



# SATHYA SAI COLLEGE

*"Character Development with Academic Excellence"*

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## Preface

Sathya Sai College, Ltd. is hereby referred to as 'the College'. In this Policy 'Principal' refers to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal and/or Business Manager.

The School's policies are made in accordance with NESA requirements as per 'Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual: November 2022'.

## Objectives

By implementing this policy, the College aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Continuity of education is maximised for each student.
- The College's expectations and requirements for attendance are clearly articulated and communicated to the College community.
- The College complies with its legal obligations regarding attendance and duty of care.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees, students, and parents/guardians.

## Principles and Commitments

### Regulatory Commitments

In NSW it is a legal requirement that all children between the ages of 6 and 17 years receive schooling. After completion of Year 10 a young person has alternative options to school if they have not reached the age of 17 years. Parents/guardians are responsible for making sure that their children comply with these legal requirements. The College is required to support parents/guardians by monitoring student attendance and helping to address attendance issues when they emerge.

The College is also under a duty of care to prevent harm to students from foreseeable risks. As part of fulfilling this duty of care, the College establishes rules and procedures for student attendance, arrivals and departures.

The Principal 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.

Sathya Sai College will monitor student attendance data and implement intervention strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance of students.

The College has procedures in place to follow up unexplained absences. The College notifies parents and/or guardians of poor school attendance and records unsatisfactory attendance information in the student's files.

The College addresses unsatisfactory attendance and works with parents/guardians and students to improve attendance.

## Attendance

The College regards regular attendance as vital to the continuity of a student's education. As such, it is expected that students attend school regularly and punctually, and that parents/guardians assist students to do so.

All students are expected to maintain an attendance rate of above 85%.

Students are required to attend and arrive punctually to all their timetabled lessons and activities.

Students are expected to be present on the Primary Campus from 8:45 am to 2:55 pm and the Secondary Campus from 8:50 am to 2:50 pm on school days.

## Late Arrivals

Students arriving at the Primary Campus after 8:45 must sign in at the office as a late arrival. Students arriving at the Secondary Campus after 8:50 must sign in at the office as a late arrival. Students arriving after these times will be recorded as a partial absence.

## Planned Absences

Planned student absences (late arrivals, early departures, or absence for a period of the school day) are permitted in certain circumstances. The Principal deems the following as acceptable reasons for a planned absence:

- Doctor's appointment or specialist appointment
- Funerals
- Religious festivals or ceremonial occasions
- Domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member.

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may deem other reasons for absence to be acceptable, and may approve leave where an application by the student's parents/guardians has been made.

Planned absences will be recorded as either partial or full day absences, with the reason for approved absence being noted as 'accepted by the Principal'.

### Early Departures

In the case of planned absences, a student will only be permitted to leave a College campus early when:

- The student has an explanation note for the planned absence, written by the student's parents/guardians; this may be handed in, sent via the Parent Portal or emailed; a verbal explanation from the student's parents/guardians is also acceptable
- The student has been signed out at and collected from the office by her/his/their parents, guardians or proxy if stated in the permission note.

Under no circumstances can one student at the College sign out another student.

Upon return to the College, all students must sign back in at their campus office.

### Exemptions from School Enrolment or Attendance

The Principal may exercise the Minister's delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act in relation to granting and cancelling a Certificate of Exemption from being enrolled or attending school in certain prescribed circumstances.

Where the parents of a student of compulsory school age seeks an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the Principal will process the parent's application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education (*Exemption from School – Procedures*).

An exemption from attendance can only be granted by the Principal and will not be granted retrospectively.

The Principal may grant a full-day exemption for the following reasons:

- Exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate)
- The child being prevented from attending College because of a direction under the *Public Health Act 2010* (NSW)
- Employment in the entertainment industry
- Participation in elite arts or elite sporting events.

The Principal may grant a part day exemption for the following reasons:

- Students participating in elite arts or elite sporting programs (where regular attendance of training is required)
- The requirements of a student's health care plan
- The requirements of school-based programs (e.g. behaviour management transition plans, return to school after injury, reintroduction plan after suspension).

The Principal may grant up to 100 days of full-day and/or part-day exemptions in a twelve-month period for any one student.

Where an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted, the student's attendance will be recorded as either a part or full day absence, with the reason for absence being noted as 'exempted from attending School'.

Parents/guardians may appeal the Principal's decision regarding an attendance exemption. Appeal procedures will comply with the principles of procedural fairness.

## Travel During Term

The College encourages families to take holidays during the school vacation periods. Travel during term is strongly discouraged as it may impact negatively upon a student's continuity of education.

The Principal will only approve travel during school term if she/he/they determine it is in the best interest of the student. If the Principal deems travel during term appropriate, the student's guardians will need to apply for, and be issued with, a *Certificate of Extended Leave*.

Applications for a *Certificate of Extended Leave* must be made to the Principal a minimum of four weeks before the start date of the proposed period of leave. Applications submitted after this time will not normally be considered for approval.

The Principal may place certain conditions on the granting of a *Certificate of Extended Leave*, such as the student adheres to an individual learning program while travelling. The student and their parents/guardians must honour these conditions.

A *Certificate of Extended Leave* will not be issued where the Principal is aware that the student has been the subject of a Child Protection report made to Family and Community Services, or contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit, and for whom unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm remain.

Where a *Certificate of Extended Leave* has been granted, the reason for a student's absence will be recorded as 'accepted by the Principal'. All other absences relating to travel will be recorded as 'unjustified'.

Where the conditions of the *Certificate of Extended Leave* have not been met, the student's attendance will be recorded as an unjustified absence.

## Unplanned Absences

Where a student is absent due to illness or unforeseen exceptional circumstances, an explanation, written and signed by the student's parents/guardians, must be submitted to the College within seven (7) days of the student's absence. Where no written explanation is provided, or the Principal does not accept the reasons provided for absence, the absence will be recorded as 'unjustified'.

## Consequences for Truancy, Lateness & Poor Attendance

When a student is found guilty of truancy, their consequences will be commensurate with the School's Discipline Policy.

When a student's attendance rate drops below 85%, the student and the student's parents/guardians will be required to attend an interview with the Principal and relevant support staff to develop and agree upon an action plan to improve the student's attendance (Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP)). Where a student's absence is due to on-going physical or mental health issues, an individual learning plan (ILP) will be developed in conjunction with/in place of an AIP.

If the student's attendance remains unsatisfactory regardless of the implementation of an AIP, the student and their parents/guardians will be given the option of withdrawing the student's enrolment or attending compulsory attendance conferences with an official conference convenor. Continued poor attendance may result in the issue of compulsory schooling orders and further legal action being taken against the student's parents/guardians.

## Impact of Absences on Course Completion Requirements

The Principal may decide that a student has been sufficiently absent to not satisfy the course completion requirements for Stage 5 or Stage 6 courses. This may result in the student not meeting the eligibility requirements for the award of a Record of School Achievement (RoSA) or a Higher School Certificate (HSC).

Absence during an approved attendance exemption cannot contribute to a non-satisfactory completion decision by the Principal. However, the Principal must arrange for course outcomes to be addressed during planned absence or on holidays.

## Related Legislation

- *Education Act 1990* (NSW)
- *Exemption from School – Procedures*, 2015, Department of Education and Communities (Learning and Engagement Directorate)

- *NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual*

## Roles & Responsibilities

The School Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed for effectiveness and updated on a regular basis.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented through the development and implementation of action plans, procedures and other documentation. The Principal is also responsible for ensuring that these documents are monitored for implementation, reviewed for effectiveness and updated on a regular basis.

## Policy Administration

The policy will be reviewed periodically, or in the event of any information or incident that indicates the need for review, or following any legislative or organisational change.

<b>Attendance Policy</b>	
<b>Policy Version</b>	<b>5</b>
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<b>Date of next review</b>	Any changes to NESA requirements or Legal obligations or within 3 years.