absences

If a student has three days of unexplained absence in a row, on the third day the school must contact the student's nominated parent(s)/carer(s) to notify them of the absence and to seek an explanation.

If a student is marked absent without explanation (A Code) the principal or delegate must attempt to contact the student's parent(s)/carer(s) no later than seven calendar days after the absence to notify them of the absence and enquire about the explanation.

Encouraging Attendance

Principals have a legal duty and a pastoral obligation to encourage attendance and respond to absenteeism. Frequent absences are detrimental to students' education and may indicate a student's need for support and/or pastoral care.

Schools must ensure:

- any sudden decline in attendance is followed up and attendance improvement support is provided if appropriate or necessary
- all emerging absenteeism is responded to and support is provided to improve attendance (<90% attendance)
- provision of additional support to students and families exhibiting ongoing chronic (<80%) and complex (<70%) absenteeism.

Responding to absenteeism

CSBB acknowledges it may not always be possible to improve attendance, for example where students are unable to attend school for health reasons, but schools will take all reasonable steps to support students experiencing difficulties attending school regularly.

Principals or delegates must respond to all emerging absenteeism (<90% attendance) with support to improve attendance. Principals may respond to any sudden decline in attendance with support to improve attendance as required.

Where appropriate, schools will develop a Individual Support Plan (ISP) in consultation with families. Consultation may also include the Student Achievement Team for further information and support.

Extended Leave and Exemptions from Enrolment and Attendance

The NSW government recognise there are circumstances where students may be granted extended leave from school, or an exemption from the requirements to be enrolled at school or to attend full time. In all cases, the Delegate must be satisfied that extended leave or exemption is in the student's best interest before issuing approval. Procedural fairness applies to all applications for extended leave and exemptions.

Schools are not responsible for managing supervision, or teaching and learning for a student during extended leave or exemption from enrolment/attendance.

Extended Leave

Planned absences of more than 10 consecutive school days for reasons other than sick leave (S Code) require prior consideration and approval, or they will be considered unapproved/unjustified absences (in line with a school's discretion regarding any absence). This ensures extended absences do not breach legal obligations for students to attend school or undermine a student's education. Required supporting documentation is clearly outlined in the Extended Leave form that parents complete and submit to the school.

Criteria for approving/supporting extended leave

When considering applications Principals should:

- encourage parents/carers to travel during school holidays rather than during the school term and should not accept a reason for travel during school term if it is not in the best interests of the student
- ensure that parents/carers understand any implications on student academic progress because of the extended leave
- ensure that parents/carers understand any implications on student academic year/class placement on their return from the extended leave (e.g. re-enrolment, progression to next year level, application to high school etc.). A decision not to approve or support an application for extended leave must be communicated to the family.

Exemptions

Exemptions may occur as a single extended absence or a series of periodic full or part-day absences. The Application for Exemption from Attendance must be completed and submitted to the principal for the CSBB approval process prior to commencing the proposed period of exemption. The Education Act 1990 (NSW) states that the education of a child is primarily the responsibility of the child's parents.

Exemptions from Attendance

Reasons for exemptions from attendance are:

- exceptional circumstances, including health considerations where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate
- employment in approved entertainment industry activities
- participation in elite arts or sporting events (e.g. at State, National or International level) as per definition on CSBB application forms
- the child is prevented from attending school under a direction of the Public Health Act 2010 and sick leave would not be more appropriate. An application is not required in this instance.

Criteria for approving/supporting Exemptions from Attendance

When considering applications Principals should:

- ensure that parents/carers understand any implications on student academic progress because of the Exemption from Attendance

- ensure that parents/carers understand any implications on student academic year/class placement on their return from the Exemption from Attendance (e.g. re-enrolment, progression to next year level, application to high school etc.). A decision not to approve or support an application for Exemption from Attendance must be communicated to the family
- (Exceptional Circumstances) Documentation, including but not limited to medical reports, psychologist reports and other referring practitioner reports, must be provided
- checklists 'Exemption from Attendance at School – Elite Arts/Sport' and 'Exemption from Attendance at School – Employment in Entertainment Industry' must be completed where programs run for over 5 school days.

Exemption from Enrolment

Exemption from enrolment may be supported for reasons of:

- participation in approved alternate education or training after a student completes Year 9 (e.g. TAFE/CIT or traineeship/apprenticeship)
- age
- health or disability.

Criteria for approving/supporting Exemptions from Enrolment

Exemption for age

Exemption for age may be granted where a child turns six years on or after 1 October and the principal is satisfied it is not in the student's interest to enrol in the year they turn six years old. To be granted an exemption, a child must be engaged in a full program of preschool education at an accredited preschool for the remainder of that school year, or full or part-time accredited preschool programs for students with disabilities leading to enrolment and full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school not later than six months after the child's sixth birthday.

Exemption for health or disability

Exemption for health or disability may be granted for a student who requires exemption to continue in an individual program supported by medical specialists. Exemption cannot be granted longer than six months after the student's sixth birthday. The principal will require a statement in support of the exemption from the child's medical specialist.

Leaving school for alternate training or full-time employment

Year 9

Principals cannot give exemptions for students that have not completed Year 9 to participate in alternate training or employment. The school should make reasonable efforts to keep students engaged in school.

Year 10

Students in Year 10 may apply for exemption to attend full time alternate education or training (e.g. apprenticeship). An Approval Statement is not required

for School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT), as they are considered to be part of an education program. Before recommending exemption, the principal should consider options to re-engage the young person with their learning including pastoral care and wellbeing supports & interventions and investigating whether the request for exemption is influenced by bullying or peer group reasons.

Years 11 and 12

Students who have completed Year 10 and are under the age of 17 may leave school for alternate education, training OR full-time employment. This does not require exemption, but the school must be notified to ensure duty of care.

Reporting student destination unknown

If a parent has removed a student from a CSBB school for any reason and the principal has been unable to obtain evidence of the student's destination, the principal or delegate must complete the Student Destination Unknown Notification form and forward it to the NSW Department of Education. A Student Destination Unknown Notification form must also be submitted in cases where the student has been marked absent for 10 consecutive days where the school is open for instruction and there has been no communication with the school.

Key Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring their child attends school each day unless exempt or absent for an approved reason
- explaining to the school any absences of a student as soon as possible and within 7 calendar days from the first day of absence, otherwise the school will record the absence as an unexplained absence
- promptly providing to the school any documentation required by the school in relation to attendance or enrolment
- applying in advance for planned student leave or exemptions from attendance
- working in partnership with the school and CSBB to address any issues impacting on a student's attendance.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that:

- the school maintains an accurate enrolment and attendance register (roll) in a form consistent with legislative obligations and securely retain any records relating to student absences
- the school promotes regular student attendance
- students and families are informed about attendance requirements
- regulatory requirements in the latest version of the NSW Education Standard Authorities Systems and Member Non-Government Schools Registration and Accreditation Manual are adhered to
- effective school processes are in place for staff to monitor and manage student attendance
- effective processes are in place to support students with poor patterns of attendance in accordance with CSBB Policy and Procedures

- effective processes are in place for the prompt response to any school attendance matter if there is a belief it threatens student wellbeing or safety
- applications for extended leave, and exemptions from attendance or enrolment are managed consistently with CSBB processes and legislative requirements.

School staff are responsible for:

- ensuring attendance rolls are accurately marked and explanations for absences recorded
- providing a safe and engaging teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of belonging to the school community
- promoting and encouraging regular attendance at school
- following the school's student attendance processes
- monitoring and following up on student absences
- consulting with the nominated leader when a student's pattern of attendance is of concern
- implementing attendance support strategies to support students at school.

The **CSBB Student Achievement Workstream** is responsible for:

- providing advice and support to schools to promote and support the regular attendance of students at school
- providing advice and support to schools about attendance improvement planning
- convening Compulsory Attendance Conference if required.

The **CSBB Compliance and Assurance Team** (Office of the Director) is responsible for:

- developing and maintaining procedures for schools to record student attendance.
- developing and maintaining procedures for extended leave and exemptions from enrolment and attendance.
- providing advice and support to schools about compliance requirements regarding attendance, applications for leave and exemptions for enrolment and/or attendance.

In the context of attendance, the **CSBB Safeguarding Team** is responsible for:

- providing advice and support to schools and service areas within CSBB where there are concerns for the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of a student.
- supporting employees to meet mandatory reporting obligations.

The **CSBB Infrastructure Workstream** is responsible for:

- in conjunction with school administration staff, creating and maintaining the electronic enrolment and attendance register.
- ensuring ongoing offsite back-ups of electronic enrolment and attendance registers are maintained.
- electronic storage and retrieval of archived enrolment and attendance records.

- storage and retrieval of digitised archived enrolment and attendance records, where this is required.
- on request, providing technical advice and support to schools to maintain and monitor enrolment and attendance registers in Electronic Student Information Systems.

Related Legislation

- Education Act 1990 (NSW)
- Education Regulation 2017 (NSW)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Review

The Policy and related Procedures/Processes will be reviewed by the relevant Workstream Lead and approved by the Director of Schools or, when required, the CSBB Board. The review will be undertaken every three (3) years unless there is a legislative or regulatory requirement to do so earlier.

Version

| Version | Current Title | Approval Date | Commencement Date |
|---------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| V3 | Attendance Policy | December 2025 | January 2026 |
| V2 | Attendance Policy | December 2022 | January 2023 |
| V1.1 | Attendance Policy | January 2019 | January 2019 |

Approved by: Danny Casey – Director of Schools

Date of next review: December 2028