

# *Coffs Harbour Christian Community School*



## Enrolment and Attendance Policy



# Notes

*Name of Policy:* Enrolment and Attendance Policy

*Year of Policy:* 2020

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## *Related Documents:*

- Certificate of Exemption Policy

## NESA Reference:

Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual (*the RANGS Manual*), January 2019

**Section:** 3.8 Attendance



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# Policy Statement

## Rationale

Coffs Harbour Christian Community School (CHCCS), established in 1981, is a non-government, combined, provincial school for students from Kindergarten to Year 12. It exists to provide an educational experience where the Biblical teachings of Jesus Christ are accepted and seen as the way of true living in accord with God's requirements of mankind. The school endeavours to present a Biblical Christian worldview as the basis of truth for living. The Christian faith, lifestyle and belief is seen as something greater than the outcomes sought through the syllabus

The school has two campuses – the Junior School Campus is in Coffs Harbour, and the Middle and Senior Schools operate at the Bonville Campus.

Co-educational and comprehensive in enrolment intake, the school endeavours to provide a caring environment with expectations of genuine individual effort and positive interpersonal relations amongst students. CHCCS is non-denominational in its Biblical interpretation.

## Purpose

Enrolment is open to all students whose parents are willing to have their children educated in a school where a Biblical Christian worldview is presented as truth. Non-believers of the Christian faith are welcome to enrol their children in the school on the condition that they will accept and support the Christian faith, values and teaching that is presented in the curriculum of the school as part of the overall package of education being presented to their child.

The school draws its students from a diverse set of backgrounds, including various Christian denominations, non-believers and socio-economic settings.

The purpose of this Policy sets out the priorities and conditions that facilitate orderly and equitable access for enrolment intakes.



# Definitions

## AIS

Association of Independent Schools

## CHCCS (the School)

Coffs Harbour Christian Community School Ltd.

## The Education Act

NSW Education Act, 1990.

For the purposes of this Policy, the applicable reference is *Part 5 – Attendance of Children at School*.



# Enrolments

## Prospective Enrolments

Parents wishing to enrol their child at CHCCS are required to:

1. Enquire at the school concerning enrolment of their child and obtain a Prospectus and Application Form
2. Make an appointment for an interview with the Principal.
3. Bring to the interview the following documentation:
  - a. The completed and signed Application Form
  - b. The child's Birth certificate
  - c. School reports for the previous two years
  - d. Any NAPLAN (or equivalent) reports
  - e. Any court documents
  - f. Medicare card
  - g. Immunisation records

In the event of a successful interview and the existence of an enrolment vacancy, a provisional position may be offered (or placement onto a waiting list if no vacancy exists). Should provisional enrolment be offered, an enrolment fee would be payable.

## Priority of Enrolment Allocations

While every effort is made to provide equitable access to CHCCS for the entire local community, it is necessary place some priority on the allocation of enrolments.

Enrolment allocations are offered according to the following order of priority:

### Junior School

1. Siblings
2. New students

### Middle School

1. Continuing students (entering Year 6 from the Junior School))
2. Siblings
3. From 2015, priority will be given to students from Macksville Adventist School entering Year 7
4. New students

### Senior School

1. Continuing students (entering Year 9 from the Middle School)
2. Siblings
3. New students



## Register of Enrolments

The register of enrolments, maintained by the principal, includes the following information for each student:

- name, age and address
- the name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/carer(s)
- 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 seventeen (17) years of age is unknown, evidence that the Department of Education has been notified (using the form *Student Enrolment Destination Unknown*, downloaded from RANGS, also available in the Letters and Forms section of this webpage, customised with school letterhead and emailed to [attendance@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:attendance@det.nsw.edu.au)). The following details should be completed on the form:
  - student's full name
  - date of birth
  - last known address
  - last date of attendance
  - parents' names and contact details
  - an indication of possible destination
  - what efforts the school has made to locate the child
  - other information that may assist officers to locate the student
  - any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents, carers or student

The register of enrolments is retained for a minimum period of five (5) years before archiving.

## Continuing Enrolment

The Education Act requires all children to attend school. It is the responsibility of parents and caregivers to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly
- Promptly explain the absences of their children from school
- Provide written information to the school that offers a reasonable explanation for a child's absence.

Failure by parents or caregivers to comply with these requirements may lead to review of the child's enrolment (refer to "Attendance and Absences" below).

**Appendix 1 is an information brochure provided to parents caregivers of students enrolled at CHCCS concerning the need for regular school attendance by their children.**



## Compulsory school age

A child is of compulsory school-age if the child is or above the age of 6 years and below the minimum school leaving age.

## Minimum school leaving age

The Education Act states that:

*21B(2)The minimum school leaving age is:*

*(a) the age at which the child completes Year 10 of secondary education (subject to participation required by subsection (3)), or*

*(b) the age of 17 years,*

*whichever first occurs.*

*(3)A child who completes Year 10 of secondary education but who is below the age of 17 years is of compulsory school-age unless the child participates on a full-time basis in:*

*(a) approved education or training, or*

*(b) if the child is of or above the age of 15 years--paid work or a combination of approved education or training and paid work.*

In more simple terms, once a student completes Year 10, there are several pathways to follow:

- Stay at school and continue to complete Year 11;
- Undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship;
- Study a vocational course at TAFE;
- Undertake a course in higher education or other approved education or training;
- Be in full-time, paid employment; or
- A combination of those options.

## Discontinued Enrolment

Enrolment at CHCCS is subject to the Terms and Conditions of enrolment described in the "Application for Enrolment." Where possible, the school will attempt to assist in determining the destination of students whose enrolment in the school has been discontinued.

For students less than 17 years of age, where the destination is unknown, a DET officer with home/school liaison responsibilities will be notified of the student's name, age, and last known address.





# Attendance and Absences

## Attendance Records

The attendance at school of all CHCCS students is recorded at the commencement of each school day when students gather in Devotions classes (at 8.50am). Each Devotions class is supervised by at least two staff members.

Student daily attendance is recorded directly into the School's "PC-School" database. Paper rolls are kept in a folder for each roll class in the event that a computer or iPad problem occurs (e.g. failed Wi-Fi connection or system downturn) that prevents immediate recording of attendance onto PC-School. Roll folders are returned to Student Reception for recording onto PC-School as soon as any problems are rectified.

Students arriving late are required to sign in at Student Reception and a late note is issued. The register of attendance is updated by the Receptionist as required after roll folders are returned at the end of Devotions classes (9.15am).

*Student attendance and absence records are confidential and contain highly sensitive information. They are legal documents that can be used as evidence in a court of law. It is therefore imperative that all staff protect the privacy and confidentiality of all students enrolled at CHCCS and their families.*

## Register of Daily Attendance

The register of daily attendance, maintained by the principal, includes the following information for each student:

- daily attendance and absences from school are recorded following the procedures described below:
  - the common code approved by the minister (published by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS), and available from the AIS website), is used
- reason for absence
- documentation to substantiate the reason(s) for absence

The register of daily attendance is retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.

CHCCS maintains the following procedures by which it:

- monitors the daily attendance/absence of students
- identifies absences from school and/or class(es)
- follows up unexplained absences
- notifies parent(s) and/or guardian(s) regarding poor school and/or class attendance
- transfers unsatisfactory attendance information to student files.

## Absences

All legitimate absences from school must be explained by the student's parents or caregivers to the school as soon as possible following a student's absence. Absences are monitored to ensure that student attendance rates meet the School's minimum attendance rate (currently 85%). A student absentee list is produced each day for reference by staff when monitoring subject classes and activities.



If a student is recorded as absent at the morning devotions class (when roll-call is taken), an SMS is sent to the primary caregiver contact number advising of the student's absence.

This usually occurs before 10am of that day. The caregiver can reply to the SMS to acknowledge the absence of their child and provide an explanation for the absence. The explanation is then recorded against the student's attendance record on PC-School. If no explanation is provided immediately, it is expected that an explanatory note will be sent in to school with the student at the earliest opportunity.

If a student is late to school, the caregiver who brought the student to school is expected to accompany the student to Student Reception to provide an explanation and sign the student into school for the day. Details of the late arrival are then recorded against the student's attendance record on PC-School. If the student who is late arrives unaccompanied, a note is required, or personal communication must be given to the school from the primary caregiver prior to, or at the time of arrival (e.g. if a senior students drive themselves to school). If no note or advice is provided, an email is sent to the primary caregiver advising of the late arrival of their child and requesting an explanation.

## Unexplained Absences

Absences not explained after 7 school days, and after all reasonable attempts have been made to obtain a satisfactory explanation, will normally be recorded as an unexplained absence against the student's attendance record on PC-School.

### **Note:**

***If a school representative provides information to parents or caregivers about their child's attendance record when attempting to resolve unexplained absences, it is imperative that no information about the attendance of other students is divulged. Images or photocopies of attendance records must not be taken or distributed for any reason. Parents may request to view, in person, the individual records of their child's absences that have been prepared from the school's electronic attendance register.***

## Ongoing or Prolonged Absences

If a student is absent for ongoing or prolonged periods, and their attendance rate falls below 85%, parents or caregivers will be asked to attend an interview with the Principal and the Student Wellbeing Coordinator.

Where a satisfactory explanation of prolonged or ongoing absences is provided, further consultation may be pursued and arrangements may be offered to support the student and caregiver in order to ensure that the student is able to attend school on a regular basis. Any support arrangements will be recorded on a Prolonged Absence Report.

## Certificate of Exemption

Where an applicant has clearly demonstrated that it is in the student's best interests and when other alternatives have been explored (where appropriate), the Principal may grant (or cancel) a Certificate of Exemption from being enrolled and attending school for:

- Periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period, or
- An indefinite period for students who have completed Year 9 of secondary education and who have been approved to undertake a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship.

Please refer to the Certificate of Exemption Policy for details.



# Appendix 1



Coffs Harbour Christian Community School

## Compulsory School Attendance Information for parents

One of the most important things that you can do for your child is to provide them with a good education. Regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life prospects. Education provides the skills necessary for your child to contribute to society when they become an adult. Coffs Harbour Christian Community School works in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of their children so that they may indeed "grow up into Christ". When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.



### *What if my child has to be away from school?*

There will be times when your child is unable to attend school due to illness, accident or urgent family matters. On any and all of those occasions you **are required by law** to ensure that you provide the school with an explanation of the absence **within seven (7) days**.

If your child is absent from school, an SMS will be sent to the primary caregiver contact number advising of the student's absence. If you do not provide a satisfactory explanation for your child's absence, our records will show an unexplained absence (effectively appearing as "Truant"). If it is considered that it was not in the best interests of your child, we will be required to record the absence as "unjustified". These records must be made available to the government, and may have significant implications under certain circumstances.

### *What are my legal responsibilities?*

The NSW Education Act, 1990 requires that for all children between the ages of 6 and the minimum school leaving age, schooling in NSW is compulsory. Section 22 states that,

"It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to cause the child:

- a) to be enrolled at, **and to attend**, a government school or a registered non-government school,...."

A school-age child is required to attend school on each day that the school is open for students.

### *It is important to arrive on time*

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence on the student attendance roll and must be explained by parents (see "*What if my child has to be away from school?*").

There are a number of important reasons why your child should arrive at school on time. Arriving at school and class on time ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day. It helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine. Arriving on time also gives students time to greet their friends before class, and it greatly reduces classroom disruptions.

### *What if we want to travel?*

Families are encouraged to travel only during school holidays, as this will avoid significant disruption to your child's education. If travel during school term is necessary, you should discuss it with your child's year advisor, or with the Principal. Absences relating to travel will be marked as "Leave" on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This would need to be discussed with the Principal.

***If a child misses just 8 days of school every term, by the end of primary school, that child will have lost more than an entire year's schooling.***





# We are here to help....

**As a member of our community we want to work with you to find the best way to support your child's regular attendance at school.**

**It is okay to contact us and seek help.**

## *My child won't go to school. What should I do?*

You should contact the Principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help.

We have highly skilled teaching and counselling staff who can work with you to establish some successful strategies to build the routines needed to ensure your child has the best chance for happy and productive school attendance.

## *What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?*

It is important to understand that Coffs Harbour Christian Community School may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend an interview with the school's pastoral care co-ordinators, or the Principal. The interview will help to identify how your child may need to be supported so they attend school regularly. We will work with you to develop an agreed plan to support your child's attendance at school.

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Principal may need to hand the matter to the Department of Family and Community Services. This may result in an application being made to the Children's Court for a *Compulsory Schooling Order*. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs, further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

## *What age can my child leave school?*

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling. You can discuss those options with us at any time.

## *Working in Partnership*

We recognise that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school. We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

In order to assist you in achieving this important goal, we can equip you with some tools to help provide the best education that your child deserves.

We understand that there may be complex factors that are impacting on your child's attendance at school. Family breakdown, as well as physical and mental health issues can often leave parents and students struggling to cope and find the answers they need. There are several community agencies and support groups that may provide further assistance to you, and we can provide information about how to contact them.

**The School's policies relating to enrolment and attendance can be found on our website.**

**Coffs Harbour Christian Community School**  
*Grow up into Christ*

**Coffs Har-**

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