5.4.3 - Attendance Policy

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Motto, Vision & Mission Statement
- Statement of Faith
- Philosophy
- School Aims

Parkes Christian School’s strives to meet to needs of students and their families. Attendance at school is required unless otherwise arranged.

**Student Absences**
The law requires each child of school age to be in school each day the school is open. If a child is absent from school a note should be sent to the child's teacher giving the reason and the date of the absence. This should be sent when the child returns to school.

If your child will be absent from school you are requested to contact the school before 8:55 am with this information. The school’s number for this purpose is (02) 68 624164. Messages can be left on this number at any time during the night or early in the morning before school commences. All absences must be explained in writing and signed by the parent or caregiver. A reason must be given in order for the roll to be marked as an explained absence.

Recreational visits to relatives and friends are not considered by law to be adequate reasons for absences from school. Parents are discouraged from taking children from school for such visits during the school year.

Students who are constantly absent on the same day each week will be asked to furnish a doctor’s certificate to verify an absence because of illness. Where a student is absent for 3 or more days without notification, the school will contact the parents to ascertain the reason for the absence.

**Travel Arrangements**
If you make arrangements for another adult to collect your child from school, it is imperative that you notify the school office beforehand. Teachers are not permitted to release children to the care of unknown persons.

Please make sure that your child/children know their travel arrangements BEFORE they leave home in the morning. If there is to be some change for the day a note should be sent to the child’s/children’s teacher, giving details of the change. Messages to change arrangements are only to be phoned to the office in cases of EXTREME EMERGENCY. Please make sure your child/children know the details of the change.

**Late Arrival at School**
When students arrive late it is very disturbing for classes already in progress. The late students not only miss out on introductory instructions but also cause valuable lesson time to be lost for all if these introductions have to be repeated, over and over. This unnecessary lateness displays a lack of respect for the teacher and the other students. It is also very time consuming for the office staff, who are required to record all late arrivals and the reasons. From time to time circumstances arise that make it impossible to be on time. When this occurs please give your child a note of explanation.

**Procedures in respect of late notes and student absences**
Late notes are issued at the School Office, a slip is taken to class by the student and the part absence is entered into the School’s Roll System. All absences and lateness are entered into the data base by the secretary. If a student arrives late to school they must sign in at the office. If a student is late to class they
must have a late note.
All absences that are not sickness should be sighted by the Principal to decide if suitable as to be deemed Leave.

If students are absent in a year 15% or more there will be a review as to if that child is able to progress to the next year.

Absences will be noted on the school reports.

Roll Marking Procedures

... Class rolls are to be marked by the Class Teacher or Year Advisor during Roll Call each morning.
... Rolls are to be returned to the Office by 9:30 am
... Office staff will enter the details of any absences for the day into the School Pro system.
Codes entered into the School Pro system (In accordance with BOSTES requirement) include:

- A  Unexplained Absence
- aS  Sickness
- aL  Approved Leave
- PaL  Partial absence Leave
- PaS  Partial absence Sickness
- E  Suspended
- B  School Approved Activity

... Late arrivals and early departures will also be entered during the day.
... Any absence not already notified to the school will trigger an SMS message being sent to the parents. This SMS requests parents to phone the office immediately to inform that they are aware of their child’s absence and where-abouts.
... In the case of a student absence, parents have 7 days in which to provide the school with a signed note of explanation for a child’s absence. If a note is not received then the student attendance system (School Pro) will generate a “Please Advise of Absence” letter informing parents of the date of absence and requesting an explanation. If no note is received after a further 7 days the absence will be recorded as an A – Unexplained Absence

Attendance: Years 11 and 12
At Parkes Christian School all students are expected to attend the school each day and for every period. Students will not be permitted to leave the school grounds during normal lesson times. Exemptions to this will be for those students accessing courses outsourced from the school.

Those attending TAFE will be required:
... Make their own way to TAFE
... If the student is driving their own car they require written permission from their parents
... If they travel with another student written permission needs to be given by all sets of parents.
... Get signed off at TAFE each time they have attended
... Wear full school uniform
Certificate of Exemption Policy

1.0 PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures to be followed when exercising delegations regarding certificates of exemption from school attendance in the following circumstances:

... Granting and cancelling of a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school for periods totalling up to 50 days in a twelve month period;

... Granting and cancelling of a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school for 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.

It includes the process for application, review and record keeping.

2.0 CONTEXT
This policy applies to students of compulsory school-age who seek exemption from the legal requirement to attend school. It is the duty of parents to comply with the Education Act 1990 and the duty of the school to maintain records of enrolment and attendance, have in place policies and procedures to provide for a safe and supportive environment for students including the provision for the welfare of students and for the protection of children.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

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 age at which the child completes Year 10 of secondary education or the age of 17 years, whichever first occurs. 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 approved education or training or 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.

Parent(s): any person who has custody or care of a student

Principal: includes an acting principal of the school

4.0 POLICY
Certificates of Exemption are granted and cancelled by the Principal. Certificates of Exemption are granted when the applicant has clearly demonstrated that the exemption is in the student’s best interests and when, where appropriate, other alternatives have been explored. The scope of the exemption is limited to the circumstances listed in the delegation. Copies of the delegations can be found in Appendix 1.

Certificates of Exemption will

- include any specific conditions that apply to the exemption,
- state that the exemption may be cancelled if these conditions cease to apply and
- specify the period for which the exemption has been granted.

In the circumstance where the applicant seeks exemption from being enrolled and attending school for an indefinite period when they have completed Year 9 of secondary education and when they have been approved to undertake a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship the following conditions apply:

- The Principal considers the student a suitable candidate to complete his or her education through an apprenticeship or traineeship,
- The student’s parents give permission for this to occur,
• The principal has sighted a full time apprenticeship or traineeship contract signed by the employer and a summary training plan authorised by an Registered Training Organisation,
• The employer agrees to notify the Principal if the apprenticeship or traineeship is abandoned before the student turns 17 or if the program is terminated by the employer,
• The apprenticeship or traineeship is subsequently approved by the Commissioner for Vocational Training, State Training Services as suitable for the student and the training contract attains ‘registered’ status.

Exemptions from attendance at school may be granted for
• Exceptional domestic exceptional domestic circumstances, including but not limited to participation in family holidays during school term subject to being satisfied that this is in the best educational interests of the child
• other exceptional circumstances such as health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate
• the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991
• employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events for short periods of time i.e. for one or two days, and at short notice

Application for exemption should be made in writing in advance. Exemptions will not be granted retrospectively. Procedural fairness will be applied to the consideration of all applications. Appeals to decisions can be made in writing by contacting the Board Chairman.

In the case where there are unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm associated with the application, Certificates of Exemption should not be issued. A risk assessment should be conducted to identify and manage risk prior to an approval being granted.

Certificates of Exemption can be cancelled when the conditions attached to the exemption are no longer being met.

5.0 PROCEDURES
Applications
• Applications will be made in writing using the appropriate Parental Application Form and directed to the Principal. Forms can be found in Appendix 2.
• All applications will be logged and filed in the Student file.

Review of Applications
• All applications will be reviewed by the Principal.
• Parents will be informed of the decision in writing.
• If successful, Certificates of Exemption will be issued by the school to Parents.
• In the case where a refusal is being considered, parents will have an opportunity to respond before the final decision is made.
• All communication during the application and review process will be in writing.

Record Keeping
• The school will keep a copy of the following documentation on the student’s file
  o the application,
- review decision,
- records tracking status of any conditions associated with the exemption,
- certificate and
- copy of delegation

- The school will also maintain a log detailing an overview of all applications and decisions made using the delegations.
- The school will record the information on the register of attendance using the appropriate codes

6.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES
- Education Act
- BOS Registration Systems and Member Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy

7.0 SOURCES
NSW Education and Training Student Welfare Directorate Exemption from School - Procedures
Robyn Yates AIS NSW

8.0. CONSULTATION

9.0. REVIEW

10.0. ACCOUNTABILITIES
The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the policy.