

## ATTENDANCE

Always read this policy in conjunction with the Related Procedures identified below.

<b>Policy Statement</b>	The CEO/Principal of Mater Dei School maintains an attendance register, approved by the Minister for Education. The register records the daily attendances of all students at the School. The register is in electronic form, utilising the New South Wales Attendance Register Codes.
<b>Purpose</b>	Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. The School, in partnership with Parents/Guardians, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. This policy sets out the requirements for the attendance and exemption from attendance of students at Mater Dei School.
<b>Scope</b>	The policy applies to all students enrolled at the School.
<b>Audience</b>	Parents/Legal Guardians & School Staff
<b>Related Procedure</b>	<a href="#">Student Attendance Flowchart</a> (included)
<b>Related Documents</b>	<a href="#">Application for Leave or Exemption</a> <a href="#">Attendance Register Codes via AIS NSW</a>
<b>Compliance Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Act (1990)</li> <li>• NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) <i>Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual</i>.</li> <li>• The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</li> <li>• Association of Independent Schools NSW (AIS NSW)</li> </ul>
<b>Policy Owner</b>	CEO/Principal
<b>Effective Date</b>	September 2021
<b>Review Date</b>	September 2023



# STUDENT ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART

WHEN A STUDENT IS/WILL BE ABSENT



Parent/Guardian to add attendance note on Compass if student is not attending school

Parent/Guardian to submit Application for Leave or Exemption for planned leave for:

- 10-100 days not related to illness OR
- regular external medical/therapy appointments

Leave/exemptions processed and recorded by Compass Admin

DAILY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE



**9:15am** Class roll is taken by the Teacher in classroom

**9:30am** Reception follows up any class who has not submitted their roll

**10:00am** Automated SMS distributed to Parent/Guardian of absent students without an attendance note, reminding to submit attendance note

Students who arrive late (after 9:15am) or are collected early (prior to 3:00pm) are signed in/out at Reception via the Compass Kiosk

Compass Admin reviews absence/late reasons and advises any of concern to Stage Leader

THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS ABSENT



Compass Admin advises Classroom Teachers via email of ANY students absent for three consecutive days

Classroom Teacher conducts pastoral phone call to:

- check on student's welfare
- remind Parent to submit attendance note (if unexplained)
- remind Parent that medical certificate is required if student absent the following day

Classroom Teacher records communication/communication attempt

FOUR CONSECUTIVE DAYS ABSENT



Parent/Guardian to provide medical certificate via Compass (or diary) for absences of four or more consecutive days

Reception uploads hard copy medical certificates to Compass

MONITORING ATTENDANCE



Compass Admin prepares fortnightly attendance report including all absences, explained/unexplained, reasons/documentation provided and percentages

Attendance monitored fortnightly at the Student Wellbeing Meeting. Students with a poor attendance rate or attendance patterns of concern are noted, discussed and followed up

FOLLOWING UP UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE



Phone call to Parent/Guardian by Stage Leader, noting attendance concern, checking on welfare, reminding them of responsibilities and offering support

Letter to Parent/Guardian from Leader of Pastoral Care noting attendance concern and a reminder of responsibilities

Meeting with Parent/Guardian(s) with Assistant Principal to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan to be reviewed regularly

Reporting to appropriate authorities



## 1 PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- ensuring that their child/ren attend school regularly
- explaining absences from school promptly (prior to 9:15am via a Compass Attendance Note) and within seven days to the school\*
- Providing a medical certificate if child is absent for four or more consecutive days
- Submitting an Application for Leave or Exemption for planned leave in the case of:
  - 10-100 days not related to illness OR
  - regular external medical/therapy appointments
- taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children

*\*A student's absence must be explained within 7 days. After this time, the absence will be recorded as "unexplained" (A)*

## 2 SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The CEO/Principal is responsible for:

- Maintaining the Register of Attendance in an approved format, which records daily attendance, absences, reasons for absences, documentation to substantiate reason for absence, certificates of leave and attendance exemptions
- Ensuring the Register is retained for the period outlined by NESA
- Providing clear information to students and Parents/Guardians regarding attendance requirements and their legal obligations under the Education Act (1990).
- Advising Parent/Guardian promptly when their child is absent without explanation.
- Monitoring attendance, identifying students developing poor attendance patterns and implementing appropriate intervention strategies in response.
- Reporting absences via Student Semester Reports
- Ensuring all staff, including staff nominated to maintain Attendance Registers, are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to document, monitor and promote regular attendance at School. *Note: The CEO/Principal cannot delegate the authority to grant and cancel exemptions to other staff.*

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

- Ensuring they carry out the requirements outlined in this document including recording attendance, follow up communication regarding absences and implementing strategies to support the follow up of unsatisfactory attendance.

### 3 ABSENCE TYPES

#### **Illness (S)**

The CEO/Principal may grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness. Reasons that students should be kept home from school include (but are not limited to):

- Symptoms of a suspected infectious disease
- Active fever, diarrhea, vomiting
- Live or dead head lice or eggs
- Injuries that will need further medical clearance before returning to school (e.g. broken bones, sprained ankles etc)
- Student's personal care needs at the time are such that staff will be unable to sufficiently manage or support the student at school (some personal hygiene matters, asthma management care during critical periods, etc)

#### **Leave (L)**

The CEO/Principal may approve leave for students who have provided an explanation of the absence. Acceptable explanations for leave may include:

- misadventure or unforeseen event
- participation in special events not related to the school
- domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member
- travel in Australia and overseas
- attendance at funeral
- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.

The CEO/Principal may decline to accept as satisfactory, an explanation for an absence. In this case, the Parent/Guardian will be advised in writing.

#### **Extended Leave (10-100 days) (L)**

For extended periods of leave (10-100 days) not related to illness/sickness, Parent/Guardians are required to submit an Application for Leave or Exemption. This form will be returned to the Parent/Guardian with advice of the outcome of the application. If granted, the form will be authorised and signed by the CEO/Principal. If declined, the CEO/Principal will provide a written explanation of the decision. This leave is included in absence reporting.

Applications for leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to the potential impact on the student, including their learning program, routines and structures. Families are encouraged to travel during school vacation periods.

### **Attendance Exemption (M)**

The CEO/Principal may grant an exemption from School attendance (full or part day, up to 100 days in a calendar year), not related to illness/sickness for students who attend regular (weekly/fortnightly) external therapy/medical appointments. Parent/Guardians are required to submit an Application for Leave or Exemption. This form will be returned to the Parent/Guardian with advice of the outcome of the application. If granted, the form will be authorised and signed by the CEO/Principal. If declined, the CEO/Principal will provide a written explanation of the decision. Attendance exemptions are not included in absence reporting. Exemptions cannot be granted retrospectively.

Applications for exemption will be considered on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to the potential impact on the student, including their learning program, routines and structures. Importantly however, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Operational Guidelines state that “NDIS funded therapy services should generally not be delivered at school nor should children or young people be taken out of school to receive these supports”.

### **Late Arrival or Early Departures (Pa)**

It is important that students are punctual for class. Arriving late in the morning may cause considerable disruption to classroom routines as well as missing out on critical learning opportunities. All partial attendance matters are recorded in absence reporting.

## **4 MONITORING ATTENDANCE & UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE**

The most effective means of restoring and maintaining regular school attendance includes sound attendance monitoring practices, communications with Parent/Guardian(s) and following up unsatisfactory attendance patterns.

Attendance is tabled at the Student Wellbeing meeting, held fortnightly. The minutes of this meeting are provided to the CEO/Principal. Students with a poor attendance rate or attendance patterns of concern are noted, discussed and followed up with intervention strategies including:

- Phone call to Parent/Guardian by Stage Leader, noting attendance concern, checking on welfare, reminding them of responsibilities and offering support
- Letter to Parent/Guardian from Leader of Pastoral Care noting attendance concern and a reminder of responsibilities
- Meeting with Parent/Guardian(s) with Assistant Principal to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan to be reviewed regularly
- Reporting to appropriate authorities

When frequent or prolonged absences are explained as being due to illness, the School will consult with Parents/Guardian(s) regarding the health care needs of the student and may request information from the student's health professional and/or medical certificates to explain absences related to illness.

If a range of school-based interventions have been unsuccessful, the School will refer individual cases to the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AIS NSW) – Regulations and Programs Team. Possible interventions include:

- Compulsory Schooling Conference - convened by AIS NSW on behalf of NSW Department of Education (DoE)
- Compulsory School Order (Children's Court via DoE)
- Prosecution in the Local Court

In the event that attendance concerns raise child protection concerns, the Child Protection Framework will be referred to and followed to ensure reporting to appropriate bodies.

## 5 BASIS OF DISCRETION

The CEO/Principal has the right of discretion to make provision for departure from the policy in the event of unforeseen or exceptional circumstances.