



**Catholic
Education**

Diocese of Wagga Wagga

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. Schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children

ARRIVING 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
- helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- gives students time to greet their friends before class
- reduces classroom disruption.

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

DIFFICULTY ATTENDING

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks.

The principal may seek further support from Catholic Education Diocese of Wagga Wagga (CEDWW) to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

TRAVEL

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal.

An Application for Extended Leave may need to be completed. 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 should be discussed with your child's school principal.

Absences from School

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance e.g. attending a funeral.

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the principal can record the absences as unjustified.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The CEDWW recognises 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.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

At CEDWW it is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age of 17 years. The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the NSW Education Standards Authority for home schooling. Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

SCHOOL LEAVING AGE

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.

Consequences of CONTINUED ABSENCES - Some of the following actions may be undertaken

• Attendance Improvement Plan

You may be asked along with your child to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference that is convened by a person authorised by the CEDWW. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place, so they attend School regularly. The school parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

The Compulsory Schooling Conference is the final school-based intervention that can be taken to address matters of unsatisfactory school attendance. It is important to understand that the school may refer the case to the CEDWW to take further action where children of compulsory schools continue to have unacceptable unexplained or unjustified absences from school despite attempted interventions at the school level.

• Compulsory School Order

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the CEDWW may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

• Prosecution in the Local Court

School and CEDWW staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling order 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.