



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

INTRODUCTION:

The school's Principal and teachers always remember that the school attendance roll accurately records daily attendances as required by the Education Act. The school roll can be used as a legal document, if necessary.

1. CONTEXT & AUDIENCE

1.1 Under the NSW *Education Act*, schools are required to ensure that individual students meet certain attendance standards, including mandatory attendance for students under 17 years of age, unless exemptions are applicable.

1.2 Teachers should be conversant with the school's attendance policy and the school's policy for marking the school roll, or the Register of Daily Attendances.

1.2 In view of the above, the roll should be maintained accurately and neatly.

1.3 The school is required to regularly submit attendance figures for a 20 week period to government authorities.

1.4 All recording of attendance on the roll will be by the **Exception Method** (i.e. marking absences only), in accordance with the attached *NSW Attendance Register Codes* and *Roll Marking Procedures*.

1.5 All entries in the roll at The Joseph Varga School must be with a pen with the recording of absences by the Bursar taking place on the school's main paper or electronic roll system, with the record of attendance kept becoming the attendance register.

1.6 All unexplained absences will be followed up by requests to clarify and substantiate the absence by the telephone and through email.

1.7 All explained absences are required to be supported by a note, an email, a phone call, or medical documentation, especially, where appropriate, in the case of a student's absence that is for more than one day.

1.8 If the student continues to be absent, or a pattern of absenteeism has developed in relation to the student not attending school, then a more serious letter will be sent to the parent demanding immediate clarification and action.

1.9 Attendance figures are collated at mid-year and end of year to be recorded and rated on school reports, and on the school server under each student's attendance record i.e. as part of each student's Individual Student Profiles.

1.10 JVS is currently investigating the purchase of attendance software as part of a student management system to be installed on the school server.

2. PARENT / CARER RESPONSIBILITIES:

2.1 Parents are required to contact the school before 9am if their child is sick.

2.2 Parents who are aware of an impending absence (i.e. due to their child attending a medical or therapeutic appointment) are required to contact the school in writing so that a record is kept in the child's personal file.

2.3 Parents are required to provide a medical certificate if a child is away for more than one day.

2.4 Parents are expected to contact the school to ensure the school has their most up to date contact and emergency contact information.

3. DAILY ROUTINE FOR ABSENCES

3.1 Taxi Coordinators must record all students who arrive at the back gate by taxi and inform a child's teacher or the Bursar if a child did not arrive.

3.2 The taxi checklist is presented to the school Bursar (or delegated person if absent).

3.3 Classroom teachers check at 9:15am who is present and inform the Bursar in writing of any students in their class who are not present.

3.4 The Bursar (or delegated person if absent) contacts parents by phone if student is not at school.

3.5 The Bursar will provide the classroom teacher with an explanation for the absence.

3.6 The Bursar completes the school roll book each day, according to the attached *NSW Attendance Register Codes and Procedure*.

3.7 There is a central 'roll book' in the administration office for each term of the year.

3.8 Recording of the type of absence is as per the register codes in 3.6.

3.9 The Principal or person with delegated responsibility checks the roll books each term.

3.10 A back-up electronic copy of the Attendance Register is maintained on and off the school property for a minimum of 7 years.

4. LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

4.1 If students (with parent and school permission) are to leave the school grounds, they must only do so if accompanied by a staff member, parent/carer.

4.2 In the case of secondary students, aged 16+, each must have met the parent/carer agreed criteria for 'paired release' to go to Belmore Rd shops at one

break time per week. Both students must here also sign out individually, recording the time they are expected to return, and individually sign in when they return.

4.3 Such leave from school will be recorded accordingly on the school attendance register.

5. EXEMPTION POLICY

5.1 In introducing the attendance codes, the NSW Minister for Education delegated the power to grant or cancel Exemption Certificates to non-government school principals within strict guidelines. This delegated authority ensures that The Joseph Varga School Principal can now provide an Exemption Certificate for students to be exempt from attending school for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for the one student, or an exemption to leave school following the completion of Year 10 to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship.

5.2 The Principal needs to strictly adhere to the processes and conditions outlined in the Exemption Guidelines and Applications and Certificates (see related documents attached in the Appendices) in order to legally apply the exemption.

The process for considering an 'Application for Exemption' is:

- Parent/s completes and submits an application to exempt his/her child from attending school (see attached), with supporting information, including a certified medical certificate, to the Principal, if appropriate.
- Principal reviews the parent's application against the criteria in the guidelines (see attached)
- If the application is for over 100 days in a year, the application is sent to Robyn Yates, Director: Government Education Policy at AIS, and then to the Minister's Delegate, Manager, Student Behaviour & Attendance, at the Student Welfare Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Communities
- If the application is under 100 days and is supported, the principal completes the original 'Certificate of Exemption' and issues it to the parent
- If relevant, during the exemption period of up to 100 days, parent/s are free to seek to enroll their child in another school, if they so desire to do so on medical or other grounds. After the first 7 days of absence of this period, the school can offer to supply packages of work that the child may complete at home and return to school for marking, until such time as the matter of the child's attendance, or exemption from attendance, or enrolment, is satisfactorily resolved.
- The school keeps a copy of the application, certificate and Minister's delegation on the student's file.
- Where the application is not supported, the Principal will notify the parents in writing of the unsuccessful outcome using the format from the guidelines.
- Copies of the application and exemption certificate or notification are kept on the student's file.
- Copies of the exemption certificate should also be filed in the school's attendance records.

6. RESOLVING POOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE

6.1 If parent/s supply no medical certificate in support of a student not attending school, or when applying for an exemption, and the student still does not attend school, and has been away for a period greater than 14 days, then the Principal has the power to inform the parent in writing that the child is in breach of legal requirements that the child should be attending school.

6.2 If the parent refuses after a further request to supply a medical certificate, then the Principal can encourage the parents to enroll their child at another school.

6.3 If there is still no action by the parent in relation to the child returning to school, or in terms of pursuing the enrollment of their child at another school, the Principal can terminate the enrolment in writing by informing the parent/s that the child is no longer enrolled at the school, and must seek to enroll the student elsewhere.

6.4 At this point, the school will inform the local Home Liaison Office and/or Community Services Office (through a formal notification), that the child is not attending school and/or may be 'at risk' in the community.

6.5 In some circumstances, the Home Liaison Office and The Joseph Varga School will work together to identify another school or setting (e.g. TAFE) which the target child will be able to attend.

6.6 All during these attempts to resolve poor student attendance, the school will seek advice from, and involve, doctors, experts, parents, and interested stakeholders in the consultative process.

6.7 This can involve recourse to legal action by obtaining 'Compulsory Schooling Orders' through either the Local Court or the Children's Court.

6.8 In determining a course of action under this legislation, the principal will also refer to and keep in mind the requirements under the *Keep Them Safe* legislation.

7. OTHER STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING ATTENDANCE:

7.1 When a pattern of irregular attendance, school phobic response, or truancy has been established, whereby attendance falls below 94%, parents/carers are invited to the school for a formal meeting. While parents are reminded about the legislative requirements for students to attend school, the focus is on generating positive strategies and methods of making learning a more enjoyable and rewarding experience for the student.

7.2 The classroom teacher is involved in this discussion with parents and/or the principal to talk about the classroom environment and determine whether classroom routines or program modifications are required to support increased engagement and the desire to attend school.

7.3 individual students are included in discussions to ascertain any difficulties the student is facing engaging in the school and classroom program.

7.4 The school will also determine the relevance and possibility of the family utilizing the Government Taxi Scheme if geographical distance and the student's needs etc, are contributing factors to the student's non-attendance.

7.5 Individual students are encouraged to attend lunchtime sport excursions.

8. ASSOCIATED APPENDICES:

- 1. Compulsory School Attendance for Principals** (see separate policy)
- 2. Compulsory School Attendance for Parents** (see separate policy)
- 3. Guidelines for Exemptions from Schools (FAQ)** (see separate policy)
- 4. Parental Application for Exemption from Attendance at School** (see below)

Application for Exemption from Attendance at School
To be completed by the student's parents

Student Details

Family name: _____ Given name(s): _____

Age: _____ Date of birth: ____ (dd) / ____ (mm) / ____ (year)

Enrolment Registration Number (ERN): _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

School name: _____

Date of exemption applied for: ____ / ____ / _____ to: ____ / ____ / _____

Number of school days: _____

Reason for application for exemption:

Please tick:

Exceptional domestic circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Exceptional Circumstance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direction under Section 42D of the <i>Public Health Act 1991</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment in entertainment industry/participation in elite sporting event for short periods of time i.e. for one or two days, and at short notice	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide more detail about the reason for the application for exemption here:

NOTE: Where the reason for application for exemption includes long term travel arrangements of more than 20 school days, copies of travel documentation should be included with the application.

DETAILS OF PRIOR/CURRENT EXEMPTIONS (if applicable)

Date of prior/current exemption from: ____ / ____ / ____ to: ____ / ____ / ____

Number of school days: _____

Copy of Certificate of Exemption attached: (Please tick one box) Yes No

PARENT DETAILS

Family name: _____ Given name(s): _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____ Relationship to student: _____

As the parent of the above mentioned student, I hereby apply for a Certificate of Exemption from attendance at school, under the *Education Act 1990*. I understand that if the exemption is granted:

- I am responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption
- the exemption is limited to the period indicated
- the exemption is subject to the conditions listed on the Certificate of Exemption
- the exemption may be cancelled at any time.

I declare the information provided in this application for a certificate of exemption is to the best of my knowledge and belief accurate and complete. I recognise that should statements in this application later prove to be false or misleading any decision made as a result of this application may be reversed. I further recognise that a failure to comply with any condition set out in the exemption may result in the exemption being revoked.

Signature of applicant/s: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

To be completed by the principal of the school where the exemption period requested exceeds 100 school days and forwarded to the delegate responsible for approval

Prior to forwarding this application for exemption from attendance at school to the delegate responsible for issuing the Certificate of Exemption (See page 4, *Guidelines for Exemption from School*), the principal should complete the following advice for the delegate.

I recommend that this application from attendance at school is (Please tick one box

Granted

Not granted

Please provide more detail here (if required):

Principal's name (please print): _____

Telephone number: _____

Signature of principal: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Note: Please complete the Certificate of Exemption from Attendance at School if exemption is granted (Refer to Appendix 3.5).

5. Certificate for Exemption from Attendance at School (see below)

Certificate for Exemption from Attendance at School under Section 25 of the Education Act 1990

STUDENT DETAILS

Family name: _____ Given name(s): _____

Date of birth: ____ (dd) / ____ (mm) / ____ (year)

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

School name: _____ School's telephone number: _____

Date of exemption from: ____ / ____ / ____ to: ____ / ____ / ____

Reason for the exemption:

Conditions of the exemption (note: for a part day exemption the hours of program participation must be specified, including the plan to have the student attend school full time).

It has been explained to the parent of the above mentioned student that they are responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption.

The parent understands that this exemption is limited to the period indicated, acknowledges that the exemption is subject to the conditions listed and that the exemption may be cancelled at any time.

Name and position of delegate: _____

Signature of delegate: _____ Date: ____/____/____

This certificate has been issued without alteration and must be produced when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers

6. Certificate for Exemption from Enrolment at School (Apprenticeship) (see below)

Certificate for Exemption from Enrolment at School under Section 25 of the *Education Act 1990*

STUDENT DETAILS

Family name: _____ Given name(s): _____

Date of birth: ____ (dd) / ____ (mm) / ____ (year)

Address: _____
Postcode: _____

School name: _____ School's telephone number: _____

Date of exemption from: ____ / ____ / ____ to: Completion of the apprenticeship/ traineeship

This exemption is granted for the sole purpose of completion of education by completion of a full time apprenticeship/traineeship commencing in Year 10.

1. The training contract is approved by State Training Services.
2. If the arrangement with the employer ceases the above named student must satisfy compulsory schooling requirements (i.e. complete Year 10 at school or at TAFE).

3. The employer must notify DEC in writing, through the principal, if the above named student does not complete the qualification or departs the program before the age of 17.

It has been explained to the parent of the above mentioned student that they are responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption. The parent understands that this exemption is limited to the period indicated, acknowledges that the exemption is subject to the conditions listed and that the exemption may be cancelled at any time.

Name of principal: _____

Signature of principal: _____ Date: ___/___/_____

This certificate has been issued without alteration and must be produced when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers

Last updated: 13 December 2013