

# Attendance Policy and Procedures



**Emmanuel**  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

*Reimagine Life's Possibilities*



# Document Details

Adopted	April 2020
Revised	May 2023
Review	May 2025
Version	1.2
Published	Website and Internal
Document Ownership	Marketing

# Preamble

Emmanuel Christian School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all Students, which addresses their educational needs. The School strives to maximise Student learning opportunities and performance, by ensuring that Students attend school regularly and without absences. At Emmanuel Christian School, our priorities are for every Student to attend school everyday and be in class, on time, prepared to learn. This school expects that 95% all school day attendance is the minimum acceptable level. Emmanuel Christian School aims to build a positive culture, with high expectations for Student attendance through rewards, daily monitoring, and follow-up practices. To improve the learning outcomes for our Students, it is imperative that they are coming to school each day. Working in partnership with our families, and employing targeted strategies that align to the causes of Student absence is our priority.

## Underlying Biblical Principle

### Colossians 3:23-24

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.

### Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

## 1. Who We Are

- 1.1 Emmanuel Christian School (the School) is a non-denominational, co-educational Christian School that offers education from Kindergarten to Year 10 situated in Rokeby, Tasmania.
- 1.2 We exist to support Parents in their God-given task of educating their children, and focus on partnering with Parents and Carers to nurture children in the Christian faith.
- 1.3 We provide a Christian education for the children of families who desire that particular education, and who are supportive of the School's Christ-centred vision and purpose.
- 1.4 We invite Parents to enter into a partnership with the School to work together in providing a safe, caring, Christian community for Students to learn and thrive, and become contributing members of society, confident in who they are and in their relationship with God.



## 2. School Community beliefs about the purpose of attending school

- 2.1 Consistent attendance at school is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes and keeping Students engaged in their learning.
- 2.2 Monitoring attendance and the reasons for absence from school is important in understanding the welfare of a child's circumstances.
- 2.3 Parents/Carers have a legal obligation to ensure a child is enrolled in, and attending school.
- 2.4 Therefore, it is important that schools have effective, reliable local practices and systems that records Student attendance accurately and in a timely manner, to enable schools to identify whether any interventions or additional supports are required to promote consistent Student engagement and attendance.
- 2.5 We believe that truanting can place a Student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.

## 3. Policy Objectives

- 3.1 To maintain a framework for the maintenance of accurate attendance records
- 3.2 To provide guidelines for addressing Student absence
- 3.3 To inform the development of management plans for Students with persistent absences
- 3.4 To establish and foster community relations necessary for the maintenance of satisfactory school attendance
- 3.5 Compliance with relevant authority requests for reporting and disclosure of attendance data.
- 3.6 To foster and affirm the school's commitment to child safety. Every day a Student does not attend school can have a negative impact on their learning

## 4. Policy Frameworks

- 4.1 What age should your child attend school?
  - In Tasmania, children and young people are enrolled at school (Prep) from the year they turn five years of age.
  - Children can also attend Kindergarten from 4 years of age.
  - Young people need to stay in education or training until they finish Year 12, or receive a Certificate III, or reach the new minimum leaving age of 18.
  - Year 10 Students during 2019 were the first group of young people who needed to meet this increased minimum leaving requirement.
- 4.2 This policy exists within the broader framework created by the following policies:
  - Education Act of 2016
  - Ministerial Instruction No 3 for Part-Time Attendance at School
  - Ministerial Instruction No 4 Students Excused from Daily Attendance at School
  - Ministerial Instruction No 6 Relating to School Student Absences
  - Ministerial Instruction No 11 for Application for Part Time Attendance at an Approved Learning Program
  - CST Code of Conduct
  - CST Grievance Policy
  - CST Performance Management Policy



# 5. Definitions

5.1 A Student is Present when:

- The Student is in class;
- The Student is, for example, off campus on an excursion, attending a work experience placement activity, or visiting another school as part of an endorsed school activity.

5.2 A Student is absent, whenever they are not attending their scheduled class, or another alternative authorised activity, even if they are on campus.

5.3 All Present and Absent SEQTA categories and descriptors can be found at paragraph 7.3 and 7.4.

5.4 If a Parent/Guardian or independent Student provides a reason for an absence that is not authorised by the Education Act 2016 or Ministerial Instruction No. 4. for Students Excused from Daily Attendance at School, then the absence **MUST** be recorded as unauthorised.





# 6. Roles and Responsibilities

## 6.1 Parents

- a. Ensure that contact details are correct and up to date.
- b. It is the responsibility of Parents to have their children attend school every day for the program in which the child is enrolled.
- c. If a Student is absent from school for a day, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to notify the school before 8.45am, or as soon as possible. Acceptable forms of communication are a phone call, email, online absentee form or written note. Parents should give a reason for the absence.
- d. If a Student is absent for up to three days the Parent must provide written explanation as to why the Student has been absent or provide a doctor's certificate stating the reason for the absence. This note is to be given to the Homeroom teacher who will lodge it the school office.
- e. Parents wishing to remove their children from school for an extended amount of time (more than five days) for a non-medical reason must apply in writing to the School Principal. Parents will be notified in writing of the Principal's decision within the established Ministerial Standards.
- f. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking planned holidays during term time.
- g. Teachers are not obliged to accommodate Students on unapproved holidays with learning programs.

## 6.2 Homeroom Teachers

- a. Create and maintain a supportive and safe classroom learning environment.
- b. Must take Student attendance for each Homeroom at 8.50am (Secondary) and 9.05am (Primary) each morning.
- c. Send Students who arrive after the roll has been taken to administration to be recorded as late.
- d. Inform Parents that any notes relating to absence (including upcoming holidays) need to be handed to administration.
- e. Discuss observed low level attendance issues with Parents.
- f. Email attendance concerns to the Head of Students and, if deemed necessary, develop strategies with the Student and Parent to improve attendance.

## 6.3 Student Responsibilities

- a. Attend school at all times, unless in the event of a school closure.
- b. Arrive to the classroom on time (between 8.30am – 8.45am) and to each subsequent class on time
- c. Remain on the school premise during school times, unless being signed out by Parents/Carers
- d. Remind Parents to email, phone or return a note when absent from school.

## 6.4 Head of Students

Head of Students is responsible for ensuring all absences are explained. To this end the Head of Students will:

- a. Monitor daily attendance reports for their Year Groups. They may request either a hard copy or an email of this information from administration staff.
- b. Track unexplained absences and contact the Parent/Guardian of every Student who has been away for 3 consecutive days
- c. The Head of Students will request a medical certificate for absences attributed to illness.
- d. Generate and maintain an accurate running tally of Student's absences.
- e. Alert the Head of School when a Student has more than five absences per term.
- f. Be responsible for setting up a Parent meeting, with the Head of School in order to discuss and reconcile the attendance issue.
- g. During the meeting, develop an individual attendance plan with Parents and Student.
- h. Provide attendance incentives (with Homeroom teachers) to encourage and improve daily attendance.

- i. Provide the School Management team with absenteeism data.
- j. Provide the School Management team with absenteeism data at the conclusion of each term for discussion (students who are at risk of disengaging from school).
- k. The Head of Students may recommend to the Head of School that permission be gained from the Principal to refer the family to the Registrar for Education (for instructions and forms see [documentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/Attendance-Policy-and-Process.pdf](https://documentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/Attendance-Policy-and-Process.pdf)).

## 6.5 Head of School

The Heads of School (Primary and Secondary) are responsible for implementing the established procedures, namely:

- a. Monitor overall school and Student attendance using attendance checks every three weeks.
- b. Reinforce regularly to staff the school's attendance expectation regarding minimum 95% Student attendance for involvement and inclusion in extra-curricular activities, such as excursions, work experience and end of year celebrations.
- c. Meet regularly (Wellbeing Team) using data provided from the Head of Students to identify and discuss Students with less than 95% attendance and follow up in a timely manner.
- d. Work with all stakeholders to facilitate Student engagement to improve attendance.
- e. Meet, when required, to review processes and respond to complex individual cases.
- f. Office Staff confirm the absence of Students whose Parents have not reported them as absent.
- g. Keep the Principal informed of issues with attendance.

## 6.6 Principals

- a. Inform Parents of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance.
- b. Implement strategies to manage Student enrolment, absences, chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy.
- c. Work with all stakeholders to take reasonable steps to follow-up unexplained absences as soon as possible, or ideally within three days of the absence.
- d. Follow appropriate processes for enforcing Parental obligation in regard to:
  - enrolment
  - attendance
  - compulsory participation
- e. Must be the one to approve extended leave requests.
- f. Must ensure the staff take reasonable steps to reengage a Student.
- g. May refer a Student to the Registrar of Education.

# 7. Recording Attendance and Absence

- 7.1 Attendance must be:
- a. Recorded at the commencement of each school day, by the Homeroom teacher (Secondary) and the classroom teacher (Primary); and be,
    - Recorded directly in SEQTA or communicated directly in writing to the School Office by 9.15am.
    - Teachers MUST ONLY enter a Student as either present or absent from their class. The School Office will manage recording reasons for absence.
  - b. Recorded at the commencement of each lesson (Secondary) or segment of the school day (Primary).
  - c. Recorded prior to every excursion leaving the school, and on every occasion that the group of Students embuses, debusses or breaks into groups or reforms.
- 7.2 Attendance and Absence must be recorded either directly into SEQTA or on a class list printed from SEQTA and then returned immediately to the School Office.
- 7.3 Attendance will be recorded in SEQTA, or on a paper list according to the following categories:
- a. Careers – attending an appointment with the Careers Coordinator.
  - b. Counselor – attending an appointment with the Counselor
  - c. Camp - off-site for all or part of the day/week
  - d. Excursion – off-site for all or part of the day
  - e. Late – late to school
  - f. Music Lesson – attending a music lesson with a School Music Tutor
  - g. Sick Bay – Student is waiting in sick bay
  - h. Tutor – educational support
  - a. Pastoral – when meeting with a member of the pastoral team (Head of Students, Head of School, Principal).

These categories allow accurate Student records to be viewed and interpreted in the case of an emergency.

- 7.4 Absence will be recorded in SEQTA according to the categories indicated by the Education Act 2016. The SEQTA categories are highlighted, namely:
- a. The **bereavement** of a person with whom the school-aged child or youth has a close, significant or family relationship
  - b. Any **medical**, legal or related appointments
  - c. Where the school-aged child or youth has witnessed or been subjected to **family violence**
  - d. A case of **terminal illness** of an immediate family member
  - e. Where a **natural disaster** or extreme weather event prevents the child safely attending school
  - f. Participation of a school age child or youth in an **approved educational experience**:
    - Recognised learning experience (e.g. a music examination)
    - Cultural activity (e.g. participation in NAIDOC Week); and initiated by an independent Student or Parent, where the principal is of the opinion that the experience or activity has educational value to the school age child or youth
    - Attending another educational institution
  - g. Attendance at a recognised educational event (e.g. a State, National or International level event sanctioned and organised by the official governing body) as:
    - A participant
    - An official of a team or other body, competing or participating in that event
    - An official otherwise engaged in that event
  - h. Where an application for approved home education has been received by the Registrar and provisional registration has been granted; or
  - i. where the Parent or independent Student notifies the Principal of an absence due to sickness, temporary or physical incapacity later than five days from the date of the absence by subsequent notification by health professional.



## Additional Descriptors

- j. **Internal Suspension** will be used to designate a Student absent from class due to this sanction being approved by the Head of School.
- k. **External Suspension** will be used to designate a Student absent from class due to this sanction being approved by the Principal/Head of School.

- 7.5 Accompanying Evidence: the Principal deputises to the Head of School and the Head of Students the authority to, when circumstances dictate, request evidence from a Student, or Parent of a school-aged child or youth, where a school-aged child or youth seeks to be excused from daily attendance. The type of evidence that may be requested will vary, depending on circumstances, but may include any or a combination of:
- a. A medical certificate by a qualified or authorised medical / allied health professional
  - b. A statutory declaration from a Parent
  - c. Notice of provisional registration for home education
  - d. Evidence of a school-aged child's or youth's participation in a sporting, academic or cultural event

## 8. If No Absence Has Been Recorded and No Notification from Parents

- 8.1 These Students will be identified by the Office Staff after Homeroom attendance and after reconciling Students who registered as late. If Students are identified in this category, the Office Staff will:
- In the Secondary school, advise the Head of School that the roll has not been taken
  - In the Primary school, advise the Head of School that the roll has not been taken
  - At the discretion of the relevant leader, an email or class visit should be made to ensure the attendance is completed by 9.30am
  - Once all attendance has been taken and reconciled, and not before 9.30 am, the relevant school office will send an SMS to all Parents of Students not at school and for whom there is no Parental advice of absence
  - Parents, having received the SMS notification, may advise the school of a reason for that absence that would be entered and reconciled by the Office Staff. Any communication by Parents sent to the Staff should be immediately forwarded to the Office Staff for this purpose
  - The School Office Staff, not classroom teachers, will enter or amend the reasons for Student absence



## 9. Managing Unexplained Absences

- 9.1 Every Student absence must be explained. The designation of 'Unexplained' in the school system identifies that legitimacy has not been ascribed to that absence.
- 9.2 The maximum duration of an absence remaining unexplained should be seven days. The process for reconciling this is:
- The Homeroom receives a report listing all unexplained absences prior to the Pastoral Care Committee meeting. This report is to be distributed by email to members of that committee in the event of the meeting not occurring.
  - Attendance is to be a standing item on the Agenda for the meeting, at which progress of unexplained absence is considered.
  - Between meetings, the Homeroom Teachers are responsible for reconciling the unexplained absences.

## 10. Managing Absence Concerns

- 10.1 In any and every instance where concern over, or suspicion about the authenticity of attendance or the veracity of any reasons provided for attendance, the Head of School should be notified in the first instance.
- 10.2 The Head of Students should advise the Head of School of the concerns. The Head of School may convene an Attendance Meeting with relevant staff to understand and investigate the situation.

## 11. Referring an Absence to the Registrar of Education

- 11.1 At any time, the Principal, or person authorised by the Principal, may refer a Student's non-attendance to the Office of the Education Registrar to conduct a compulsory conciliation conference.
- 11.2 The Principal must complete the Office of the Education Registrar application form. This is available from [oer.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CCC-Application-Form-Schools-Non-Government.pdf](http://oer.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CCC-Application-Form-Schools-Non-Government.pdf).
- 11.3 A checklist has been provided at Appendix 1 – Checklist – Request to the Learning Services General Manager to refer matter to Compulsory Conciliation Conference, to provide guidance on the relevant material required for a referral and the requirement to engage with a social worker to help engage the Student.
- 11.4 The Principal must send the Office of Education Registrar application form and completed checklist to the Head of School (Primary) or Head of School (Secondary).

## 12. Educational Impact of Absences

- 12.1 Should a Student have a number of unexplained absences and this impacts their work output, this Student may be deemed to not have not passed the year. This may lead to the Student repeating the year or not graduating Year 10.



## Links to Other Useful Information

- Ministerial Instruction No 6 Relating to School Student Absences.
- Office of the Education Registrar Website.
- Office of the Education Registrar Information for Schools.

## What is the Role of the Registrar of Education?

The Office of the Education Registrar has been established to help resolve reasons for Student's continued unauthorised non-attendance at school. A compulsory conciliation conference is a process whereby Students, Parents and Principals can discuss and agree to what needs to happen to support a Student to attend school.

## Does Emmanuel Christian School run the compulsory conciliation conference?

No. The independent Registrar of Education, is responsible for the compulsory conciliation conference process. The Registrar of Education, will determine if the matter is suitable for a compulsory conciliation conference and will appoint an independent conciliator to run the process.

## What happens at the compulsory conciliation conference?

If the Registrar of Education accepts referral, the Registrar of Education will require the Parent, the Principal and/or any other person involved in supporting the Student to attend a conciliation conference to work through the reasons contributing to non-attendance.

The compulsory conciliation conference will provide everyone with an opportunity to discuss the reasons for the Student's absence, and what can be done to assist the Student, to attend school every day. The conciliation conferences are designed to be helpful and to offer support to resolve any problems and to assist to find ways to improve the Student's attendance.



# Appendix 1: Checklist

Request for Principal to refer matter.

**1. Which of the following circumstances apply to the Student's non-attendance? (Please check/tick):**

- Linked to an incident at or related to school;
- A dispute between the Parent and the school, or the Student and the school; Allegation of difficulties with other Students, harassment or inappropriate social behaviour;
- Difficulties with transport;
- Disability or illness (including anxiety) suffered by the Student or the Parent; (with accompanying medical diagnosis)
- Insufficient skills or understanding on the part of the Parent to successfully get the child to school;
- Experiencing difficulty with transition points such as year 6 to 7;
- Difficulty engaging with the Parent to determine the cause of the non-attendance;
- Incident has occurred at school which is unlikely to be resolved by the passage of time and needs to be resolved quickly in order to expedite the Student's return to school;
- Student with otherwise excellent attendance suddenly ceases attending school with no reasonable excuse;
- Parent indicates at a very early stage that the Student will not be returned to school unless a particular matter is resolved and the school needs the assistance of a third party to resolve that matter;
- Other (please explain in the space provided below or attach reasons)

## 2. Which of the following information is provided with this request for referral? (please check/tick):

- A summary of interventions by the school social worker:
- A copy of the Student's attendance records, certified by the Principal;
- A copy of all correspondence sent to Parents/Carers regarding non-attendance (including Minutes of meetings);
- A copy of the Student's enrolment form (or validation form), that includes the Parents/Carers contact details;
- A copy of any court orders relating to who the Student resides with;
- A copy of the Schools Attendance Policy as it relates to Student's attendance and the managing of absences of Students not authorised by Part 3 of the Education Act 2016;
- A summary of phone or verbal conversations held with Parents/Carers regarding non-attendance, including with an Authorised Person;
- A copy of correspondence from Parents/Carers including medical certificates;
- A copy of all other information regarding the non-attendance of Student, including meeting notes, action plans etc.;
- A summary of actions including support/intervention provided to date to engage with the Student (including all relevant information from teaching and support staff, i.e. school social workers/psychologists);
- Student voice regarding the issue;
- Current legal Guardian of Student (to identify any legal custody issues, restraint orders etc.);
- Underlying core reasons of the issue, as seen from Principal's perspective (please explain in the space provided below or attach reasons).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head of School

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: Email

**This email is to be sent by administration staff to Parents / Carers after 5 days of unexplained absence. This email needs to Carbon Copied (CC) to the Homeroom Teacher and Head of Students.**

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your child has had more than 5 days unexplained absences so far this term. While we understand that most Students will periodically be too unwell to attend school, the 2016 Education Act requires schools to distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences. Authorised absences are those explained by school activities, medical certificates (to cover sickness beyond 3 consecutive days) etc.

For information about authorised versus unauthorised absences, see [education.tas.gov.au/Parents-Guardians/Parent-fact-sheets/authorised-absences/](http://education.tas.gov.au/Parents-Guardians/Parent-fact-sheets/authorised-absences/)

If you feel that these unexplained absences have been incorrectly recorded, please phone the Emmanuel office and provide the relevant documentation (e.g. Medical certificate for sickness beyond three consecutive days). Please note that continued unexplained absences may result in the school notifying the Registrar for Education which would trigger an external conciliation conference in order to resolve the absence and maximise Student learning.

Yours sincerely

**Head of School**







1 Chipmans Road, Rokeby 7019

+61 3 6247 8476

[admin@emmanuel.tas.edu.au](mailto:admin@emmanuel.tas.edu.au)

[emmanuel.tas.edu.au](http://emmanuel.tas.edu.au)