



PROCEDURE 02.14.01-E

Student Attendance / Non-Attendance

1. Context

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences. "School" in this document refers to St Edmund's College.

2. Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children attend School regularly
- explaining the absences of their children from School promptly to the School
- taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

School staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of belonging to the School community
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- monitoring student attendance and maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- ensuring that all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from School are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are discussed with parents and are implemented.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:

- attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students; unsatisfactory attendance record is transferred to the student's file and that parents are advised of matters relating to unsatisfactory attendance.
- staff record accurately the attendance of each student each day using an attendance code to identify the explanation of student absence.
- School staff are trained to implement School attendance policies and procedures and that personnel, with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records, are supervised.
- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements.

The Principal may grant additional leave for brief periods of time.

The Principal may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence. The parent should be advised that the explanation has not been accepted and a reason for the decision provided.

The Principal's delegate, may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged (more than 3-5 days).

The Principal's delegate, is responsible for ensuring that records of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents are retained. If teachers receive verbal explanations from parents, a record of these must be kept with written and printed electronic explanations.

3. School Attendance Records Requirements

School attendance records must include:

- A Register of Admission to be retained permanently.
- Notes and records of verbal explanations for absences from parents - to be retained for a minimum of seven (7) years from the date of receipt.

- An Attendance Register to be retained for a minimum of seven (7) years after the last entry is made.
- In a case where a student has an accident necessitating an accident report, all attendance records should be retained until the year the student reaches the age of 24 years as a minimum.

4. Enrolment and Records of attendance, Register

Upon completion of enrolment and student's commencement at the School, the School's enrolment register is updated and maintained by administration staff.

The *Education Act 1990* (Section 24) requires that attendance registers (rolls) be maintained in a form approved by the Minister. These may be either manual or electronic rolls.

The classroom/homeroom teachers are responsible for registering the attendance of students. Student attendance is recorded daily electronically on Sentral (student information management system) during homeroom. Records are printed as required for reporting purposes. In the event that Sentral is unavailable, records will be maintained manually until Sentral is once again available.

Attendance registers must be maintained on all days on which the School is open for instruction, including School sports days, swimming carnivals, excursions and similar events.

The exception method (marking absences only) is to be followed by the School. Only government approved codes are to be used. These are outlined as follows with corresponding wording used by Sentral:

Codes to use	Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence
A Sentral: Unjustified	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 Sentral: Sick	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 - 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 Sentral: Leave	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: - 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 Sentral: Suspended	The student was suspended from school
Codes to use	Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used to record a variation in attendance (not counted as an absence for statistical purposes)
M Sentral: Exempt	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
F Sentral: Flexible	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: - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses
B Sentral: School	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

Business	undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange
H1,2 Sentral: Shared Enrolment	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

When using the electronic method on Sentral, in the case where the student has not arrived to class and if no information has been received by office staff, teachers mark students as 'absent' and 'unexplained'. In the case where the homeroom teacher has received notification, they are to mark the student as 'absent', 'explained' and then select the correct code e.g. Sick, Leave. They must also fill in the other fields to provide more information about the absence e.g. Comments, Source of information, Communication method. Homeroom / classroom teachers must print all emails related to parent notification of absences and submit to the School Secretary at the completion of each term.

School attendance must be recorded by 8:45am in the school day by the homeroom teacher. In the absence of the homeroom teacher, the casual teacher will complete a manual attendance slip (located in the teacher's desk drawer of each homeroom) and provide this to the School Secretary who will ensure completion of the register of attendance for that class.

Students involved in off-site activities organised by the School such as Work Experience are to be marked as 'absent' using code B (school business) until they arrive on-site.

In the case of late arrival or early departure, the precise times of arrival or departure must be recorded by the School Secretary. Students are to be dropped off or collected by a parent/carer.

At the completion of homeroom at 8:45am the School Secretary reviews the absence summary on Sentral to identify students who are unexplained absences. Where a student is absent without prior warning, the Principal's delegate will contact the parents/caregiver by email before the end of period 3 to establish reason for absence. If the student is an independent traveler, the parent/carer of that student will be contacted by telephone. The Principal's delegate will change the register to explain the absence and email the teacher for their records.

In circumstances when absences continue to be unjustified or unapproved by the Principal, a meeting shall be scheduled between the parents/carers, Head of Wellbeing and the Principal.

4.1 Security of attendance registers

Registers are to be accessed by the Principal, School leadership team and teachers only. At the end of each School year the Principal's delegate must ensure that the attendance register is preserved as a complete record of students' absences for that year.

Sentral is backed up on the School's mainframe, with a second back up done weekly off site.

5. Exemption from Attendance at School

Generally, Certificates of Exemption should not be approved in the case of students who have been the subject of a Community Services report or Child Wellbeing Unit report and for whom unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm remain. A risk assessment should be conducted to identify and manage the issues.

Where the Principal, or their delegate, is aware of existing child protection concerns, (including where it may be in the child's best interests to grant the exemption) they will consult with the Director and CEO of EREA Flexible Schools.

Applications for exemption from School attendance must be made in writing. In exceptional circumstances, an oral request can be made to the School Principal seeking assistance in writing an application for exemption from School attendance.

In the case of students of compulsory school age who are enrolled in a school, applications for exemption from School attendance must be submitted at least 4 weeks in advance. Exemptions from School attendance cannot be granted retrospectively under these Guidelines.

Under Section 25 of the Education Act 1990, the Minister may grant a Certificate of Exemption. This power is delegated, subject to these Guidelines, to Principals, in relation to granting of an exemption from School attendance for periods totaling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student.

Delegates cannot delegate this power. The power to exempt students for periods more than 50 days in a 12 month period currently remains with the Minister.

Exemption from School attendance should only be granted where conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable in the view of the Minister or delegate, that a Certificate of Exemption be granted.

If there is any case where there are circumstances that may not be considered by these Guidelines, and there appears to be an arguable interest of the child in the granting of an exemption but that such an exemption would appear to be prevented by these Guidelines, the case should be referred to the CEC and EREA.

A delegate can cancel the Certificate of Exemption where they identify circumstances that they believe warrant this action. For example, where the conditions attached to the exemption are not being met.

If an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision made by the delegate, the appeal would go to the delegate above the decision maker.

In this procedure, the term 'parent' or 'parents/carers' includes any person or persons having the custody or care of the child.

5.1 Reasons for Granting Full Day Exemptions from Attendance at School

The Principal may grant exemptions due to: exceptional domestic circumstances, including but not limited to participation in family holidays during school term subject to being satisfied that this is in the best educational interests of the child; other exceptional circumstances such as health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate; employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events for short periods of time i.e. for one or two days, and at short notice. Exemptions referred to here are outlined on the School's Application for Extended Leave Travel Form 15A (02.14.04b- ERSES).

For any other matter, the Principal must consult the Director and CEO of Flexible Schools

The attendance register must indicate full day exemptions with the code M.

5.2 Reasons for Granting Part Day Exemptions from Attendance at School

Section 25 (2A) of the Education Act 1990 gives the Minister the power to grant a certificate of exemption from the requirement to attend a school during the times specified in the certificate.

From time-to-time students of compulsory school age may participate in School based individual student programs which include programs that incorporate behaviour management plans to reengage students with education. In such cases, the parent's agreement to their child's participation in the program, by signature, constitutes an application for part day attendance at School. It is not necessary to complete a separate application for exemption from attendance at School form.

Students of compulsory school age participating in such programs may be granted full or part day exemptions for periods of time not exceeding the equivalent number of full school days provided for within the delegate's power.

Participation in such alternative education programs must be approved by the Executive Director of Catholic Schools through the designated officer, prior to exemption being granted.

The attendance register must indicate part day exemptions with the code M.

5.3 Conditions Attached to Exemptions from Attendance at School

Certificates of Exemption issued by the Executive Director of Catholic Schools and Principals must include the specific conditions that apply to the exemption state that the exemption may be cancelled if these conditions cease to apply specify a period for which the exemption had been granted.

The original Certificate of Exemption will be provided to the parents/carers
A copy of the Certificate of Exemption must be attached to the student's record.

The delegate should retain a copy of the signed Certificate of Exemption in the delegate's official records.

5.4 Extended Leave approval

The Principal determines what type of leave is allowed and the length of time permissible. Extended Leave approval is at the discretion of the Principal.

6. Exemption from Enrolment at School - General Principles

It is the duty of the NSW State Government, to ensure that every child receives an education of the highest quality and it is the duty of parents/carers to comply with the compulsory education requirements of the Education Act 1990.

In the case of parents/carers of children of compulsory school age seeking authority not to enrol, this must be considered as an application for exemption from school enrolment. Under Section 25 of the Education Act 1990, the Minister may grant a certificate of exemption.

Applications for exemption from enrolment at school must be made in writing. In exceptional circumstances, an oral request can be made to the School principal, seeking assistance on completing an application for exemption from School enrolment.

Procedural fairness will be accorded to an applicant for an exemption. If the delegate is considering refusing to grant an exemption, the parent should be given an opportunity to respond to the delegate's concerns before a final decision is made. This opportunity should be offered to the parent in writing.

Under Section 25 of the Education Act 1990, the Minister may grant a Certificate of Exemption from enrolment at school. This power is delegated, subject to this procedure, to the Executive Director of Catholic Schools, in relation to granting of an exemption from enrolment at School totaling up to 50 days in a twelve month period.

The power to exempt students in Catholic systemic schools for periods more than 50 days in a 12 month period currently remains with the Minister. Applications should be forwarded through the Director and CEO of EREA Flexible Schools to the Catholic Education Commission, NSW.

The Director-General of the NSW Department of Education is delegated the power to exercise all the Minister's powers under Section 25 without limitation.

Exemption from enrolment should only be granted where conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable in the view of the Minister or delegate that a Certificate of Exemption be granted.

If there is any case, where there are circumstances that may not be considered by this procedure and an exemption appears to be in the best interests of the child, the case should be referred to the Director-General for consideration. This may be done through the Director and CEO of EREA Flexible Schools.

6.1 Reasons for Granting Exemptions from Enrolment at School

Under section 21B of the Education Act, Secondary Principals grant exemptions to students of compulsory school age from the requirement to be enrolled in school, provided they have completed Year 9 of secondary education and approval has been given to their entering a **full time apprenticeship or traineeship** before they have completed Year 10. See section 6 of the *Guidelines on the Completion of Education in Special Circumstances* for further information. Such exemptions will only be granted to a student where the: principal considers that, in all the circumstances, the student is a suitable candidate to complete his or her education through an apprenticeship or traineeship; student's parents/carers give permission for this to occur; principal has sighted a full time full time apprenticeship or traineeship contract signed by the employer and a summary training plan authorised by the Registered Training Organisation; employer agrees to notify the EREA Flexible Schools (through the Principal) if the apprenticeship or traineeship is abandoned before the student turns 17. If the student does not complete the apprenticeship or traineeship, he or she will not have completed Year 10 and will be legally required to do so under another pathway of the Act (for example by returning to School or seeking enrolment in TAFE NSW); the apprenticeship or traineeship is subsequently approved by the Commissioner for Vocational Training, State Training Services as suitable for the young person and the training contract attains 'registered' status following the probationary period. (Where approval is granted by the Principal and the Commissioner subsequently notifies the student of his or her decision not to approve the contract following the probationary period, the approval and the exemption from compulsory schooling cease from that point to operate, and the student's parents/carers must take steps to comply with their compulsory schooling obligations).

Checklist for Approval of a Student to Complete Year 10 of Secondary Education by undertaking a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship.

6.2 Conditions Attached to Exemptions from Enrolment at School

Certificates of Exemption from enrolment must: include any specific conditions that apply to the exemption; state that the exemption may be cancelled if any such conditions are not met; specify a period for which the exemption had been granted.

The original Certificates of Exemption will be provided to the parents/carers.

A copy of the Certificate of Exemption will be provided to the School on subsequent enrolment and must be attached to the student's record card.

A copy of the signed Certificate of Exemption will be retained by the designated EREA Flexible Schools Representative.

6. Unsatisfactory Attendance Intervention Strategies

Attendance data will be monitored by the principal's delegate fortnightly and any concerns will be raised to the Principal and Head of Wellbeing. The School has implemented the following strategies in order to improve unsatisfactory attendance and student engagement in school and learning:

- The School encourages parents/carers to understand their obligations to ensure their child attends school, and to not condone absences for unauthorised reasons such as birthdays, shopping and other leisure activities.
- Regular meetings are conducted between the Principal, Deputy Principal and senior staff as appropriate to coordinate responses to student absences.
- Students with persistently low attendance will be monitored and personalised strategies will be considered to increase their attendance and/or engage them in continuing education programs. For students requiring more intensive support, one-on-one meetings and alternative arrangements may be organised in consultation with parents/carers.
- A Student Attendance Plan may be required as a strategy to improve attendance.
- When frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the School will request medical certificates for the absences and will consult with parents/carers regarding the health care needs of the student.
- All required reports will be made to the Department of Communities and Justice, Child Protection Helpline, and/or contact will be made with the Child Wellbeing Unit if there are safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns in relation to student attendance.

Approval Authority	College Principal
Date for Next Review	March 2026
Related Policies, Procedures & Guidelines	Education Act 1990 02.14.00-E – School Attendance / Non-Attendance Policy 02.14.04-E – Letter: Declining an Application for a Certificate of Exemption