



# Student Attendance Policy

February 2024

# Purpose

This Policy outlines student attendance requirements. It explores the processes involved in regard to student attendance at Minarah College.

<b>Date of last review:</b>	February 2024	<b>Author:</b>	Principal/s
<b>Date of next review:</b>	February 2025	<b>Owner:</b>	Principal/s
<b>Type of policy:</b>	State-wide (DoE)	<b>Approval:</b>	School Board
<b>Key contract email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Davinder.singh@minarah.nsw.edu">Davinder.singh@minarah.nsw.edu</a>	<b>Key Contact Name:</b>	Principal/s
		<b>Key Contact Phone:</b>	02 8783 9188

## Positioning within Minarah operational model

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership and Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting and Data	
<input type="checkbox"/> Governance and Accountabilities	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teaching and Learning	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos and Wellbeing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and Assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pathways and Enrichment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents and Community	
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates	
<input type="checkbox"/> Our People	

# Contents

1.0 Policy Statement .....	4
2.0 Register of Enrolments .....	4
3.0 Register of Daily Attendance .....	4
4.0 Responsibilities .....	5
4.2 Teachers' Responsibilities .....	5
5.0 Attendance Registers (Rolls) .....	7
6.0 Roll Marking Procedures .....	8
7.0 Student Absences .....	8
8.0 Supporting the Regular Attendance of Students at School .....	14
9.0 Attendance Improvement Planning/Intervention Strategies .....	15
10.0 Definitions.....	15

## 1.0 Policy Statement

Regular and punctual attendance is extremely important to a student's academic achievement. Under Section 22 of the Education Act (1990), children who are of compulsory school-age must attend school regularly and punctually. Whilst regular school attendance is the legal responsibility of parents, Minarah College staff record and monitor attendance and absences as part of their duty of care.

The Principal/s of Minarah College maintains a register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school, which includes information for each student as required by Section 3.8 of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual.

Student absence and variation to attendance will be recorded using the Minister's codes.

Minarah College will monitor student attendance data and implement intervention strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance of students. Attendance is deemed unsatisfactory if a student falls below 98%. Where the parents of a student at compulsory school age seeks an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the Principal/s will process the parent's application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education.

The Principal/s may grant and/or cancel a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances.

It is expected that students attend school regularly and participate fully and effectively in all the educational programs available in the school. To foster a sense of well-being and belonging to the whole school community Minarah College strives to provide a positive learning environment which addresses the learning needs of all students.

## 2.0 Register of Enrolments

The register of enrolments for Minarah College is maintained and monitored by the Principal/s who ensures that all the following information about students are present and updated on a regular basis via hard copy forms/online data bank *Sentral*.

- name, age and address
- the name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- date of enrolment and, where applicable, 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, the Principal/s will notify Department of Education (DoE) of the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist DoE to locate the student.

## 3.0 Register of Daily Attendance

The Principal/s at Minarah College monitors the attendance of every student enrolled at the school to identify, record and maintain any absences in a register of daily attendance (electronic). This register of daily attendances is retained by the school for a period of seven (7) years from the date of last entry.

- The attendance register identifies both full and partial absences, and for partial absences, the time the student arrived or left the school with reasons.
- For each absence from the school, the attendance register indicates the reason for the absence, including a variation to attendance, using attendance codes approved by the NSW Minister for Education.
- A student has an absence if they are not present on the school's premises. This includes where there is a variation to the student's attendance, for example where the student is engaging in their schooling at another location such as during an excursion.
- The records of documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence is maintained by the Principal/s or his delegate – roll call teachers/class teachers and the admin staff. This may include communication from parents/carers (including letters, emails, SMS responses and file notes) or documentation from medical practitioners, specialists or other authorities.
- Principal/s at Minarah College has the discretion to decline a reason provided for an absence if he/she is not satisfied with the reason provided or does not think the absence is in the best interest of the student. Principal/s through his delegate (roll call/class teachers and Admin Staff) can request parents/carers provide documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence.
- If a reason for an absence has not been provided within 7 days of the date of the absence, or has not been accepted by the Principal/s, the absence is to be recorded as unexplained or unjustified. Even where an absence is recorded as unexplained, the reason for the absence with the parents/ carers is to be still followed up.
- It is at the Principal/s's discretion to accept other explanations for absence and his delegate will record this absence as 'L'. That is, for explanations unapproved by the Principal/s, this will be recorded as 'A' – unjustified. For cases where the Principal/s accepts the reason for absence, this will be recorded as 'L' – to mean absence is for leave approved by the Principal/s.

## 4.0 Responsibilities

### 4.1 Parents' Responsibilities

- Section 22 of the Education Act (1990) establishes that parents of children of compulsory school age are legally responsible for their child's enrolment and regular attendance at school, or to register them with NESAs for home schooling.
- Ensuring that their children attend school regularly, on each day when the school is open for instruction.
- Parents must explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days of the absence occurring by providing relevant documentation (i.e., medical certificate or written note) explaining the child's absence.
- Parents must contact the school and complete 'Application for Extended Leave – Travel' (*Appendix B*) prior to planning for prolonged leave such as an overseas holiday.
- Provide updated contact details to the school office as soon as there is a change in contact details.
- Parents are encouraged to check the S4P (Sentral for Parents) App for their child's attendance record.

### 4.2 Teachers' Responsibilities

- Supporting the regular attendance of students by providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community through offering equal opportunities and high-quality education.
- Recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- Recording, monitoring and maintaining accurate attendance on the Attendance module of Sentral daily – the roll call/class teacher for Years K-6, and Year Advisers From Years 7-12 will collect absence explanations from the students and pass these to the admin office for recording

the codes of S for sick, and A for unjustified absence.

- Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise. Teachers must notify the Wellbeing team if they notice irregular attendance and frequent late arrival.
- For absenteeism of more than two (2) consecutive days, admin office staff will be informed by the teachers in writing via email so they can follow up with the parents and document on Sentral.
- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- Set work for students when requested by parents going on extended leave as approved by the Principal/s.

### 4.3 School Admin/Office Staff Responsibilities

- Notify the class/roll call teachers if a student leaves early, and mark this on Attendance module of Sentral
- Notify class/roll call teachers if a student has been admitted into the sick bay during class, recess and lunch
- Mark the roll on Attendance module of Sentral on days when a roll call teacher/class teacher is absent – the substitute teacher will need to submit a paper roll (obtainable from Admin) for this to happen
- Update the Attendance module of Sentral with the reason/s for partial absences (early dismissals, late arrivals)
- Enter onto Sentral (Attendance module) the reason/s of absence if a parent/caregiver notifies the school through the phone. Any other code such as B, L, F to be entered by school admin staff after necessary documentation provided by the student/parent/roll call teacher.
- *The code for suspension 'E' will be entered automatically by Heads of Wellbeing/Deputy Principals when a student is suspended through Wellbeing module of Sentral.*
- As delegated by the Principal/s, and informed by the class/roll call teachers, and the Attendance Support Officer, admin staff will contact parent(s) after two (2) days of an unexplained absence occurring
- Pass on messages and notes regarding students requiring long leave to the respective Deputy Principals (Primary and Secondary)
- To provide a register of enrolments that includes the following information for each student; name, age, address, name and contact number of parents/guardians, name of emergency contact and contact number, date of enrolments. For the students above the age of six (6), document previous school or pre- enrolment details. (This information is available upon request from administration)
- Document date of leaving school/name of new school (*Appendix C*). That is, where the destination of a student under 17 years of age is unknown, the Department of Education ([attendance@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:attendance@det.nsw.edu.au)) will be notified of the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, , last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents or student. (This information is available upon request from administration)
- Retain the register of enrolments for a minimum period of five (5) years preceding the current date
- Retain the register of daily attendance by the school for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.

### 4.4 Principal/s and Leadership Responsibilities

The Principal/s:

- Ensures that attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate

record of the attendance of students. In addition, the Principal/s monitors the Attendance on Sentral to make sure accurate records of attendance are kept and maintained by staff – this responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Principals where an audit is performed twice a term to check for any discrepancies in rolls, absences not followed up, etc.

- Ensures that all attendance records including details of transfers and exemptions are accurate and readily accessible
- Ensures that all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and partial or whole day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented
- Supports teachers and staff when dealing with parents regarding unsatisfactory student attendance
- Notifies relevant authorities if unsatisfactory attendance persists
- Provides clear information to parents and students regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- Has the authority and may grant exemption for attendance from school for students due to illness that requires students to stay away from school as per the Public Health Order.
- May:
  - Grant sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness (Attendance Register Code 'S')
  - Decline to accept an explanation for an absence as satisfactory. In this case, the parent must be advised that the explanation has not been accepted and be provided with a reason for this decision.
  - Request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged. Where Principal/s have ongoing concerns, they may request the parents' consent to contact the medical practitioner. In the event where this request is denied, or the Principal/s is still not satisfied with the reason for absence, they can then record this absence as unjustified (Attendance Register Code 'A')
  - Delegate responsibility for the maintenance of attendance registers to teachers and other school personnel. Where this is the case, the Principal/s must ensure that these staff members know the procedures set out in this policy.
  - Record 'Leave' days in a school year for students of compulsory school age who have provided an explanation of the absence which has been accepted by the Principal/s (Attendance Register Code 'L'). Additional days for students not of compulsory school age may be recorded at the Principal/s's discretion.

This may be due to:

- Misadventure or unforeseen event
- Participation in special events not related to the school
- Domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member
- Attendance at funerals
- Recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions
- Family vacations/holidays

## 5.0 Attendance Registers (Rolls)

### 5.1 Registering the attendance of students

- The Education Act (1990) (Section 24) requires that attendance registers be maintained in a form approved by the Minister. Minarah College utilises Sentral to maintain an electronic attendance register.
- Attendance registers must be maintained on all days which the College is open for instruction. This includes excursions, sports/athletics carnivals and other similar events.
- The exception method will be used, which includes marking absences only. The NSW

Attendance Register Codes must only be used (see *Appendix A* for these codes)

- Student attendance must be registered at the start of each period (Secondary), including Roll Call
- Senior students participating in flexible timetables must be marked using the Attendance Register Code 'F'.
- Staff members (roll call and class teachers) who are responsible for maintaining attendance registers must be fully acquainted with the procedures as set out in this policy
- A hard copy of the electronic attendance register (NSW Attendance Detail Report) may be extracted from Sentral on a regular basis and endorsed by the Principal/s or delegated school executive, certifying its accuracy. Once this hard copy is signed, it becomes the record of attendance and must not be amended. Where there is a partial absence, the exact times of arrival or departure must be recorded in the system, with the relevant code.

## 5.2 Security of Attendance Registers

- Any/all hard copies of attendance registers must be stored in a secure location within the College
- These attendance registers must not be removed from the school premises, except for when an exceptional circumstance warrants this removal (i.e., flood or fire)
- At the conclusion of each school year, the Principal/s must ensure that the attendance registers are preserved as a complete record of students' absences for that year.

## 6.0 Roll Marking Procedures

### 6.1 Class/Roll Call Teacher – Daily Attendance

- All class/roll call teachers are to utilise Sentral to take attendance at the beginning of each day (Roll Call period as assigned). Rolls in Secondary classes need to be marked every period on Sentral.
- The specialist teachers have the same responsibility, that is, they also must take attendance of the students who are under their care within a particular period.
- In the event where there are technical difficulties and the roll cannot be marked via Sentral, hard copies of class rolls will be available (from the admin office staff) to mark student attendance. Roll call/class teachers are to then update this on Sentral.

### 6.2 Excursions/Incursions and Taking Attendance

- In case of incursions, students' attendance records should still be taken during the period(s) that the student participates in the activity. Therefore, the class teacher at the time is required to enter student attendance on Sentral (PxP), either before the students are taken to the incursion program or immediately after attending the incursion program.
- In case of excursions, the accompanying teacher is to mark the roll on a class list and send this list, which indicates the student attendance record for the excursion, to the school's Office Administrator.

### 6.3 Class/Roll Call teacher Absences and Taking Attendance

- If the Class/roll call teacher is absent, a Casual Teacher on the class will mark the roll on a class list and send it to the Office Administrator at the end of roll call period.
- For secondary classes, a paper roll is supplied for the Casual teacher by the Heads of Departments (absent teacher) so rolls can be checked/marked every period.

## 7.0 Student Absences

## 7.1 Absences

- For students who are absent from school, parents should provide a reason for absence upon the students return to school. The reason may be provided with a medical certificate or a phone call/note from the parent(s) explaining the exact reason for the absence.
- Parents must contact the school if the student will be unable to come to school for more than one (1) day, due to illness or other misadventure. If a student has been absent for more than two (2) consecutive days and the school hasn't been notified, the admin office staff will contact the parents on the third day of the absence occurring – after being informed by the class/roll call teacher(s).
- In the event of a child's extended absence from school or a lack of attendance on the child's part, the College will employ intervention strategies and put in place attendance improvement plans for the student(s) concerned.
- All/any documentation/communication in relation to a student's absence from school is filed in a Roll Call folder maintained by the Roll Call or the Class Teacher for the calendar year.

## 7.2 Partial Absences

Students' who come to school late (that is after 8:35am) or leave early (before 3.20pm) will be marked on Sentral as a partial attendance using Minister's code 'P'. This is to be entered onto Sentral by the Admin office staff detailing the reason(s) for late entry or early exits from the school. The student coming in late or departing early from school must be accompanied by the parent. The parent will need to state the reasons for early departure or late arrival which is then recorded onto Sentral by the Admin staff.

In cases where a parent cannot accompany the child to school for late arrivals, a phone call from the parent is necessary to substantiate the reasons. Early departures, however, will require the parent to pick up the child from school.

Reasons Acceptable for Lateness:

- Doctor's appointment
- Cases of emergency or an incident on the way to school bus is late

Reasons Not Acceptable for Lateness:

- Traffic
- Slept in
- Shopping
- Just late (no reason given)
- Other avoidable and insufficient reason

Reasons Acceptable for Early Leave:

- Doctor's appointment
- Family emergency
- Other unavoidable situations (i.e., parent called in to work and there's nobody else to collect the child)

Reasons Not Acceptable for Early Leave:

- Wanting to prevent the afternoon traffic rush
- Shopping
- Other avoidable situations

## 7.3 Prolonged Leave of Absence

Where students are anticipated to be absent for prolonged periods of time during the school year, parents will need to obtain approval from the College before taking this leave.

In these circumstances parent(s) will need to arrange a meeting with the Principal/s, who will then provide a permission form to be completed by the parent and explain the Conditions of Leave. Upon completion, the form must be submitted to the school for approval by the Principal/s. A copy of this approval will be sent to the parent(s).

The Attendance Register Code 'L' must be used to indicate student leave of absence.

Parents must be mindful of the following conditions for Leave:

- Granting approval for leave is only at the discretion of the Principal/s
- Leave will be granted only for extenuating circumstances. Requests for family holidays will not be approved. The student's general attendance pattern will also be considered before approval is granted.
- Approval will be granted up to 15 school days within one academic year (10 days for students undertaking the HSC).
- To maintain the educational continuity of the child when on leave, it is recommended that the students complete some level of work as set by their class/roll call teacher.

Parents should be aware that leave exceeding 5 school weeks (or 25 school days) within the one academic year may adversely affect the child's progress and their performance. It is therefore expected that parents try to organise overseas trips around the school holiday period so that minimum disruption to their child's education is made.

Any or all leave applications are to be made via the appropriate forms and is maintained and stored by the school's admin staff in the student folder. A copy of this is also given to the Class/Roll Call teacher for their records.

## 7.4 Exemption from Attendance at School

Under section 25 of the Education Act students may be eligible for an exemption from enrolment or attendance in accordance with the Exemptions from *Attendance and Enrolment – Guidelines for Independent Schools*.

### 7.4.1

A child may be exempt from being enrolled at and attending school if the Principal/s is satisfied that conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable that a Certificate should be granted. A Certificate of Exemption may be given subject to conditions and limited to a period specified in the certificate.

### 7.4.2

A Certificate of Exemption must only be granted when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is in the student's best interests in the short and long term. Alternatives to exemption should have been fully explored.

### 7.4.3

In these Procedures the term 'parent' or 'parents' includes any person or persons having the custody or care of a child.

#### 7.4.4

A Certificate of Exemption should not be approved where the student has been the subject of contact with a child protection report to Family and Community Services and/or there are unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm. Prior to granting a Certificate of Exemption a risk assessment should be completed to identify and manage risks.

#### 7.4.5

If parents request authority not to enroll their child, this must be considered an application for exemption from enrolment.

#### 7.4.6

The Principal/s may grant a Certificate of Exemption subject to procedures, as outlined in the following table.

<b>Powers: Exemption from Attendance at School</b>	<b>Delegates (Note: Delegates cannot delegate)</b>
Student engaged in employment in approved entertainment industry activities	Principal/s Full or part days Up to 100 days in a twelve month period for any one student More than 100 days in a twelvemonth period for any one student School-based procedures
Student participating in elite arts or elite sporting events* * Refers to national/international sports events, elite programs run by national and international organisations, talent identification programs run by NSW Dept Sport and Recreation	
Exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate)	
<b>Powers: Exemption from Enrolment at School</b>	<b>Delegates (Note: Delegates cannot delegate)</b>
Exemption from enrolment - Age	Principal/s School-based procedures
Exemption from enrolment - Health, learning or social needs or disability	
Exemption from enrolment - Completion of Education under Special Circumstances - for apprenticeships and traineeships only	
Exemption from enrolment - Completion of Education under Special Circumstances- not an apprenticeship or traineeship	Please go to the NESA website <a href="#">here</a>

#### 7.4.7 General Principles

- Procedural fairness must be accorded to an applicant. If the Principal/s is refusing to grant an exemption, the parents should be given an opportunity to respond to the delegate's concerns before a final decision is made. This opportunity should be offered to the parent in writing. If an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision made by the Principal/s, the school's complaints and grievances policies and procedures would apply, and/or the applicant may appeal to the Minister's Delegate.
- For most exemptions, parents make an application by completing an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School. This must be made in writing and in advance. Parents may seek assistance from the Principal/s when completing forms.
- The parent is not required to apply for an exemption in cases of the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under the Public Health Act 2010. The Principal/s may grant a Certificate of Exemption for the period determined by relevant authorities under this Act.
- If there is any case where there are circumstances that may not be considered by these Procedures and an exemption appears to be in the best interest of the child, the case should be referred to the AISNSW Regulation Team prior to an exemption being granted.
- A Principal/s can cancel the Certificate of Exemption where they identify circumstances that they believe

warrants this action. For example, where the conditions attached to the exemption are not being met or cease to apply. Schools are to retain copies of all documentation relating to the exemption in the student's file until the student reaches the age of 25, or for 7 years, whichever is greater, and then destroy.

## 7.4.8 Reason for Granting Full-Day Exemptions from Attendance at School

### The Principal/s may grant exemptions due to:

- Exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is appropriate)
- The child being prevented from attending school because of a principal/s's direction under the Public Health Act 2010. (Note that in the case of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the school is required to advise an unvaccinated student not to attend until advised to do so. The parent is not required to complete an application for exemption)
- Employment in the entertainment industry
- Participation in elite arts or elite sporting events (i.e. national/international sports events, elite programs run by national and international organisations, talent identification programs run by NSW Dept Sport and Recreation)
- For any other matter not covered by the above points, the principal/s should contact the AISNSW Regulation Team at (02) 9299 2845 or regulations@aisnsw.edu.au.
- Note: Students traveling during school terms are not to be exempt. If the principal/s accepts the reason, then leave is granted and the 'L' code should be used, consistent with the implementation of National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting

### The attendance register must indicate full-day exemptions with the code 'M'.

## 7.4.9 Reasons for granting part day exemptions from attendance at school

- The Education Act 1990 gives the Minister or principal/s the power to grant a Certificate of Exemption from the requirement to attend school during the times specified in the Certificate.
- For students participating in elite arts or elite sporting programs (i.e. national or international sports events, camps run by national or international sports organisations, national sports squads, and talent identification programs run by the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation) who are required to attend regular activities/training during school time the appropriate application must be completed and submitted to the principal/s for approval prior to commencing the program.
- For part-day exemption due to the requirements of a health care plan, the principal/s should seek the parents' consent to obtain information from health professionals responsible for the health care of the child and prepare forms relating to exemption from attendance.
- Students participating in school programs may be granted part-day exemptions for periods of time not exceeding the equivalent number of full school days. Close monitoring of exemption periods is necessary so that the approval period is not exceeded.
- Participation in such school programs must be approved by the principal/s.
- The attendance register must indicate part-day exemptions with the code P/M.

## 7.4.10 Exemption from Enrolment at School

Reasons for granting exemptions from enrolment at school:

The principal/s may grant such exemptions on behalf of the Minister due to:

- A. age, where a child turns six years on or after 1 October or later in a school year and is engaged in:
- full time preschool education at an accredited preschool for the remainder of that school year
  - full or part-time accredited preschool programs for students with disabilities leading to enrolment and full- time attendance at a government or registered non-government school not later than six months after the child's sixth birthday

**Note:** The delegate will require proof of enrolment or participation in the preschool and the child should be involved in a transition-to-school program as a condition of their exemption

- B.** the health, learning, or social needs or disability of a child necessitating the continuation of an individual program supported by medical specialists not longer than six months after the child's sixth birthday

**Note:** The delegate will require a statement in support of the exemption from the child's medical specialist and the child should be involved in a transition-to-school program as a condition of their exemption

#### 7.4.11

Principal/s may grant exemptions to students from the requirement to be enrolled in school provided approval has been given by the Commissioner for Vocational Education, State Training Services, to their entering a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship. This applies to students who have completed year 9 and before they have completed Year 10. Such exemptions should only be granted where the:

- The Principal/s considers that the student is 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/s has sighted a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship contract signed by the employer and a summary training plan authorised by the Registered Training Organisation
- The employer agrees to notify the Department of Education (through the Principal/s) if the apprenticeship or traineeship is abandoned before the student turns 17
- Apprenticeship or traineeship is approved by the Commissioner for Vocational Training, State Training Services as suitable for the young person and the training contract attains 'registered' status following the probationary period. Where approval is granted by the principal/s and the Commissioner subsequently notifies the student of his or her decision not to approve the contract following the probationary period the approval and the exemption will be cancelled. The student's parents must then take steps to comply with their compulsory schooling obligations.

**Note:** if the student does not complete the apprenticeship or traineeship, he or she will not have completed Year 10. They will be legally required to complete Year 10 under another pathway of the Education Act (1990), for example, by returning to school or seeking enrolment in TAFE NSW

#### 7.4.12 Issuing certificates of exemption from attendance or enrolment at school

On approval, a Certificate of Exemption must be issued and:  
include any specific conditions that apply to the exemption

- state that the exemption may be cancelled if any such conditions are not met or if cease to apply
- specify dates for which the exemption has been granted, including hours of program participation if a part-day exemption period applies.

#### 7.4.13

The original Certificate of Exemption will be provided to the parents

#### 7.4.14

A copy was placed in the student's file. For exemption from enrolment, a copy of the Certificate of Exemption will be provided to the school on subsequent enrolment and must be placed in the student's file.

#### 7.4.15

Grounds for exemptions may include:

- exemption from enrolment:
  - age (in certain circumstances for children turning 6, but not exceeding 6 months after the child's 6th birthday)
  - students who have completed Year 9 but not yet completed Year 10 and who have secured a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship
- exemption from attendance:
  - exceptional circumstances
  - direction under the Public Health Act 2010
  - employment in the entertainment industry
  - participation in elite arts or elite sporting events
- Parents/carers are required to make an application for exemption to the school in advance of the period being sought, except for an exemption under the Public Health Act where no application is required.
- The principal/s will consider the application in accordance with the criteria in the guidelines from the NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- Approved Exemption is marked with the code '**M**' on the attendance register.

## 8.0 Supporting the Regular Attendance of Students at School

Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of students at school. Problems of non-attendance are usually resolved by deputies and school staff in consultation with parents and students.

Minarah College has a systematic process for the timely identification of students whose attendance may be of concern. The Deputy Principals (Primary and Secondary) proactively monitor the attendance of all students to identify indicators that may reveal potential attendance concerns.

Indicators that a student may be at risk can include:

- patterns of absence, for example:
  - habitual lateness
  - regularly leaving school early
  - multiple single-day absences over a term
  - absences that regularly occur on Mondays, after holidays, school camps or sports days
- unexplained absences
- tearfulness, tantrums, or clinginess upon arriving at school or repeated pleas to go home
- frequent complaints of illness while at school and requests to go to the sick bay

Before the student's absenteeism becomes chronic, attendance data, in combination with student welfare processes is monitored by the respective Deputy Principals (Primary and High). This enables early identification of students at risk, so targeted intervention can be provided. Addressing the issues in a timelier manner results in a satisfactory outcome for the student.

The Deputy Principals (Primary and Secondary), together with the Wellbeing Team (Heads of Wellbeing and Counsellors) monitor attendance data regularly and are responsible for student attendance improvement. The team will:

- hold regular meetings with all staff to familiarise them with indicators that may lead to potential attendance concerns so students at risk can be promptly identified and supported
- utilise attendance systems to analyse attendance data to:
  - investigate trends such as for days of the week, assessment periods, times of the year, year levels, gender, or groups
  - track individual student attendance over time and monitor academic progress
  - analyse patterns of reasons provided for irregular attendance if a student's absence begins to accumulate
  - review data from previous terms, or year, or school to target students for improvement

## 9.0 Attendance Improvement Planning/Intervention Strategies

Where a student's attendance is of poor, an improvement plan may be necessary which is a collaborative process whereby issues relating to a student's inability to attend school are identified and strategies to increase attendance are determined. An Attendance Improvement Plan is the documented outcome of the planning process. This plan will be drawn up by the Wellbeing team in consultation with the Deputy Principal (Operations). The Principal/s will send a letter (*Appendix D*) to the parent/guardian to advise that An Attendance Improvement Plan needs to be written up.

The Attendance Improvement Plan broadly identifies the specific barriers prohibiting the student from attending school and strategies to address those issues. This may relate to school refusal, school withdrawal, or truancy.

### Planning

The attendance improvement planning process includes intervention strategies for:

- facilitate a gradual transition to school that builds up to full-time attendance and is achievable, plan what the student will be doing, where and with whom
- manage expectations regarding completion of schoolwork and assessments
- ensure a key contact person is established for a regular check-in/check-out
- have a student-friendly 'safe place' to go to if needed, e.g., wellbeing center
- access appropriate external specialists
- support social engagement and interactions with peers as part of the re-entry-to-school process
- facilitate communication processes between home and school

An **Attendance Improvement Plan** (*Appendix E*) should be reviewed as regularly as required according to the needs of the student. Ideally, the plan would be reviewed fortnightly, but a minimum would be monthly.

The **Graduated Increase Attendance Plan** (*Appendix F*) may also be used for the student to refer to. This plan details the student's timetable and documents the agreed attendance arrangements.

The **Return to School Rubric** (*Appendix G*) may be an alternative plan for students to refer to. The rubric focuses on areas of concern that are impacting the student's attendance at school and can be tailored to their needs.

## 10.0 Definitions

Parent	Includes a carer or other person having the care or custody of a child or young person
Unexplained Absence	A student absence where a parent provides no acceptable reason for a student's non-attendance
Truancy	The absence of a student from school without the knowledge or permission of their parent or carer
Explained/justified absence	A parent has provided an explanation of the student's absence which has been accepted by the principal/s
Explained/unjustified absence	A parent has provided an explanation of the student's absence which has not been accepted by the principal/s
Unexplained/unjustified absence	A parent has not provided an explanation of the absence after seven days of the student returning to school

Compulsory school age	<p>In NSW, all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age are legally required to attend school. All students must complete Year 10. After Year 10 and until they turn 17, students must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in school, or registered for home schooling; or</li><li>• in approved education or training (e.g. TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship); or</li><li>• in full-time, paid employment (average 25 hours/week); or</li><li>• in a combination of work, education and/or training.</li></ul>
-----------------------	---

## Appendices



### Appendix A: New South Wales Attendance Register Codes

Schools are required to have policy and procedures to monitor regular attendance and to ensure that records are current, accurate, and accessible. The procedures should reflect how attendance is marked, followed up, and records maintained at that particular school.

The tables on the following pages indicate:

- Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence
- Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

The symbol 'X' is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

Schools must use the following symbols to record an absence or variation in attendance, in addition to the appropriate attendance register code shown on the following pages

Symbol	Meaning
a	The student was absent for the whole day
Pa	The student was late or was absent for part of the day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

NESA requires that the register of enrolments must be retained for a minimum of five (5) years before archiving. The register of daily attendance must be retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.

### Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence

The following attendance register codes are to be used to record the explanation of student absence and are counted for statistical purposes.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
<b>A</b>	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal/s. It is at the principal/s's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.	To be also used if the principal/s does not accept that an absence (e.g., for extended leave/travel during school term) is in the student's best interests and that the reason is unjustified.
<b>S</b>	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: -a medical certificate is provided or -the absence was due to sickness and the principal/s accepts this explanation. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.	

<b>L</b>	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal/s. This may be due to: - misadventure or unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to the school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - travel in Australia and overseas - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.	Note that this code is to be used if the reason for the absence (e.g. extended leave/travel) is <b>accepted</b> by the principal/s. The principal/s may consider an Application for Extended Leave/Travel from parents, and provide a Certificate for Extended Leave/Travel, if approved.
<b>E</b>	The student was suspended from school	

## Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

Only the following attendance register codes must be used to record a variation in attendance – they are not counted as an absence for statistical purposes. In addition to recording the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the variation must be recorded.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
<b>M</b>	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer, usually the Principal/s.	
<b>F</b>	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses	The “F” code is no longer only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable. The code should also be used in independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and other programs that are school authorised.
<b>B</b>	The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal/s approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: - work experience - school sport (representative events) - school excursions - student exchange	The ‘B’ code is used for sport when the student has been selected to represent the school at an event. If the student is participating at an elite level (state or national squads), consideration may be given to an Exemption from Attendance (Elite Sports/Arts)
<b>H</b>	The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education	In most cases this code will only be used by government schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools. The “F” code, not the “H” code is to be used by independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.

## Appendix B:



# Application for Extended Leave –Travel

**NOTE: PARTS A, B and C** are to be **completed by the student’s parent** and returned to their child’s school principal/s.

### PART A: STUDENT DETAILS

Please complete table below with details of all students at this school associated with the period of travel. Separate applications are required for each school if siblings do not attend the same school.

FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	DOB	AGE	GRADE

Student address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of extended leave applied for: From: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Number of school days: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for travel (including why this travel is occurring in school time):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Relevant travel documentation such as an e-ticket or itinerary (in the case of non-flight bound travel within Australia only) must be attached to this application.

## Appendix C:



### Student Enrolment Destination Unknown Notification

This form has been prepared to provide a Department of Education Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) with details where the enrolment destination of a student of compulsory school age is unknown.

**Name of School:**  
**Location of School:**  
**School contact details:**

**Student Details**

**Student Name:**  
**Date of Birth:**  
**Last known address:**  
**Last day attended:**  
**Has the student enrolment been withdrawn, and parent notified (date):**

**Parent Details** **Parent**  
**Name(s):**  
**Contact details:**

**Further information Possible**  
**destination:**  
**Other relevant information:**

**Any risks associated with contacting the student or parent?**  
**Outline what efforts the school has taken to locate the child/children**

**Principal/s Name:**  
**Principal/s Signature:**  
**Date**

Return to: NSW Department of Education [attendance@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:attendance@det.nsw.edu.au)

## **Appendix D: Sample Letter – Principal/s to parents/carers advising of intention to meet to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan**



<Correspondence Name>

<Correspondence Address>

Dear <Correspondence Name>

I refer to the attendance of <Student Name> at school.

At a recent meeting, <Student First Name>'s pattern of attendance was reviewed and despite the school implementing several strategies <Student First Name>'s lack of attendance remains a concern.

Regular attendance at school is essential if <Student First Name> is to achieve his/her educational best and increase his/her career and life options. School staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing <Student First Name> from full participation at school.

The school would like to meet with you to formulate an Attendance Improvement Plan. This is an opportune time to attempt to resolve your child's attendance issues and develop a plan that aims to restore your child's regular attendance at school.

I would like to remind you that The Education Act (1990) requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school each day it is open for instruction. If you do not meaningfully engage in the Attendance Improvement Plan, or there is no improvement in <Student First Name>'s attendance during this time, the school may need to pursue further action such as a Secretary's Compulsory Schooling Conference

It is important that we work together to improve <Student First Name>'s attendance at school. If you wish to discuss this matter further with me, please contact the school on the school's phone number to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

<Principal/s's Name>

Principal/s

<Date>

## Student Attendance Improvement Plan



**School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_/\_\_/\_\_ **Date:** \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Regular attendance helps students to; develop a sense of belonging, maintain, and develop friendships, progress with learning and be more engaged at school.

Barriers/Blockers <i>(Text about why I do not attend school)</i>	Strategies <i>(Strategies to attend school)</i>	Responsibilities <i>(Who is responsible)</i>

Plan start date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Plan end date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

This plan was created by: \_\_\_\_\_ In consultation with: \_\_\_\_

## Example Strategies

### School based

- Referral to Learning and Support team
- Check in check out system with teacher mentor
- Rewards chart and/or use of school-based merit system
- Referral to school counsellor
- Peer mentor or buddy system
- Communicate with parent any academic or wellbeing concerns as soon as possible.
- Follow up on any unexplained absences
- Build student-teacher relationship

### Family based

- Promote benefits of attendance at home.
- Ensure child arrives on time and is ready to participate.
- Set routine. Bed and wake up time consistent each day. Pack school bag and prepare for school the previous night.
- Turn off electronic devices an hour before bed
- Rewards. Short term and long term
- Follow up with GP or other medical professional
- Plan any necessary appointments outside of school hours where possible
- Communicate any absences to the school (within 7 days of the first day of absence). This may include providing a note from GP where appropriate

## **Student based**

- Follow routine. Bed and wake up time consistent each day. Pack school bag and prepare for school the previous night.
- Discuss with teacher/ school any issues that may arise regarding school. Ask for help.
- Eat breakfast
- Attempt to take part in classroom activities
- Join extracurricular activities. Join a school group or team.
- Tell parent 3 good things that occurred at school each day.

These strategies are general suggestions. Strategies put in place will be specific to the individual child and address the identified barriers to attendance.

## Appendix F Graduated Attendance Improvement Plan



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Term and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Term Expected attendance	M	T	W	T	F	Weekly attendance achievement	School Special Events	Focus for the week	Goals
<b>Example:</b> Week 0 2 days	Sessions 3 and 4	Sessions 3 and 4	Sessions 3 and 4	Sessions 1 and 2	Sessions 3 and 4		Friday am, Grade assembly	Developing the good habit of being at school every day	Increase attendance at school a little each week  Develop skills in managing feelings of anxiety or stress whilst at school  Develop social group and social skills  Develop and practice coping strategies – short rest periods, distraction techniques, chill out time etc.
<b>Week 3</b> 3 days								Adjust to longer periods of time in school	
<b>Week 4</b> 4 days									
<b>Week 5</b> 4 days									
<b>Week 6-8</b> 4 days									
<b>Week 9</b>									
<b>Wek 10</b>									

## Appendix G

### Return to School Rubric



Consult with the student and their support team to:

- Select areas of concern from the rubric
- Tailor the stages to suit the student
- Delete the rows if not required.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Focus area	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Uniform	I will not put on the school uniform.	I try on some of the items of my school uniform at home.	I put on my school uniform and wear it for a period of 2 hours at home.	I put on my school uniform and wear it to school for a set period.	I put on my school uniform and wear it at school for the duration of the day.	I am comfortable wearing my uniform at school.
Contact with someone at school	I am not in contact with anyone from school.	I am in contact with one or two teachers and students at school via email fortnightly.	I speak with a teacher and a student from school at least once per week.	I attend school and spend time with both a teacher and a student from school for a set period. e.g., 2 hours	I attend school and spend time with both a teacher and a student from school for a set period. e.g., 4 hours	I attend school and spend time with teachers and students from school for the duration of the school day.

Sleep routine (e.g. get up time being 7.30 allowing for minimum 8 hours sleep)	I go to bed late and have difficulty going to sleep.	I go to bed late and cannot get up for school.	I go to bed late and get up late for school.	I go to bed late but still get up in time for school.	I mostly go to bed on time, and mostly get up on time for school.	I go to bed on time and get up on time for school.
School work	I do not do any schoolwork.	I do schoolwork once a week for my favorite/chosen subject. OR I do some schoolwork with support.	I do some schoolwork on my own and some with support at least twice a week.	I do some schoolwork every day, with support, in my favorite subject.	I do some schoolwork every day for my favorite/chosen subject and finish the task.	I do some schoolwork every day for 2 or more subjects and finish the task.
Focus area	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
Attending school	I am driven past the school with my mum/dad/carer.	I get out of the car at school and walk to the school gate with my mum/dad/carer.	I get out of the car and walk to the school gate independently.	I walk around the school grounds with my mum/ dad/ carer/teacher.	I walk to the classroom door with my mum/dad/carer/ teacher.	I enter the classroom for a set time with a support person from school.
Attending school: Joining the class	I join the whole class for 10 minutes in the classroom in the morning session.	I join the whole class for 20 minutes in the classroom in the morning session.	I join the whole class for 1 hour in the morning session.	I join the whole class for 2 hours in the morning session.	I join the whole class for activities for a set period.	I join the whole class for the whole morning session.
Attending School: Recess and lunch	I stay in the classroom with my teacher at	I go to the library/ student welfare office/	I go with a friend to the library or designated	I spend 10 minutes in the playground with a	I spend half of each recess or lunchtime	I spend all my recess and lunchtimes in the

routines	recess time.	designated 'spot' etc. during recess/lunch time.	spot at recess/lunch time.	friend and then go to the library/ designated 'spot.'	with a friend in the playground and then go to the library/designated spot.	playground with a friend/s.
Home routine	I don't have an evening or morning routine.	With active 1:1 support from my family, I follow my home routine.  In the evening: e.g., set alarm, packing my bag, and preparing uniform  In the morning: e.g., get up, breakfast, shower	With verbal encouragement and reminders from my family, I follow my home routine.  In the evening: e.g., set alarm, packing my bag, and preparing uniform  In the morning: e.g., get up, breakfast, shower	With one verbal reminder from my family, I follow my home routine.  In the evening: e.g., alarm, packing my bag and preparing uniform  In the morning: e.g., get up, breakfast, shower	I mostly follow my home routine without reminders from my family.  In the evening: e.g., alarm, packing my bag and preparing uniform  In the morning: e.g., get up, breakfast, shower	I follow my home routine independently.  In the evening: e.g., alarm, packing my bag and preparing uniform  In the morning: e.g., get up, breakfast, shower

Focus area	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
Screen Routine	My screen routine takes up more than 5 hours of my day. Before I go to bed, I spend 5-10 minutes without screen contact. I have unlimited access to screens in my bedroom.	My screen routine takes up 4-5 hours of my day. Before I go to bed I spend 10-20 minutes without screen contact. In my bedroom there are screens, but I do not access them between 8pm and 8 am.	My screen routine takes up 3-4 hours of my day. Before I go to bed, I spend 30 minutes without screen contact. In my bedroom there are screens, but I do not access them between the hours of 8pm and after school.	My screen routine takes up 2-3 hours of my day. Before I go to bed, I spend at least 30 minutes without screen contact. There are no screens in my bedroom.	My screen routine involves less than 2 hours of my day. Before I go to bed, I always spend at least 1 hour without any screen contact. There are no screens in my bedroom.	My screen routine involves less than 2 hours of my day. Before I go to bed, I always spend at least 1 hour without any screen contact and read for 1 hour before sleep. There are no screens in my bedroom

## Document Control

<b>Publication date:</b>	February 2021	<b>Review Date:</b>	February 2024
<b>Version number:</b>	v1.5		
<b>Applies to:</b>	All Minarah Staff		
<b>Responsible Review Officer:</b>	Principal/s		
<b>Approved by:</b>	Minarah Board	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	

## Revision History

Version	Revision Description	Revised By	Date
v1.0	Authorised	Jay Halai	February 2021
v1.1	Revised	Davindar Singh with Nicky Sabbadin Manager Regulation, AIS	March 2022
v1.2	Revised (as per NESA Requirements)	Davindar Singh	June 2022
v1.3	Format and Template Change	Davindar Singh	February 2023
v1.4	Format Change	Zeenat Dean	July 2023
v1.5	Format Change	Samina Ali	February 2024