



# Student Attendance Policy and Procedures

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# Student Attendance Policy & Procedures

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this HopePoint Christian School policy is to outline the attendance requirements, and procedures, to be followed in regards to the register of Enrolments and Daily Attendance. Under the monitoring of the Principal of HopePoint Christian School, this register is maintained and stored on SENTRAL, in a form approved by the Minister of Education, and includes the information for each student as required by Section 3.8 of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government School (NSW) Manual*.

### 1.2 Compliance and Records

**1.2.1** All student attendance is recorded daily and, any absence or variation, explained using the Minister's common codes. The Principal monitors all student attendance, to encourage and ensure satisfactory levels of attendance are maintained.

**1.2.2** In the matter of unsatisfactory attendance, intervention strategies will be implemented by HopePoint Christian School to improve attendance and support the student.

**1.2.3** Where the parents/guardian of a compulsory school aged child apply for a Certificate of Exemption from being enrolled or attending school in certain prescribed circumstances, the Principal may exercise the Ministers delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW) in relation to granting or cancelling it. In the matter of an exemption being approved, the Principal will process it in accordance with the guidelines from the NSW Department of Education.

## 2. Responsibilities

**2.1** Section 22 of the [Education Act 1990](#) requires students between the ages of six and sixteen to be enrolled at a government or registered non-government school and to attend that school whenever instruction is provided, or to be registered with the NESA for home schooling.

**2.2** All students who are enrolled at HopePoint Christian School are expected to attend school when instructed.

**2.3** Section 24 of the Education Act requires principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister, and using the Minister's codes. Attendance registers must be available to authorised officers at all times.

**2.4** Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. HopePoint Christian School, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

**2.5** Encouraging regular attendance is a core HopePoint Christian School responsibility, demonstrated with clear messaging in the form of posters displayed on the School Grounds.

**2.6** In keeping with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government School (NSW) Manual, HopePoint Christian School securely stores a backup of the enrolment and attendance records off site.

**2.7** Parents and carers are legally responsible for enrolling their children of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school, or for registering them with the Board of Studies for homeschooling, and ensuring that they attend regularly.

## **2.8 Definitions**

- **HPCS:** HopePoint Christian School
- **Compulsory School Age:** Children are of compulsory school age from the day they turn 6 years old, and until the completion of Year 10.
- **SENTRAL:** The secure cloud-based school administration platform used by HopePoint Christian School for the management, storing, tracking and reporting of all school administration and student data.
- **Minister:** Refers to the Minister of Education in NSW.
- **NESA:** NSW Educational Standards Authority.

## **3. Register of Enrolments**

The HopePoint Christian School Register of Enrolments is maintained by the Registrar, monitored and stored by the Principal, and accessible exclusively to necessary staff on SENTRAL, the school's online administration platform. A backup of the enrolment register is kept securely offsite.

### **3.1 Enrolment**

Upon enrolment at HopePoint Christian School, the following information is collected by the Registrar and recorded in SENTRAL. As the child progresses throughout their schooling at HopePoint Christian School, any additional required information is updated by the Registrar or Reception Administrator.

- Student name, date of birth, and home address.
- Name(s) and contact information for parents/guardians, (and emergency contacts)
- Date of enrolment

### 3.3 Leaving HPCS

At point of exit from enrolment at HopePoint Christian School, the Parents/Guardians of the child are required to inform the school, in writing, if they intend to withdraw their child and provide the following information. The student's record on SENTRAL is then updated accordingly.

- Date of leaving school, and next student destination.
- Where the destination of the student is known, the Registrar will update SENTRAL with the location details, and confirm enrolment at the new school via phone call.
- Where the destination of a student leaving HopePoint Christian School is unknown, records of communications sent to the parents and the Department of Education are retained by the Registrar and added to the student file. The DoE is notified using the Student Enrolment Destination Unknown Notification Form.

## 4. Register of Attendance

### 4.1 Daily Attendance

All student attendance is recorded daily and, any absence or variation, explained using the Minister's common codes.

#### 4.1.2 Each Day

- Upon arrival at school, students are to attend morning assembly prior to being sent to their classrooms with their teacher.
- Once in the classroom, each roll is marked by the teacher after 9:15am. Any Casual teachers will collect a paper roll from the School Office to be marked and returned. Any paper rolls submitted are entered into SENTRAL by the Reception Administrator.
- The Reception Administrator will email teachers at Recess if a class roll is not marked.
- If a student arrives after 9:15am, they must present to the HopePoint Christian School Office to be recorded as late on SENTRAL by the Reception Administrator using the Minister's Code. If uncertain of the appropriate code, the Principal will be consulted.
- Justification of absence is based upon parental communication, either in person at the time of sign in or via email in advance. This supporting evidence is saved within the student absence entry on SENTRAL.
- Students who depart before the end of the school day will present to the School Office where the Reception Administrator will mark the student as an early leaver on SENTRAL, with the appropriate Minister's Code, and the timeframe in which they were at school. Justification of absence is based upon parental communication, either in person at the time of sign in or via email in advance. This supporting evidence is saved within the student absence entry on SENTRAL.

- At the end of the school day, the administrator will generate an email to be sent to the primary contacts of any student with an unexplained absence to provide justification. Parents can reply via email or a phone call.
- The administrator will update the attendance register based upon parental communication. A copy of the parent communication is stored within the SENTRAL record for that student absence.

## 4.2 Absences

4.2.1 Parents/Guardians are notified of their child's absence by an email each missed day, and contacted by phone if they do not respond. It is required of them to explain the reasoning for their child's absence to HopePoint Christian School within 7 days, in the form of written correspondence or a phone call to the HPCS School Office.

4.2.2 The explanation, and supporting documentation are then attached to the absence entry in SENTRAL. If an explanation has not been received, or has not been accepted by the Principal, the school will record the absence as unexplained or unjustified and this will be reflected on the Student's official record. Explanations received after 7 days will not be accepted.

## 4.3 Attendance Report

4.3.1 At the end of each week an attendance report is generated and distributed to the Principal. Once viewed and annotated, the weekly absence report is stored within the Absence Tallies folder at the School Office.

Throughout each week, should the Reception Administrator notice continued absences, they may address them with the Principal directly.

The Principal monitors all student attendance, to encourage and ensure satisfactory levels of attendance are maintained. This also ensures the school notices any continued patterns of absence, leading to early intervention and preventative strategies for unsatisfactory attendance.

4.3.2 The administrator will produce an Absence List from SENTRAL every month . This report includes an extended explanation of all absences for each student each week.

The Absence List report will be assessed by the Reception Administrator for patterns of absence, both justified and unjustified. Any patterns of concern will be discussed with, or referred to the Principal as needed.

Where a pattern of concern is identified, the Reception Administrator will generate an individual Student History Report for future analysis.

Once the concern is identified, the Student Improvement Plan will be implemented, based upon the identified patterns.

Attendance Improvement Planning will be initiated by the Principal via a phone call to the Parents/Guardian. The Principal will liaise with the family and the student to determine strategies for attendance improvement.

Where additional support is required for Attendance Improvement Planning, the Principal may contact the Student Services consultants at AISNSW.

The monthly Absence List report is annotated and stored within the Monitoring Attendance Data folder at the School Office.

**4.3.3** If not cooperative with HopePoint Christian School, it is the law that families attend the Secretary's Compulsory Schooling Conference with the Department of Education's Legal Services, and then further to Children's Court or Local Court if absenteeism is continued.

## **4.4 Leave and Extended Leave**

**4.4.1** HopePoint Christian School requests that any parents/guardians that seek Leave or Extended Leave for their compulsory school-aged child, apply directly to the Principal in a written format, prior to the dates requested. This could be as an email or application form, available to collect from the HPCS School Office. A HopePoint Christian School Application for Leave form must be completed for each request for leave, and is then added to the student's file along with any supporting documentation provided by the family.

**4.4.2** Retrospective Leave Applications will only be considered by the Principal in exceptional circumstances, and only if the Parent/Guardian requests it as soon as possible, and not weeks or months after.

**4.4.3** Permission for Leave is granted solely by the Principal. The Principal will take into consideration the conditions and consequences applicable to the acceptance of an Application for Leave, and the parents/guardians will be contacted by HopePoint Christian School once a decision has been made, notifying them of the final outcome.

**4.4.4** For Leave that has been approved, the 'L' code is to be used. This code is used in relation to a misadventure or unexpected event, participation in special events not related to the school, domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member, attendance to funerals, recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.

**4.4.5** If the Principal denies a leave application and the family decides to continue without leave for the student, all absences from school will be marked as unjustified with the 'A' code.

**4.4.6** Extended Leave is considered as any request for leave for longer than 3 consecutive school days. HopePoint Christian School provides the appropriate application forms, which must be completed, signed and returned to the School Office or Principal prior to consideration.

**4.4.7** Permission for Extended Leave is granted solely by the Principal, who will take into consideration the conditions and consequences applicable to the acceptance of an Application for Extended Leave, and the parents/guardians will be contacted by HopePoint Christian School once a decision has been made, notifying them of the final outcome.

## 4.5 Minister's Attendance Codes

<b>a</b>	Absent	Used as a placeholder until the official reason is provided.
<b>A</b>	Unexplained or Unjustified	Used when an explanation for an absence has not been provided to HPCS within 7 days, or when the explanation that has been provided is not accepted by the Principal.
<b>S</b>	Sick/Medical	The student has been absent from school due an illness, medical reason, specialist appointment, dental appointment, mental health, or other allied health appointment. Also used to provide explanation for a part day absence if a student leaves school early due to illness.
<b>L</b>	Leave	Used to explain a misadventure or unexpected event, participation in special events not related to the school, domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member, attendance to funerals, recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions. It is also used when a family applies to HPCS to travel during the school term and is granted approval prior to departure. When the application is declined, but the family still travels, the <b>A</b> code would be appropriate.
<b>E</b>	Suspended from school	This code is used when a student is asked to stay away from school for disciplinary reasons. It is not used when a student is serving an 'in school' suspension, as the child is present at school.
<b>M</b>	Exempted	When an exemption from attendance has been granted, in advance, by the Principal. Approval can not be granted retrospectively.
<b>B</b>	School Business	Used when a student is away from school representing HPCS at an organised event such as a sporting activity or excursion.
<b>F</b>	Flexible Timetable	Used when a student is not present because they are not required to be. Most commonly used when a Pathways progression to HSC is being completed, or when an examination schedule has started.
<b>H</b>	Shared Enrolment/Hospital schools	Not commonly used in the independent sector, except when a student is attending a school in another setting because they have no choice, such as Hospital School. The temporary school is to provide attendance records to HPCS.
<b>P</b>	Part day attendance	The 'P' code shows that the student was absent for a part of the day. Could be late for school, left early, or was absent for a portion in the middle of the school day. MUST be accompanied by the reason code & time frames of when the student arrived and left the school.
<b>X</b>	First and Last day	To be used on the students first day of attendance, and last day of attendance each school term.

## 4.6 Definitions

- **Absenteeism:** Defined as any form of absence from school or class.
- **School Refusal:** Refers to when a child refuses to attend class/ or has problems remaining in class for an entire day, and is anxiety-based (separation, generalised or socially driven). It can present as extended or periodic absences from school, missed classes or chronic tardiness with the child experiencing intense dread or anxiety about school. Parents/Guardians are aware of these absences and no attempt by the child is made to conceal them.
- **Chronic School Refusal:** Is missing 15 school days in an academic year or missing at least 10% of school days at some point of the academic year.
- **School Withdrawal:** When Parent's/Guardians deliberately keep a child away from school for various reasons, including family illness, parental conflict, or family holidays.

4.7 HopePoint Christian School, at all times, will put the best interests of each child at the forefront of attendance. It is seen as a great responsibility to create a positive and engaging school environment that uplifts and inspires each student to not only be their best self, but to have a desire to attend school, participate in and thrive.

It is through consistent, clear communication with school families in the weekly newsletter, and visual reminders across the grounds of HopePoint Christian School that encourages increased attendance, and an environment that fosters a welcoming, safe and supportive space for all.

## 5. Exemptions

### 5.1 Exemption Summary

5.1.1 A certificate of exemption can be granted or cancelled by the Principal of HopePoint Christian School. Exemptions are granted when the applicant has clearly demonstrated that the exemption is in the student's best interests and when, where appropriate, other alternatives have been explored. Under Section 25 of the NSW Education Act (1990), Principal's have been delegated authority by the Minister for Education for the granting of an exemption from school.

5.1.2 Applications for an exemption are to be made in writing, in advance. Exemptions will not be granted retrospectively.

### 5.2 Certificate of Exemption from Attendance

5.2.1 The Principal of HopePoint Christian School has been delegated the authority of the Minister, to grant or cancel exemptions from attendance, for up to 100 days, for students in the following circumstances.

- Engagement in approved entertainment industry activities.
- Participation in elite arts or elite sporting events.
- Exceptional Circumstances.



5.2.2 Exemptions from attendance can be approved for part days or whole days. They can be approved for individual days or for multiple consecutive days for a defined period of time. HopePoint Christian School monitors the cumulative number of days that exemptions are granted for a child and may cancel the certificate of exemption if necessary.

## 5.4 Certificate of Exemption from Enrolment

5.4.1 The Principal of HopePoint Christian School has been delegated the authority of the Minister, to grant or cancel exemptions from enrolment, for the following reasons.

- Age, where the child turns six years on or after 1 October or later in a school year.
- Health, learning or social needs, or disability of a child necessitating the continuation of an individual program supported by medical specialists not longer than 6 months after the child's sixth birthday.
- Special circumstances, typically only necessary in high school for traineeships or apprenticeships.