



CHANGES TO THE EDUCATION ACT: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

In accordance with amendments to the Education Act, including the raising of the compulsory school leaving age to 17 years together with changes in Department of Education & Communities regulations, Nowra Anglican College has been obliged to review its policy in relation to the signing in and out of students as well as absences from school:

Absence from School

All absences require parents/carers to give a reason for the absence. Absences fall into one of the following categories:

1. Late Arrival / Early Departure

Any student who arrives late for school needs to be escorted to Student Services by a parent/carer so they can be signed in appropriately. Alternatively, a note should be written, addressed to the school, explaining their child's lateness. In the instance where a child needs to leave school early, he or she will need to visit Student Services prior to the commencement of the school day with either a note written in their diary (where applicable) or a note from their parent/carer advising the time they will be collected and the reason for the early departure. This will enable College staff to ensure that the student is at Student Services ready for collection.

It is no longer appropriate for students of any age to sign themselves in or out of school. Parents/carers must not collect a student directly from class. In all cases late arrivals and early departures must report to Student Services.

2. Sick Leave

Where a child is sick, an explanatory letter from the parent/carer must be provided to **Student Services** upon his or her return to the College. If the absence is greater than five days the letter should be accompanied by a Medical Certificate.

3. Other Types of Leave

Up to 15 days of leave may be granted in a school year for students whose parents have provided a written explanation (letter or email) of the absence in advance. The written explanation must be provided to **Student Services** – not the class teacher or care group leader. The reasons for leave that will typically be accepted by the Principal include:

- a) misadventure or unforeseen event
- b) participation in special events not related to the school
- c) domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member
- d) attendance at funerals
- e) recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.

Additional leave days for students 17 years of age or older may be approved at the Principal's discretion, but only for extraordinary circumstances.

4. Unexplained/Unjustified Absence

If no explanation has been provided by parents either before or within seven days after the absence or if the explanation is considered unsatisfactory by the Principal, the time the student has been absent from school will be recorded as Unexplained/Unjustified. Please minimise the number of unexplained/unjustified absences by always providing a written explanation or notice in advance.

Any days a student is absent from school over and above these 15 days will be recorded as unjustified absences, except in circumstances for which an exemption has been requested.

5. Other absences

In the past parents/carers have used reasons such as “absent with parent permission” – these are no longer acceptable and will trigger an unapproved absence. Parents will then be asked to provide a new note with an appropriate reason for the absence.

Exemptions

The College advises parents to apply for an Exemption as soon as they become aware of the need for leave that falls into one of the following categories:

- Exceptional domestic circumstances, including but not limited to participation in family holidays during school term subject to the Principal being satisfied that this is in the best educational interests of the child;
- Health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate;
- Child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991 i.e., due to a contagious disease; or
- Employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events for short periods of time i.e., for one or two days.

In all such cases parents/carers need to apply for an *Exemption from Attendance at School*. An **Application for Exemption from Attendance at School** form must be completed and return it to the College along with supporting documentation prior to the leave date. The request will then be reviewed by the Principal and either approved or declined based on the merits of the application and the criteria listed above. A copy of the application form is attached and copies are also available on the College website and at Student Services.

If it is possible that an exemption application could be refused, the parent/carer will be given an opportunity to respond to the Principal’s concerns before a final decision is made. Responses to declined exemption applications must be submitted to the Principal by the parent/carer in writing.

On approval of the Exemption the College will issue an *Exemption from Attendance* outlining the conditions and duration of the exemption. Exemption Certificates are effective only for the period indicated, and are issued subject to the conditions listed on the Certificate. Exemptions may be cancelled at any time.

The parent/carer(s) of the student remain responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption. Certificates will be issued without alteration and must be produced when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers.

Please note: At present applications for exemption of 50 or more days must be referred by the Principal to the Minister of Education’s delegate through the Association of Independent Schools. Parents are advised to allow at least three weeks for the processing of applications for exemption of 50 or more days duration.

Please ensure that you are familiar with the procedures described above to ensure your compliance with the Education Act and Regulations. If you have any questions regarding these procedures please do not hesitate to contact the Registrar, Loreena Doumbos, on 4421 7711 or by email at enrol@nac.nsw.edu.au.

Lorrae Sampson
Executive Principal
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