



B7.1 Attendance

Attendance

reviewed – 05/12/2025

Students at St Paul's International College are expected to punctually attend all classes and activities for courses in which they are enrolled. Exceptions are made in the event of illness or misadventure. College policy is that students must be in attendance for 95% of their classes.

The College follows the Schools Attendance Register Codes 2025 as seen at the end of this document.

Context:

Regular attendance at school for every student is essential if students are to achieve their potential, and increase their career and life options. Schools in partnerships 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 part of their duty of care, record and monitor part and whole day absences. Schools, in providing a caring teaching and learning environment, which addresses the learning and support needs of students, including those with additional learning and support needs or complex health conditions, foster students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.

The importance of Attendance:

Attending school sets students up for success in many areas. Regular attendance means that students can:

- consistently engage with the curriculum
- participate in classroom activities
- benefit from teacher instruction
- enjoy interactions with others.

Regular attendance helps establish a routine. It encourages the development of discipline and time-management skills.

Schools support parents and caregivers by monitoring student attendance. They also help to address attendance issues when they emerge.

Attending school regularly contributes to a student's sense of belonging and community. It enhances their overall wellbeing.

Consistent absences can lead to:

- gaps in learning
- decreased academic performance

- diminished prospects for higher education and employment.

Maintaining high attendance rates ensures students' holistic development and long-term success.

Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- enrolling their children of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school or registering for home schooling;
- ensuring that their children attend school every day the school is open for their instruction;
- explaining the absences of their children from school promptly by means such as a telephone call, written note, text message or email to the school
- working in partnership with the school to plan and implement strategies to support regular attendance at school, including communicating with the school if they are aware of issues impacting on their child's attendance or engagement with school.

Responsibilities of school staff

School Staff support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community;
- promoting regular attendance at school through teaching and learning activities that acknowledge the learning and support needs of students
- working with parents and external agencies (including psychologists) if necessary in the development of an individual well-being management plan to support students to attend school regularly

Procedures for Student Attendance at St Paul's International College:

- know the procedures in this document before marking the attendance register and following up absences. Staff must understand how an absence should be noted on an attendance register using the approved codes;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- seek verbal or written advice promptly from parents regarding unexplained full or part day absences. Parents may not be aware that their child has been absent from school and will expect to be informed promptly if unexplained absences occur. The College secretary emails local parents at 11am to ask after absent students. For boarding students, boarding supervisors find students absent from assembly straight after roll call, all other absences are checked against any permissions received from parents or illnesses in the clinic.
- 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
- retain records of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents
- alerting the Principal, or staff member responsible for monitoring attendance, when a student's pattern of attendance is of concern, or if no explanation is received from the parent or carer within required timeframes of 7 days.

Attendance records maintenance:

Attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students. The Principal should endorse and sign the attendance data certifying its accuracy at regular intervals throughout the year. Once signed, this copy becomes the official record of attendance and must not be amended. A school must be able to access archived records for individual students at any time (Including attendance records of Alumni Students)

- All attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accessible to the NESA Inspector.

The following documents are to be retained:

- A Register of Enrolments to be retained for five years.
- Notes and records of verbal explanations for absences from parents.
- An Attendance Register (roll) to be retained for seven years after the last entry.

Attendance monitoring strategies:

- Rolls are marked by Year Coordinators or designated teachers at morning assemblies. Students line up in alphabetical order in their Year Groups. Accuracy of roll-marking is important
- After morning assembly, the manual roll information is transferred to an electronic format by the College Secretary
- At that time, absences for boarding students are noted and boarding supervisors locate the students and bring them to school. Those students have their lateness recorded by the College secretary and a late note given for class. In some cases, where boarders are absent for the whole day or partial day, documentation is checked giving them permission to be absent and/or the clinic book checked if they are sick. Local students who were absent at assembly are also recorded and the College secretary emails their parents if no prior explanation has been provided. The College is to seek a written or oral explanation for lateness or absence from the care-giver of a day-student
- The names of absentees are posted in the Daily Notices which is emailed to all staff before morning tea
- Teachers notify the General Office of any other students absent from their classes. Phones are located in all classrooms and all staff rooms. Year coordinators, office staff or boarding supervisors either locate the missing student or inform staff of a legitimate absence.
- Students who are late to class are to obtain a late slip from the General Office first, giving the reason for their lateness. This lateness is also recorded by the College secretary
- Students who wish to leave the College grounds during the school day must apply to the General Office, showing written permission from their caregiver, the College Director or Principal. A note is given to those students and checked on their return.

- Persistent lateness is to be made known to the parent or caregiver, and supportive or punitive measures taken as appropriate by Year Coordinators e.g. letter to parents, phone call. Such details are recorded on student files held in the main Office.
- Unexplained absences are followed up through phone calls/emails/text messages to parents, guardians, and care givers. In cases where no reasonable reason for the student's absence has been provided and/or the student cannot be located, the police area command in Moss Vale will be contacted and the matter reported.
- A Register of Daily Attendance is retained for 7 years.
- A Register of Enrolments is retained for 5 years. This is maintained at the College and an electronic, weekly backup copy is maintained off-site.

Delegation:

According to the AMENDED EDUCATION ACT 1990 DELEGATION, the Principal has authority in the

- Granting and cancelling of a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school for periods totalling 100 days in a twelve month period.
- Granting and cancelling of a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school for an indefinite period for students who have completed Year 9 of secondary education and who have been approved to undertake a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship.

Forms for such exemptions can be obtained from the College Secretary.

General Principles for exemption:

- Procedural fairness must be accorded to an applicant. If the delegate is considering refusing granting an exemption, the parent should be given an opportunity to respond to the delegates concerns before a final decision is made. This opportunity should be offered to the parent in writing.
- If an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision made by a delegate, the appeal would go to the next more senior delegate. (Catholic Schools NSW)
- For most exemptions parents make an application by completing an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School. This must be made in writing and in advance (see attached). Parents can seek assistance from the Principal when completing an Application for Exemption from Attendance /Enrolment at School.
- The parent is not required to apply for an exemption in cases of the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991 . The Principal may grant a Certificate of Exemption for the period determined by public health authorities.
- A delegate can refer the granting of an exemption to a more senior delegate (Catholic Schools NSW) where they identify circumstances that may make this more appropriate.
- If there is any case where there are circumstances that may not be considered by these Procedures and an exemption appears to be in the best interest of the child, the case should be referred to Catholic Schools NSW.
- A delegate can cancel the Certificate of Exemption where they identify circumstances that they believe warrants this action. For example, where the conditions attached to the exemption are not being met or cease to apply. (e.g. Passed end date)
- Schools are to retain copies of all documentation relating to the exemption in the student's file until the student reaches the age of 25, or for 7 years, whichever is greater, and then destroy.

Reasons why exemption may be granted:

- Exceptional domestic circumstances, subject to being satisfied that this is in the best educational interests of the child. (Excluding holidays/travel) Note: Students travelling during school terms are not to be exempt. If the Principal accepts the reason then leave is granted and the 'L' code should be used, consistent with the implementation of National Standards for Student Attendance Data and Attendance Register.
- Other exceptional circumstances such as health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate
- A child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991. The Principal may grant a Certificate of Exemption for the period determined by a public health authority. (The parent is not required to complete an application for exemption)
- 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 re-engage students with education.
- 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 i.e. 100 days. Close monitoring of exemption periods is necessary so that the approval period is not exceeded.
- Students participating in school based programs including behaviour management transition plans. An Application for Part Day Exemption should be completed.
- Employment in the entertainment industry.
- Participation in elite arts or sporting events for short periods of time i.e. for one or two days, and at short notice. For students participating in elite arts or elite sporting programs who are required to attend regular activities/training during school time an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School must be completed and submitted to the Principal for approval prior to commencing the program. It must meet the "Elite" definition and be supported by the relevant state or national sporting body.
- Employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events for longer periods of time i.e. longer periods where a tutor is provided.
- There are very few circumstances that would warrant an exemption.

School Attendance Register Codes

Schools are required to have policy and procedures to monitor regular attendance and to ensure that records are current, accurate and accessible. The procedures should reflect how attendance is marked, followed up and records maintained at that particular school.

The tables on the following pages indicate:

- Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence
- Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

The symbol 'X' is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

Schools must use the following symbols to record an absence or variation in attendance, *in addition to* the appropriate attendance register code shown on the following pages.

Symbol	Meaning
a	The student was absent for the whole day
Pa	The students was late or was absent for part of the day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

NESA requires that the register of enrolments must be retained for a minimum of five (5) years before archiving.

The register of daily attendance must be retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.

Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence

The following attendance register codes are to be used to record the explanation of student absence and **are counted** for statistical purposes.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
A	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.	To be also used if the principal does not accept that an absence (e.g. for extended leave/travel during school term) is in the student's best interests and that the reason is unjustified.
S	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	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.	Note that this code is to be used if the reason for the absence (e.g. extended leave/travel) is accepted by the principal. The principal may consider an Application for Extended Leave/Travel from parents, and provide a Certificate for Extended Leave/Travel, if approved.
E	The student was suspended from school	

Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

Only the following attendance register codes must be used to record a variation in attendance – they are **not** counted as an absence for statistical purposes. In addition to recording the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the variation must be recorded.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.	
F	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	The “F” code is no longer only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable. The code should also be used in independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and other programs that are school authorised
B	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 (representative events) - school excursions - student exchange	The ‘B’ code is used for sport when the student has been selected to represent the school at an event. If the student is participating at an elite level (state or national squads), consideration may be given to an Exemption from Attendance (Elite Sports/Arts)

H	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	In most cases this code will only be used by government schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools. The “F” code, not the “H” code is to be used by independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.
----------	---	---

Further advice on the use of attendance codes from CSNSW 5th February 2021 regarding impact of COVID-19:

- Please use attendance code **F** for students who have been asked to remain at home due to the virus and where the student is well, the school should be providing work for the student to complete
- Please use attendance code **M** if the student is unwell, it is not expected that they would be provided with or completing work at home.
- Please use attendance code **A** for situations where families have self-selected to not attend school as this will be an unexplained absence.