



# Attendance Policy

Prepared by	CEN Hub Compliance Officer
Date Prepared	March 2016
Date ratified by the Board:	...
Monitored by	Principal
Review by	Registrar
Date for review	2022
Status	Final
Policy Pertains to:	Principal; Executive; Registrar; Teachers; Parents & Students
File Details:	...

Version	Date	Notes
1.1	October 2019	New Illawarra Christian School updated policy

Authorised By	Date



**Version History**

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	October 2019	New Illawarra Christian School Policy from CEN Hub Policy
1.1		

Illawarra Christian School Mission: In Christ's service to partner with parents in providing a quality Christian Education founded on the Word of God.

## Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	CHRISTIAN RATIONALE	4
3	PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT	4
4	TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES	5
5	DEFINITIONS	6
6	POLICY	7
7	PROCEDURES	7
	7.1 Register of Enrolment	7
	7.2 Attendance	8
	7.3 Class Rolls	8
	7.4 Notes From Parents	9
	7.5 Late Arrivals	9
	7.6 Early Leave	9
	7.7 Absences	10
	7.8 Assessments - Stages 5 and 6	11
	7.9 Unsatisfactory Attendance	11
	7.10 Return to School Plan	12
	7.11 Exemptions from Attendance	12
	7.12 Application for Leave	13
	7.13 Reporting Student Attendance (DET)	13
	7.14 Reporting to the Board	13
	7.15 Maintenance of Records	14
	7.16 Chart: Follow Up of Student Absence (following page)	15
8	EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE	16

### Important related documents:

Child Protection Policy	Student Code of Conduct
Enrolment Policy	Secondary Assessment Policy
Welfare Policy	
Discipline Policy	

### Relevant legislation:

Education Act 1990  
Australian Education Act 2013 (Section 77(2)(f))  
Australian Education Regulation 2013 (paragraphs 56(c) + (d))

### References:

DET Exemption From School procedures: Learning & Engagement Directorate 2015  
NESA, Registered and Accredited Non-Government Schools(RANGS) Manual, December 2017  
(latest version on NESA website)  
DET School Attendance Legal Action Guidelines  
ACARA

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The NSW Education Act (1990) (Sections 22 + 24), requires schools to ensure that individual students meet certain attendance standards.

This includes mandatory attendance (Sections 21B, B(2), B(3)) for students between 6 and 17 years of age, on all designated school days, unless exemptions are applicable.

All students must complete Year 10, after which, and until they turn 17, they must be:

- In school, or registered for home schooling; or
- In approved education or training such as TAFE, apprenticeships etc; or
- In full time paid employment (av. 25 hour p/w); or
- In a combination of work, education and /or training.

Students in Stage 6 must attend school in order to fulfil course requirements and accreditation for the Higher School Certificate.

Registers of Enrolment, and Daily Attendance, of all students at the school must be maintained. The primary goal of the school's attendance procedures is the well-being and quality education of all students.

## 2 CHRISTIAN RATIONALE

Illawarra Christian School exists to partner with parents in educating their children. The school undertakes this role with great respect, understanding that this responsibility and authority also comes from God.

Whilst regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential; the school has a duty of care for students during school hours. The register of attendance is an important tool to ensure the whereabouts and safety of all students enrolled at the school, and to give an account to their parents. It allows the school to pursue its program of complete education, appropriate welfare and discipline for the student, and pastoral care that may extend to the family.

Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility. Procedures for the accurate record of daily attendance, and follow-up of absences, assist the school to fulfill its responsibilities to students and their families, to the state government, and to God.

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24*

## 3 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document sets out the policy and procedures of Illawarra Christian School to: monitor student attendance; enable the school to exercise its duty of care and pastoral obligations towards students; and fulfil its legal responsibilities.

4 — TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities	Evidence of Compliance
<b>Principal</b>	
Maintain a Register of Enrolments	Administrative System (LMS)
Maintain an Attendance Register in a form approved by the Minister, documenting absences; kept available for inspection	Hard copy Class Rolls; LMS records
Ensure procedures for a safe environment and pastoral care for students	Policies – WHS; Welfare; Discipline; Attendance; Child Protection
Ensure procedures which:	This document
- Monitor daily attendance	Class rolls; notes; Certificates of Leave
- Identify and follow up absences	(LMS) Enrolment Pack; parent information
- Inform staff; students and parents of attendance requirements	nights; newsletters; website; Student Code of Conduct
- Inform school staff of attendance requirements	Staff Handbook; PD week; section meetings
- Follow procedural fairness guidelines in all circumstances	
Ensure procedures for exercising the Minister’s delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act to grant leave of absence; and maintain records	Filed notes; (electronically in LMS) Filed copies of Leave Applications; Certificates; reason for declining leave
Provide clear information to parents/ students regarding attendance requirements + consequences of unsatisfactory attendance	Enrolment agreement; procedures of this policy
Inform School Liaison Officer of attendance problems/ issues	LMS
<b>Board</b>	
Review reports and attendance patterns	Board reports
<b>Business Manager</b>	
Overview of attendance registers; administrative procedures; Staff training	Class rolls; LMS; procedural review; Staff meetings
Maintenance of records	LMS/SDS
<b>Attendance Officer/Admin Staff</b>	
Follow up unexplained absences	Unexplained Absences List; Individual student reports;
Report patterns of significant absences	Significant Absences List; reported to principal monthly as required
Consult/ preparation of attendance action plans	Attendance Action Plans
<b>Deputy Principal</b>	
Enforce current procedures; Follow up welfare	LMS records (Pastoral Care notes); secure confidential files on server

Staff training	Professional Learning calendar; staff meetings
<b>Pastoral Care Coordinators</b>	
Contact parents for student welfare & missed schoolwork 3 <sup>rd</sup> day	LMS or phone
Collaborative Return to School plans	Notes re: parent meetings; Return to School Plan; RtS Register
<b>Teachers</b>	
Daily attendance rolls; Follow up notes	Class rolls; LMS
Pastoral care of students	Teacher records; LMS comments
Communication with parents re: child's education & well-being	Parent-teacher meetings; reports; file notes
<b>Front Office Staff</b>	
Maintain rolls & update (LMS) records; receive notes + App notifications; communicate to staff	Attendance records; notes from parents; LMS
<b>School Psychologist</b>	
Pastoral care of students	LMS
<b>Parents</b>	
Ensure their school-aged child attends school	Enrolment Terms of Agreement
Explain absence of child within 7 days	Filed notes; LMS
Apply in advance for Certificate of Exemption for any exceptional leave	Website; filed records; LMS

## 5 DEFINITIONS

**ACARA** – Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority

**DET** – Department of Education & Training

**Parent/s** – any person having the custody or care of a child

**LMS** - Learning Management System (SEQTA)

**SDS** - School Database System (Denbeigh)

## 6 POLICY

The school will:

- (a) Maintain an accurate Register of Enrolment.
- (b) Maintain a Register of Daily Attendance.
- (c) Maintain procedures to record attendance and absences accurately.
- (d) Maintain procedures for the exercise of the Minister's delegation (Section 25 of Education Act 1990) to grant leave.
- (e) Maintain procedures to ensure that students enrolled at Illawarra Christian School attend school as they are able.
- (f) Maintain procedures for a safe environment and pastoral care for students; and for students to be supported in learning and pastoral care in absences.

## 7 PROCEDURES

### 7.1 Register of Enrolment

- (a) The school will maintain a Register of Enrolments (*LMS/Denbeigh* Administrative System) that includes for each student:
  - Name, age and address
  - Name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
  - Date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination
  - For students older than 6 years of age, previous school or pre-enrolment situation
  - Where the destination school of a student below 17 years of age is unknown, a record that a Department of Education and Training Officer with home-school liaison responsibilities will be notified of the student's name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, indication of possible destination, other applicable information, and any known WHS risks associated with contacting the parents of student
- (b) The Register of Enrolments will be retained for a minimum of 7 years after the last data entry (NESA) before archiving.

LMS/Denbeigh system retains records indefinitely and is backed up to a second server on-site; and off-site at regular intervals. (See Enrolment Policy)

## **7.2 Attendance**

- (a) The school's requirements and expectations for attendance are communicated to parents and students at enrolment; and reinforced regularly through Parent Information Nights and Parent-Teacher Meetings, other communications and via the Illawarra Christian School Student Code of Conduct.
- (b) The daily attendance/ absence of students will be monitored by a class roll, (hard copy or electronically) indicated in accordance with the NSW Attendance Register Symbols:
  - Absences
  - Reason for absence
  - Documentation from parent to substantiate reason for absence, which includes: child's name/ class; date of absence; reason for absence; parent signature
- (c) Information from the class roll, and absence notes, is entered into (LMS).
- (d) Attendance will be marked at events such as sport carnivals, excursions and off-site activities, and will be transcribed into rolls.
- (e) Attendance and late arrivals (Kinder – Year 12) are recorded on student reports.
- (f) The Principal/Deputy Principal shall inform Front Office staff of suspensions and expulsions.
- (g) Class rolls and documentation will be retained for 7 years after the last entry was made. Retained on (LMS) system indefinitely; backed up to second on-site server; and off-site at regular intervals.
- (h) The Attendance Register must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board inspector or by any authorised person, who may require the principal of the school to furnish a copy of the register or any part of it.
- (i) Attendance is reported each year in the school's Annual Report.

## **7.3 Class Rolls**

- (a) Hard copy rolls K - Year 12 are identified by class number and teacher's name.
- (b) Rolls are marked each morning in class / Pastoral care groups in an electronic form via LMS. Present and absences are both indicated on the roll.
- (c) Daily attendance information (absences) is managed and followed up by the Front Office staff via LMS using NSW Attendance Register Codes and communication with parents as necessary.
- (d) Hard copy rolls are kept in the Front Office, for emergency situations.



#### **7.4 Notes From Parents**

- (a) Notes may be delivered via email, LMS or through a hard copy absence form which is available at the school office. The absence is then recorded as a resolved absence in LMS.
- (b) Hard copy notes are filed in the individual student files.
- (c) If a note includes information in addition to the explanation of the student's absence, the Principal will indicate where it should be directed.
- (d) Complaints should be directed to the Office Manager/Principal.
- (e) If the note indicates that an extended leave form is required, it should be stapled & processed using the Application for Exemption from Attendance at School (4.2).
- (f) If a parent informs office staff of anticipated absence other than a medical reason, an Application for Exemption form will be given, emailed or LMS messaged. Once the leave has been approved by the Principal, the teachers are informed of the student's absence.

#### **7.5 Late Arrivals**

- (a) Students late to school must report to the Front Office. Front office staff record the time of arrival and the reason for the lateness in LMS.
- (b) If the student arrives after 9:30am or later in the day parents must sign a note to indicate a partial day attendance.
- (c) The class roll via LMS records, are amended to record the late arrival.

#### **7.6 Early Leave**

- (a) Students are required to bring a note from a parent to state the reason for early departure from the school, and the time they will be picked up.
- (b) The student takes the note to the Front Office. Administration staff enter the details into LMS.
- (c) Students in years K - 10 must be picked up by a parent or authorised adult. The identity of unknown people should be checked by Front Office staff.
- (d) Year 11 - 12 students, with permission, may either drive themselves, or be picked up on Derribong Drive.
- (e) If parents notify the school of another adult picking up their child, the Front Office staff shall either email or send a hard copy message with a student runner to the student's class teacher to inform the student.

- (f) If a student appears anxious about the identity of an adult arriving to pick them up, the Front Office staff should ask the child to wait, and inform the Principal or another Executive staff member of the circumstance.

## **7.7 Absences**

- (a) All student absences are to be notified in writing, via LMS direct message, or an email received by the office staff, even when a parent phones the school to notify of a child's absence.
- (b) Absence due to medical reasons may be reported via:
- a hand-written note
  - LMS message
  - reception email
- (c) Absence due to other reasons must be applied for by parents, using the 'Application for Exemption from Attendance at School' Form (4.2). Forms can be found on the Illawarra Christian School website. It is for absences other than illness, including part-days, or extended leave.
- (d) Front office staff and Pastoral Care staff monitor late arrivals and absences. When patterns emerge, the Front office staff/Deputy Principal will follow up the reason for the absence or the late arrivals.
- (e) When a note of absence from the parent is returned:
- the teacher will send it to the office to be entered into LMS and filed in the student's file.
  - to the Front Office, office staff will amend the class roll and the LMS record and file in the note in the student's file.
- (f) When an absent note from the parent is not returned:
- For students in K - 12, the Front office staff, generate a weekly report of Unresolved Absences (via LMS)
  - An electronic record of the unresolved absences is direct messaged to parents/carers via LMS.
- (g) A parent/carer may either reply to the direct message relating to the unresolved absence/s or they can provide a handwritten note explaining their child's absence/s. These are entered into LMS via Front Office Staff.
- (h) Unresolved absences are followed up by Front Office Staff.
- (i) Notes are filed in student files which are kept in the school office.
- (j) Number of days explained absences and unexplained absences are indicated on student reports.
- (k) If truancy is suspected in cases of unexplained absences, and parents are unable to be contacted, a letter may be sent from the school in an unmarked envelope.

- (l) Staff should refer any comments or observations about attendance or absences to the Deputy Principal.

See Chart - Follow Up of Student Absence

### **7.8 Assessments - Stage 6**

- (a) A medical certificate must be provided for a student who is absent on the day a formal Assessment Task is to be handed in, unless the Assessment Task has been submitted previously.

### **7.9 Unsatisfactory Attendance**

- (a) Unsatisfactory attendance may include frequent absences, or a pattern of lateness or absences, even if notification is provided.
- (b) The Deputy Principal oversees proceedings in cases of unsatisfactory attendance in respect of student welfare/ pastoral care and continuing enrolment issues.  
  
The Pastoral Care Coordinators and teachers follow up absences in respect of pastoral care and missed schoolwork.  
  
The Front Office Staff follows up absences to complete administration requirements; and will notify the Deputy Principal of a student's pattern of frequent absences.  
  
The School Psychologist may be included in follow-up of welfare issues.
- (c) If a student has a pattern of unexplained absences, or a pattern of unacceptable school or class attendance even with an explanation from parents, the Front Office Staff, will notify the Deputy Principal and their Pastoral Care Coordinator, who will liaise with Pastoral Care teachers.
- (d) Unsatisfactory attendance is noted in LMS (Pastoral Care section), and notified to parents. Confidential notes are kept in the Student's file. A meeting will be arranged with the parents and Principal to discuss enrolment options for the student and continuing parent partnership with the school.
- (e) Should a pattern of non-attendance cause staff to have concerns for a student's welfare, they will notify the Principal of their concerns who will follow the Child Protection protocols. (Also: Requirements under the *Keep Them Safe* legislation)
- (f) The school may negotiate a Return to School Plan with Parents to assist the regular attendance of their child/ren at school.
- (g) The school may request assistance from the Pastoral Care Coordinator/School Psychologist to resolve poor school attendance.
- (h) Chapter 16A of the Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998 permits sharing of information concerning the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people.

### **7.10 Return to School Plan**

Following an illness, students are not to return to school prior to the recommendations outlined by the NSW Health eg: gastro

Absenteeism of more than 5 days (10%) of a term may indicate the need for a Return to School plan for a student; an individualised, flexible attendance plan with the aim of returning the student to full attendance. (See Welfare Policy) The goal is to assist all students to attend every day and achieve the appropriate learning outcomes.

- (a) The Pastoral Care Coordinator shall be notified of absences of 5 days or longer. A Return to School plan shall be facilitated in consultation with the parents and child, and any other stakeholders, to provide appropriate learning tasks.
- (b) The Pastoral Care Coordinator / School Counsellor shall maintain a Register of Return to School plans for follow up.
- (c) The Pastoral Care Coordinator shall inform Front Office staff of a student commencing a Return to School plan, or pursuing a flexible timetable.
- (d) If there is a risk of RoSA outcomes not being met, the Principal shall be informed.
- (e) In the event of no improvement to attendance, the Principal and Deputy Principal shall meet with parents to discuss the student's continuing enrolment.
- (f) Where communication with the parents/ guardians fails:
  - i. a formal letter shall be sent asking them to contact the school;
  - ii. if no response within seven (7) days, a letter shall be sent requesting parents/ guardians to make an appointment to discuss the situation with the Principal, including the consequence of Termination of Enrolment if there is no response;
- (g) All meetings and decisions shall be documented.

### **7.11 Exemptions from Attendance**

- (a) The Principal may grant Exemption from Attendance, or part day exemptions, for up to 100 days in a 12 month period; or an exemption to leave school (Exemption from Enrolment) following the completion of Year 9 to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship.
- (b) The process for considering an application for exemption is:
  - Parent downloads the 'Application for Exemption From Attendance at School' form (4.2) from the school website, and returns the completed form to the school
  - Principal reviews the application against the criteria in the DET guidelines

- Certificate of Exemption created by office staff (if the application is supported), and the original certificate is emailed to parent/carer.
  - Copy of the application and certificate is kept on the student's file
  - Teachers are notified of the student's absence, so that work can be given while they are absent from school if necessary.
- (c) Should the approval not be granted, notice will be given in writing in time for the parent to appeal the decision in writing and/ or in person according to the principles of procedural fairness which are followed in all similar matters.

#### **7.12 Application for Leave**

Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. Holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods are indicated as absences.

- (a) Families must complete an Application for Leave for absences within school terms. (Form 4.2)
- (b) If the Principal grants leave, the code 'Approved Leave' is marked in the roll. If a certificate is not issued, 'unresolved absence' is recorded on the roll, in LMS.

#### **7.13 Reporting Student Attendance**

Schools are required to report enrolment and attendance data for Semester 1 and Term 3. Student attendance data will have to be collected and reported according to the annual standards outlined by ACARA.

Assistance for non-government schools is found in the SSP Student Attendance (STATS) Collection guidelines.

#### **7.14 Reporting to the Board**

The Board are provided with an enrolment report at each Board meeting.

**7.15 Maintenance of Records**

**School Attendance Record requirements:**

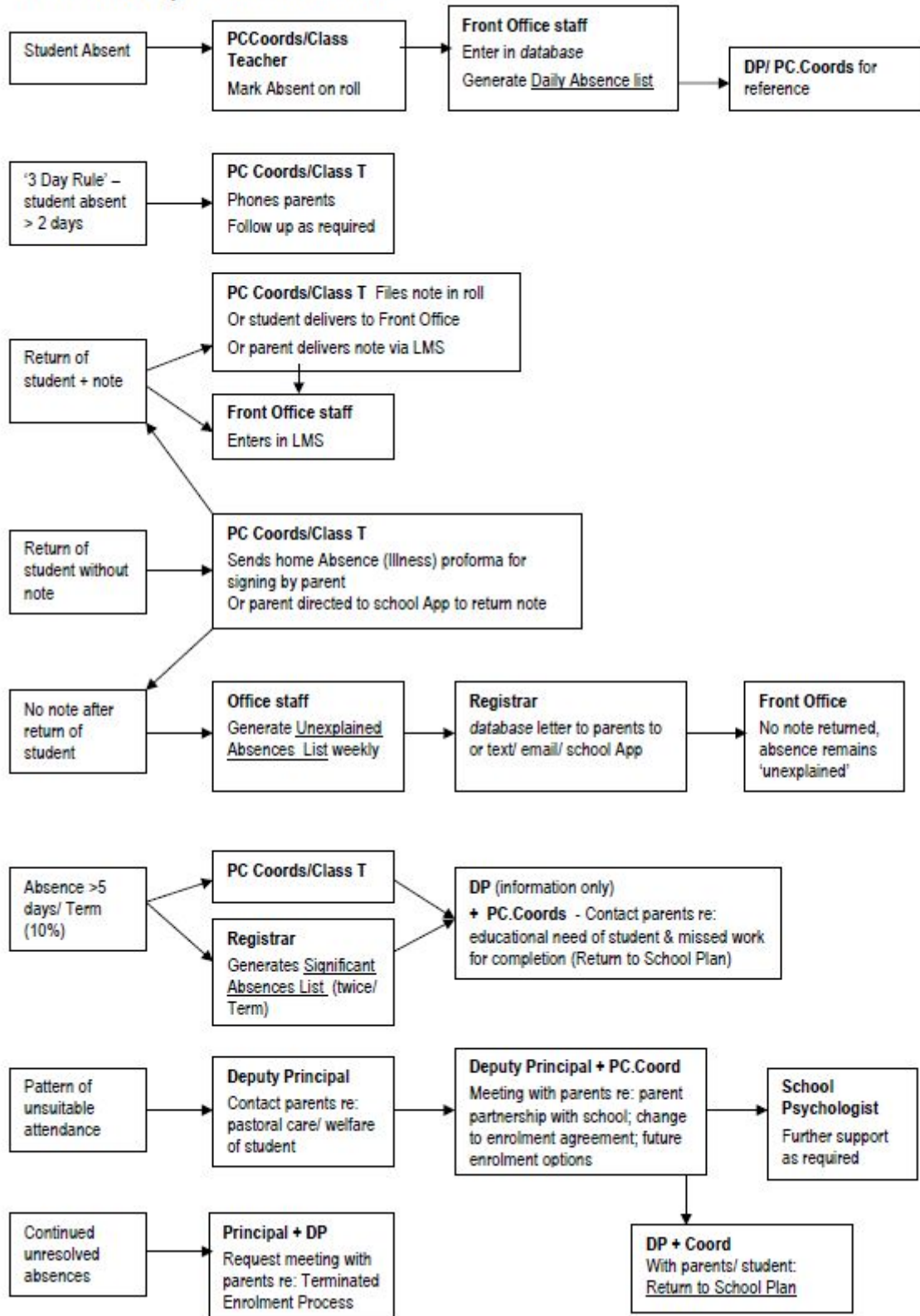
<b><i>Document</i></b>	<b><i>Retention Period</i></b>
Enrolment Register	Retain permanently (min. 5y before archiving) (LMS )) automatically retains records permanently.
Attendance Register (Roll) – Manual or Electronic	Retain for a minimum period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made. Store the registers (rolls) in a secure store for the specified timeframe.
Notes and records of verbal explanations of absence from parents	Retain for seven (7) calendar years.
Records for Certificates of Exemption from Attendance and Enrolment	Retain for seven (7) calendar years.
The student's record card detailing the number of absences each year	Retain for seven (7) calendar years after the student has left.
In the case where a student has an accident necessitating an accident report	All attendance records should be retained until the year student is 25 years old.
Return to School plans & documented meetings	Retain until the year student is 25 years old.

**7.16 Chart: Follow Up of Student Absence** (following page)

Chart: Follow up of Student Absences

Attendance Policy

Chart: Follow up of Student Absences



**8 EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE**

Refs	EVIDENCE	FILE LOCATION
RANGS 3.6.2	Register of Enrolments: - Name, age, address - Name, contact phone- parents - Date enrol/ depart (destination) - Prev school (if applicable) - Destination unknown, student <17y - Immunisation evidence	
RANGS 3.6.2	Attendance Register: - Rolls - LMS	
DET Codes	Absences: (common codes) - A unexplained - L leave + Certificate of Leave - M + exemption form - S + note - B + approved school business - Pa partial + late/ early note - E suspended + ref	
RANGS 3.8	Procedures: - daily attendance - identify absences	
RANGS 3.3.1.1 3.3.1.2 3.3.1.3	- follow up unexplained absences: - S.Coord processes - Registrar processes - student files - notify parents poor attendance - school reports - Return to School Plan - RtS Register - Minister's Delegation (Section 25, Ed Act)	
RANGS 3.10.1	Attendance data in Annual Report	

**Forms:**

Student Absence Notification Form-for Illness

Application for Exemption from Attendance at School

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

Application for Exemption of Enrolment at School