



WAYS Secondary Attendance Policy and Procedure

NESA Manual Section: Attendance (3.8); Safe and Supportive Environment (3.6.2)

Policy

The Principal/delegate of WAYS Secondary (WAYS) maintains a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school, which includes information for each student as required by Section 3.8 of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual*.

Where the parent(s)/caregiver(s) of a student of compulsory school age seeks an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the Principal will process the parent(s)/caregiver(s) application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education.

The Principal may exercise the Minister's delegation under Section 25 of the *Education Act* in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances.

Procedure

Procedure for maintaining the Register of Enrolments

At WAYS Secondary the Student Administration and Support Coordinator is responsible for collecting and maintaining the required enrolment register information at interview and during the enrolment process. Refer to the school *Enrolment Policy*.

The Student Administration and Support Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the electronic Register of Enrolments in a form approved by the Minister, in the computer T Drive in the WAYS Secondary student/Reports and records/register of enrolment folder. The WAYS Register of Enrolments includes the following information for each student:

- name, age and address;
- name and contact telephone of parent/caregivers;
- date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination;
- for students older than six(6)years, previous school or pre-enrolment situation;
- where the destination of a student below the age of 17 is unknown. The Student Administration and Support Coordinator is responsible for contacting the Department of Education via attendance@det.nsw.edu.au . They will provide the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parent/caregivers names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parent(s)/caregiver(s) or student.

During the enrolment process the Student Administration and Support Coordinator also collects the following additional student information:

- student background information for MCEECDYA;
- personal Information regarding mental and physical health, existing social supports, information regarding previous school and educational functioning.

The Principal /delegate is responsible for ensuring that the WAYS Register of Enrolments is regularly securely backed up and stored off-site and is retained on the school computer T Drive for a minimum period of five (5) years before archiving.

Procedures for maintaining the Register of Daily Attendance

The Student Administration and Support Coordinator/delegate is responsible for maintaining the electronic Register of Daily Attendance, in a form approved by the Minister, in T Drive. The WAYS Register of Daily Attendance includes the following information for each student:

- daily attendance, which may be recorded by noting daily absences;
- absences;
- reason for absence;
- reference to documentation to substantiate reason for absence

The WAYS Secondary Register of Daily Attendance uses the common code approved by the Minister to record and explain student absences. (Appendix 1).

The Principal/delegate is responsible for ensuring that the WAYS Secondary Register of Daily Attendance is regularly securely backed up and stored off-site and is retained on the school computer T Drive for a minimum period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made, before archiving.

Procedures for recording daily attendance

The Student Administration and Support Coordinator/delegate is responsible for collecting, recording and reconciling the student absence/attendance information on a daily basis. WAYS has in place and implements the following procedures to identify, monitor and record the daily attendance and absence of each student at the school.

- When a student is going to be absent for the day, they or their parent(s)/caregiver(s) are required to contact the Student Administration and Support Coordinator or a member of the WAYS school office staff on the school telephone number (93652500) or by SMS or email by 10am.
- The Principal / delegate notifies the Student Administration and Support Coordinator/delegate of any students that have acceptable explanations for and/or authorisation for absences.
- The daily roll call is taken at 9:45am each day by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator/delegate and the class teachers.
- The Student Administration and Support Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the correct Ministers code (a) has been used to record the student absences in the WAYS electronic Register of Daily Attendance.
- Students who arrive late/ after this roll call must first report to the Student Administration and Support Coordinator before they go to class. The Student Administration and Support Coordinator records the reason for the student's lateness in the WAYS electronic Register of Daily Attendance.
- Students who arrive to school after 10am without a reasonable explanation from their parent(s)/caregiver(s) will be required to remain after school for 55 mins on that day. Parent(s)/caregiver(s) will be informed by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator/delegate. The student will be supervised by a member of WAYS staff.
- If a student arrives at 12:30pm or onwards the Student Administration and Support Coordinator will record a partial absence (Pa) and the reason in WAYS electronic Register of Daily Attendance and the student file.
- In the event that a student is absent and neither the student nor their parent(s)/caregiver(s) have contacted the school the Student Administration and Support Coordinator/delegate will contact the student and/or parent(s)/caregiver(s) by telephone for an explanation of the absence on the day. This explanation will be recorded in attendance register and may be replicated in the students file as well by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator.
- In cases where the student, their parent(s)/caregiver(s) or emergency contact cannot be reached after repeated attempts by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator, the Principal may contact the police.
- In the event of an unexplained absence, when the student returns to school, they will be asked by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator to explain and provide appropriate documentation for

their absence. This explanation will be recorded in the Register of Daily Attendance using the appropriate Ministers code. Any documentation relating to the absence will be filed by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator in the student's file.

- If within seven days of the student's return to school after their absence and no explanation has been provided by the student or their parent(s)/caregiver(s) the Student Administration and Support Coordinator will record the reason for the student's absence using the Ministers code (A) for an unexplained or unjustified absence.
- The Student Administration and Support Coordinator regularly monitors the Register of Daily Attendance. Should a student's record begin to show that there is:
 - unsatisfactory class or school attendance;
 - a significant number of explained absences;
 - an ongoing pattern of unexplained absences;

These matters will be referred to the Principal and the schools' behaviour management procedures in relation to attendance will be implemented. Refer the *WAYS Student Discipline Policy*. The Student Administration and Support Coordinator will record the attendance issue and any actions taken on the student's file.

During the day each student attendance is also monitored as follows:

- all teachers take a roll during each of their classes which is recorded in the teacher's daybook

Where a student is identified as not being in attendance in class, the Student Administration and Support Coordinator will contact the student and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) to seek an explanation for their absence. The Principal will be notified and if the explanation provided is not justifiable the absence will be recorded in the Register of Daily attendance as an 'A' and the schools behaviour management guidelines for attendance and leaving school without permission will be implemented.

Procedures for improving unsatisfactory attendance

WAYS has in place programs to assist in engaging disengaged students in school and their learning (see *Quality of the Educational Program*). The school implements a range of strategies to promote, encourage and support students to achieve satisfactory school attendance.

At WAYS student attendance is a primary focus of all programs. A variety of general strategies to promote good attendance include, but are not limited to:

- a school bus pick-up and drop off by staff from Bondi Junction station;
- provision of food for recess and lunch;
- provision of a secure youth friendly school environment (i.e pool tables, ping pong tables and xbox to use on break);
- constant verbal praise and encouragement from all staff when students attend;
- consistent contact by the Student Administration and Support and Coordinator, teachers or Principal via telephone, email or face to face meetings with parent(s)/caregiver(s), students and other relevant support agencies in relation to improving student attendance issues;
- provision of counselling and or case management to address attendance issues when identified by staff, student or parent(s)/caregiver(s);
- regular engagement and collaboration with any external student supports.
- incentives where students have shown improvement in their attendance such as, receiving a privilege, for example lunch of their choice or vouchers that are donated to WAYS Secondary by local businesses or bought by WAYS.
- Students with anxiety may take timeout before attending their first class, they can also arrange to have an assigned "buddy" to meet with them before entering the school that morning. Additionally, they could contact the Student Administration and Support Coordinator prior to coming to school to access support and encouragement. These students may also arrange to have a telehealth conference with their external provider at the school.

Regardless of absence/attendance issues, appropriate notification will be given to students in the form of verbal and written warnings, meetings with parents/caregivers/students and the escalation of such warning towards the possibility of non-completion of course requirements. These warnings will also be communicated and presented to parent(s)/ caregiver(s) by telephone, sms, email and/or letters through the Student Support and Administration Coordinator/delegate. Refer to the school *Monitoring Student Eligibility for the Award of RoSA* or *HSC* policies.

Intervention strategies

The Student Administration and Support Coordinator/delegate regularly monitors the Register of Daily Attendance and updates the Principal in relation to student attendance, when a student's records show:

- unsatisfactory class or school attendance;
- a significant number of explained absences;
- an ongoing pattern of unexplained absences.

The following intervention strategies will be used to improve unsatisfactory attendance;

- If a student begins to demonstrate a pattern of absences, for example at least has 7 days of unexplained absences within a short period of time and no reason is supplied by the student and/or their parent(s)/ caregiver(s). The teachers and/or the Student Administration and Support Coordinator will contact via telephone and or in writing (email or letter) and discuss the concerns in greater detail with the student, parent(s)/ caregiver(s) or any other agency involved in their care.
- In instances where there is a pattern of significant non-attendance (i.e., students are missing more than 20% of school), the Principal/delegate in conjunction with WAYS staff and any relevant external student support staff may create an attendance plan. This will be discussed with the student to ascertain their input and agreement with the plan.
- If the student has an external health practitioner such as psychologist/ psychiatrist, with permission from the parent/caregiver/student, the WAYS psychologist / case manager or Principal/delegate may contact them in order to assist in the creation of and or involvement in the Attendance Management Plan. Parent(s)/caregiver(s) will be contacted by a WAYS staff member to discuss the plan.
- A copy of the Attendance Management Plan is retained in the students file by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator.
- Should the pattern of unsatisfactory attendance continue to escalate despite the school's intervention strategies and an agreed upon Attendance Management Plan being implemented, students will be put on an attendance contract, the terms of which will be stipulated by the Principal. This contract will be devised in consultation with WAYS staff and or external student supports. The final terms of the contract is at the discretion WAYS Secondary.
- Parent(s)/ caregiver(s) / student and potential external agencies involved with the student may be contacted by the Principal / delegate and will be informed of the contract. They may also be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the contract. Students not meeting the terms of the contract will risk their place in the school. In the event that the student, parent(s) and or caregiver(s) are not satisfied with the contract, the school will endeavour to assist them in finding a more appropriate education setting to accommodate their needs.
- Due to the requirements of NESA for the number of required course hours for students to complete Year 11 and 12, and in order to avoid non-completion of course requirements, students in these years groups who are on an attendance contract will need to catch up on work missed and provide documentation for any absences. In the event that students are physically and or mentally unwell medical certificates will be required to account for the absence.
- In the event that the Student Administration and Support Coordinator / delegate notifies the Principal that a student is chronically absent and has a significant number of unexplained absences the Principal:
 - will access the Mandatory Reporting Guide (MRG) on the Keep Them Safe website (www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au) to determine whether a report to Department of Community Justice (DCJ) required;
 - will seek advice from the AIS Student Services Team in relation to Attendance Improvement Planning meetings and Compulsory Schooling Conferences;
 - can determine that the student will be placed on an Attendance Contract which will stipulate the number of days a student may miss within a stipulated period of time without penalty. In the event that the student exceeds the number of days stipulated in the contract, the Principal will advise that the student should leave the school on the basis of protracted and unresolvable non-attendance.
 - may discuss with the student and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) that the student should be withdrawn from the school as despite the support, encouragement and intervention strategies that have been implemented by WAYS there has been no improvement in the student's pattern of unsatisfactory

attendance. Should the student be withdrawn they may be encouraged to apply to re-enter WAYS the following year and/or once they are able to meet the school's attendance requirements.

Extended Travel Leave

Parent(s)/caregiver(s) wishing to make an application for extended travel leave must contact the Principal/delegate and the Student Administration and Support Coordinator to request permission to for extended leave from school. The Principal/delegate will make the decision as to whether this leave is granted and will inform the parent/caregiver. The Principal/delegate and or the Student Administration and Support Coordinator may request and retain relevant documentation to support the request for extended leave. Requests for leave must be made to the Principal at least two (2) weeks before the requested period of leave is to be taken. The Principal may request an interview with the parent(s)/caregiver(s).

It is at the Principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided. Where the Principal **does not** accept that an absence is in the student's best interests and/or that the reason is unjustified leave will not be approved.

The Principal will inform parents/carers verbally and in writing of whether the extended travel leave has or has not been approved.

Where the extended travel leave is approved the Principal will issue a certificate (Appendix 2: Extended Leave Certificate - Travel). The original certificate must be carried by the student/parent(s)/caregiver(s) during the approved period of leave and must be provided where requested by the appropriate authorities.

The Student Administration and Support Coordinator will file the extended travel leave application, relevant information and the Principal's correspondence with a copy of the certificate in T Drive and the student's file. This process is explained at the enrolment interview.

Exercising the Ministers Delegation

Parent(s)/caregiver(s) wishing to make an application for exemption from school attendance must contact the Principal/delegate and or Student Administration Coordinator and Support to obtain an application form. The appropriate application and supporting documentation, where requested, must be submitted to the Principal at least 2 weeks before the requested period of absence is to be taken. The Principal may request an interview with the parent(s)/caregiver(s).

For applications for a student for exemption from school attendance of under 100 days in a twelve (12) month period the Principal will act as the Minister's Delegate. (Appendix 3 : Minister's Delegation) The Principal will consider the application in accordance with the criteria *Exemptions from Attendance and Enrolment – Guidelines for independent schools* in determining whether the exemption is approved.

It is at the Principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided. Where the Principal **does not** accept that an absence is in the student's best interests and/or that the reason is unjustified exemption from attendance will not be approved.

The Principal will inform parent(s)/caregiver(s) verbally and in writing of whether exemption from attendance has or has not been approved.

Where the leave is approved the Principal will issue a certificate of Exemption (Appendix 4: Certificate of Exemption). The original exemption from attendance certificate must be carried by the student/parent(s)/caregiver(s) during the period of approved period of absence and must be provided where requested by the appropriate authorities.

The Register of Attendance will record the student's absence as unexplained if the parents/carers choose to take the student out of school for the period that has not been approved.

The Student Administration and Support Coordinator file the exemption from attendance application, relevant information and the Principal's correspondence with a copy of the certificate in T Drive and the student's file.

Applications for a student exemption from school attendance totalling 100 days or more in a twelve (12) month period must be approved by the Minister's Delegate at the Department of Education. The Principal will

send the application to the Independent Schools sector representative – the AIS Division Head, Regulations and Programs regulations@aisnsw.edu.au who will then forward it to the Minister’s Delegate at the Department of Education.

Where parent(s)/caregiver(s) seek to make an application for a student for exemption from enrolment they should make an appointment with the Principal. For students in K-10 all applications for exemption from enrolment must be approved by the Minister’s Delegate at the Department of Education. The Principal will send the application to the Independent Schools sector representative – the AIS Division Head, Regulations and Programs regulations@aisnsw.edu.au who will then forward it to the Minister’s Delegate at the Department of Education.

The Minister’s delegation and copies of exemption certificates will be filed by the Student Administration and Support Coordinator in the school’s attendance records in T Drive.

Date Created:	August 2015
Date Reviewed:	February 2022
Expiry Date:	February 2023
Approved by:	Dr Terri Said, CEO.

Appendix 1: 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.

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.

Definitions

Only the following attendance register codes **must** be used to record the:

- explanation of student absence, and/or
- variation in student attendance.

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.

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence	
Symbol	Meaning
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.
S	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
E	The student was suspended from school

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used to record a variation in attendance (not counted as an absence for statistical purposes)	
Symbol	Meaning
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by the Principal officer.
F	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses
B	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange
H¹	<p>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.</p> <p>The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education

¹ Note: In most cases this code will only be used by Department of Education and Communities schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools.

2. Note: For Independent Schools use "F" not "H" for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.

Recording the duration of an absence or variation in attendance

In addition to recording the reason for an absence or the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the absence or variation must be recorded.

Manual Attendance Registers

Department of Education and Communities schools that maintain manual attendance registers and do not use electronic means for maintaining student attendance must use the following symbols with the appropriate attendance register code for recording the reason for absence or a variation in attendance:

- a** - The student was absent on that day.
- Pa** - The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

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

Electronic Attendance Registers²

For **Department of Education and Communities schools** using electronic means for maintaining student attendance (OASIS, EBS4 or compliant third- party systems), when recording a partial absence, the precise time of arrival and/or departure must be documented.

When information is transferred to OASIS from other compliant electronic systems, or from manual attendance registers, whole day absence (a) will be shown as W and partial absence (Pa) will be shown as P.

Appendix 2: Extended Leave Certificate



WAYS Secondary Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel

The student/s whose details appear below has/have been provided a period of extended leave from school for the purpose of travel.

Note: Where an application is made by a parent with more than one child a separate copy of this Certificate should be placed in each student's file.

Student Details

Please complete table below with details of all students associated with the period of travel:

Family Name	Given Name	Date Of Birth	Age	Year of Schooling	Enrolment Register Number

Student/s address: _____ Postcode: _____

School name: _____ School telephone: _____

Dates of extended leave: From: _____ / _____ / _____ to _____ / _____ / _____

Number of school days: _____

Reason for providing the period of extended leave:

Conditions applicable to providing the period of extended leave:

It has been explained to the parent of the above-mentioned student/s that they are responsible for his/ her/ their supervision during the period of extended leave.

It has been explained to the parent that the period of extended leave is limited to the period indicated and the parent has acknowledged that the provided period of extended leave is subject to the conditions listed.

Principal name: _____ Principal signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

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

Appendix 3: Ministers Delegation

Powers – Exemption from Attendance at School	Delegates (Note: Delegates cannot delegate)
Exemption from school attendance for students engaged in employment in approved entertainment industry activities up to 100 days in a twelve month period for any one student.	Principal Note: In large scale productions or for long term commitments to such a production the application should be referred to the Director, Government Education Policy AIS NSW
Exemption from school attendance for students participating in elite arts or elite sporting events up to 100 days in a twelve month period for any one student.	Principal
Exemption from school attendance totalling up to 100 days in a twelve month period for any one student, including part time exemption.	Principal
Exemption from school attendance totalling 100 days or more in a twelve month period for any one student.	The application should be referred to the Director, Government Education Policy AIS NSW
For periods exceeding the delegate’s authority the application should be referred to the next most senior delegate.	
Powers – Exemption from Enrolment at School	Delegates (Note: Delegates cannot delegate)
Exemption from enrolment - Age	The application should be referred to the Director, Government Education Policy AIS NSW
Exemption from enrolment - Health, learning or social needs or disability	
Exemption from enrolment - Completion of Education under Special Circumstances- for apprenticeships and traineeships only	Principal
Exemption from enrolment - Completion of Education under Special Circumstances- <u>not</u> an apprenticeship or traineeship	Please complete form on the BOSTES website: http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/policy-research/pdf_doc/application-completion-y10-special-circumstances-not-apprenticeship.pdf

Appendix 4: Certificate of Exemption from Attendance



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

The student whose details appear below has been granted an exemption from attendance for the period indicated.

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).

As the parent of the above mentioned student, I am responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption. I understand that this exemption is limited to the period indicated. I understand that this exemption is subject to the conditions listed and that the exemption may be cancelled at any time.

Name of parent: _____ Signature of parent: _____

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