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RAINBOW RIDGE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

The School aims to ensure all students are attending school or accounted for on all scheduled school days. Regular school attendance gives students the best opportunity for education and social well being.

PURPOSE

To describe the policy and procedures that our School uses to ensure accurate and consistent attendance recording, monitoring and follow up.

POLICY

- 1) Rainbow Ridge School maintains a Register of Enrolments in accordance with the [Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools \(NSW\) Manual](#).
- 2) The School monitors the daily attendance of all students at the School and maintains a daily Attendance Register for each class of students, including reasons for student absence.
- 3) Student absences from classes or from the School are identified and recorded in a consistent manner by each class teacher, using the attendance codes approved by the Minister for Education.
- 4) A student may be granted an exemption from attendance/enrolment, or a period of extended holiday, by the Principal in some circumstances, in accordance with section 25 of the *Education Act 1990*.
- 5) Unexplained absences from classes or the school are followed up by phone within 7 days by the clerical officer with the parent or guardian to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- 6) Where a student has a poor record of school or class attendance, or where there is an unexplained absence of three consecutive school days, the Principal shall be informed, who will discuss the matter with the class teacher and make efforts to contact the parents/ guardians.
- 7) Where unacceptable class or school attendance is identified, the Principal will arrange an interview with the parents/ guardians to discuss the attendance issue. Any notes or action taken are recorded, as appropriate, in the Student Management Software (SchoolPro) with any hard copies in the student file.
- 8) Information in the Register of Enrolments and the Attendance Registers is backed up regularly and a copy kept offsite.
- 9) Hard copies of the Register of Enrolments are maintained for at least 5 years before archiving and the Attendance Register is retained for at least 7 years after the last entry was made in respect of a Student.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Register of Enrolments

- 1) The Register of Enrolments is maintained, using the School's Student Management software, by the clerical officer appointed to oversee enrolments (Clerical Officer).
- 2) The School collects the following information on enrolment forms. Information is updated each year:
 - a) Name, age and address of student;
 - b) Name and telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s);
 - c) Date of enrolment; and
 - d) For students over 6 years old, previous school or pre-enrolment situation.
- e) The School also collects information as required by NESA, including parent education levels and employment, student and household primary language and indigenous status.
- f) The Clerical Officer stores the hard copy of the enrolment form in the student file.
- g) When a student leaves the School, their parents complete a Student Exit Form, which provides the following information:
 - i) Date of leaving the school; and
 - ii) The destination of the student after leaving the school.
 - iii) The information is recorded into SchoolPro and the Student Exit Form is stored in the student file.
- h) The Clerical Officer processes the Student Exit Form and transfers the information into the Register of Enrolments. The Clerical Officer stores the hard copy of the exit form in the student folder.
- i) Where the destination of a student is unknown, the Principal will send an email or letter to the Department of Education and Communities officer with home school liaison responsibilities, to notify them of the following information:
 - i) The student's full name, date of birth and last known address;
 - ii) The last date of attendance of the student;
 - iii) Name(s) and contact details of the parent(s)/guardian(s);
 - iv) An indication of the student's possible destination;
 - v) Any other information that may assist officers to locate the student; and
 - vi) Any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parent(s) or student.

Attendance Register

- a) Parents are expected to inform the School of their child's absence on the day of or before the absence, by a written, dated note, by phone, or by coming into the office with the information.
- b) Office staff pass any notification of absences to the teacher in note form.
- c) Class teachers complete roll books each day, which are the Attendance Registers for their class(es). Teachers record any absences in the roll books, as well as reasons for the absence and any documentation to support the reasons for absence.
- d) Attendance data is transferred on a weekly basis into SchoolPro by the clerical officer.
- e) The roll books must be readily accessible.

The Minister's Attendance Codes

- a) It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that teachers have access to the current attendance codes. The attendance codes approved by the Minister, as varied from time to time, can be found on the website of the NSW Association of Independent Schools (AIS). The AIS also sends email newsletters to advise member schools of any changes in these areas.
- b) The Principal regularly instructs teachers at College meetings about how to record absences so that teachers are recording absences consistently.
- c) Teachers use the attendance codes to record:

- i) The reason for a student's absence or the reason for a variation in attendance. A variation in attendance includes the student's attendance at school camps, school excursions or school sporting events.
- ii) The duration of the absence or variation. For example, absent for the whole day ('a') or for part of a day ('Pa'). If absent for part of a day, the time of arrival or departure must be recorded.
- iii) An 'X' symbol to indicate the first and last day that the student attended each term.

Exemptions from Attendance/Enrolment, and Extended Holidays

- a) These Procedures reflect the 'Exemption from School Procedures' published by the NSW Department of Education and Communities ([School Attendance Policy PD 2005 0259](#)). When deciding whether to grant an exemption, the Educational Administrator will refer to this publication.
- b) The Principal has authority to grant exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12-month period for any one student. The Principal may only grant an exemption where it has been clearly demonstrated by the parent(s)/guardian(s) that it is in the child's best interests in the short and long term. The Principal must consider and fully explore alternatives to exemption. For example, the Principal must consider whether it is in the child's best interests to access distance education. The Principal may discuss options with the NSW Association of Independent Schools, to gain their input and guidance where appropriate.
- c) Parent(s)/guardian(s) may make an application for their child's exemption from attendance at school, by completing an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School. A copy is attached at Appendix A.
- d) On receipt of an application for exemption from attendance/enrolment at school, the Principal may grant full-day exemptions due to:
 - (1) Exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate);
 - (2) The child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under the Public Health Act 2010;
 - (3) Employment in the entertainment industry; or
 - (4) Participation in elite arts or elite sporting events.
- e) For any other matter not covered, the Principal must consult with the School Education Director (through NESAs).
- f) On receipt of an application for exemption from attendance/enrolment at school, the Principal may grant part-day exemptions for students participating in school based programs that have been approved by the Director, Public Schools NSW.
- g) If parent(s)/guardian(s) request authority not to enrol their child, the Principal will consider this as an application for exemption from enrolment. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may make an application for their child's exemption from enrolment by completing an Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School ([Appendix A](#)). On receipt of an application, the Principal may grant an exemption from enrolment at school where:
 - (1) A child turns six on or after 1 October and is engaged in accredited pre-school education; or
 - (2) The health, learning or social needs or disability of a child requires the child's continuation in an approved program.
- h) Where the Principal decides to grant an exemption from attendance or enrolment in any of the above circumstances, and having regard to the factors in d) of these procedures, the Principal will complete a Certificate for Exemption under Section 25 of the Education Act, a copy of which is attached at [Appendix B](#). The Principal will provide the Certificate of Exemption to the parent(s)/guardian(s), and also place copies in the student file and in a 'Leave and Exemptions' file.
- i) The Principal must not issue a Certificate of Exemption where child protection issues or risk of harm have been identified. Prior to granting a Certificate of Exemption the Principal will conduct a risk assessment to identify and manage any child protection issues. Where the Principal is aware of existing child protection concerns, the Principal will consult the Director, Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships prior to approval being granted.
- j) If the Principal chooses to decline an application for exemption, a letter will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s), outlining the reasons for the decision. A template letter is attached at [Appendix C](#).

- k) Holidays taken by students outside of school holiday periods are considered as absences, so a Certificate of Exemption cannot be granted for this purpose. However, parent(s)/guardian(s) may complete an Application for Extended Leave – Vacation/Travel, a copy of which is attached at [Appendix D](#). On receipt of such an application, the Principal may complete a Certificate of Extended Leave – Vacation/Travel, where the parent(s)/guardian(s) have demonstrated that the extended leave is in the student's best interests in the short and long term. The Principal may attach conditions to the Certificate where appropriate, such as requirements to complete reading or homework tasks. A copy of the Certificate of Extended Leave – Vacation/Travel is attached at [Appendix E](#). The Principal will provide the Certificate of Extended Leave to the parent(s)/guardian(s), who must produce it when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers. The Principal will place copies of the Certificate on the student file and in a 'Leave and Exemptions' file.

Unexplained Absences

- a) If a student is absent without an explanation, the teacher or delegated office staff member will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone or email to ascertain why the student has been absent and to remind the parent of their responsibilities in relation to their child's attendance at school. The teacher may request the office staff to make this initial contact, and the office staff will make a written note to the teacher, to let them know the outcome of the phone call.
- b) If the office staff member is not able to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone, a letter or email will be sent to them, asking why the child was absent and reminding them to let the school know the reasons each time their child is absent.
- c) All activity is recorded in SchoolPro.
- d) Following a response from the parent(s)/guardian(s), the teacher will report to the College of Teachers and the Principal if there are any significant issues in relation to the absence.
- e) The teacher and/or the Principal make every attempt to address any issues of hindrance for the child attending school.

Poor Attendance Record

- a) If a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) have been unable or unwilling to provide a satisfactory reason, the teacher or the Principal contacts the parent(s)/guardian(s) to:
- (1) Outline the School's and the parent's responsibility in relation to attendance and attach a copy or give website of the document '[Compulsory School Attendance – Information for Parents](#)', published by the NSW Department of Education and Communities, and available on the website of the NSW Association of Independent Schools.
 - (2) Outline the support the School can offer to assist the family in relation to attendance. Such support may include an appointment with the School Support Facilitator.
 - (3) Invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting with the class teacher and Principal, to discuss ways to resolve the situation.
- b) The teacher stores notification on the student file in SchoolPro, and notes of any meeting/s are also saved on the student file. A template letter is attached at [Appendix F](#).

Where a student is absent for 30 days, the Principal will access the mandatory reporters section of the Keep Them Safe website (www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au), to determine whether a report is required.

Unacceptable Attendance Record

- a) Unacceptable attendance is clear when the child is not being given an opportunity to receive the appropriate education.
- b) If the parent(s)/guardian(s) do not respond to the School's correspondence, or co-operate with the School's requests in relation to their child's attendance:

\\server01\Documents\POLICIES & PROCEDURES\Current Policy & Procedures\ADMINISTRATION\Attendance Policy and Procedures1.docx

- c) The Principal will contact Teaching and Educational Standards (NESAs) to notify that the parent(s)/guardian(s) do not appear to have fulfilled their responsibilities in relation to their child's attendance.
- d) The Principal sends a letter, this time by registered mail, which informs the parent(s)/guardian(s) that NESAs has been notified because of the lack of response or co-operation regarding the child's unexplained absence from school. A copy of this letter is stored on the student's file.
- e) In some cases, the Principal will need to forward documentation to the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) officer with home school liaison responsibilities, outlining the student's attendance record, and the efforts made by the School. In this case, the Principal will also advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the DEC has been contacted.
- f) At the end of this process, the Principal will send an email or letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s), notifying them that the child's enrolment at the School is no longer valid.

Storage of Registers

- a) The designated Clerical Officer ensures that the Register of Enrolments in SchoolPro is accurate and complete and backups are made on a regular basis.
- b) The designated Clerical Officer ensures that a photocopy of the Attendance Registers is made at the end of each term, to keep in each class file.
- c) At the end of each term the Attendance Register copies are scanned and stored electronically off site.

Archiving of Registers

- a) The Principal will determine when the Register of Enrolments and the Attendance Registers (roll books) will be disposed of.
- b) The Principal will ensure that the Register of Enrolments will be held in a storage site at the school for at least 5 years and will maintain backup records for the same length of time.
- c) The Principal will ensure that Attendance Registers will be held in a storage site at the school for at least 21 years after the last entry was made and will maintain backup records for the same length of time.

Associated Documents:

Parent Handbook
Enrolment Application Form
Application for Attendance Exemption Form
Application for Extended Leave Form
Exit Interview Forms
and Class Roll books



Application for Exemption from Attendance/Enrolment at School

To be completed by the student's parents

Student Details

Family name: _____ Given name(s): _____

Age: _____ Date of birth: ____ (dd) / ____ (mm) / ____ (year)

Enrolment Registration Number (ERN): _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

School name: _____

Date of exemption applied for: ____ / ____ / ____ to: ____ / ____ / ____

Number of school days: _____

Reason for application for exemption:

Please tick:

Exceptional domestic circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Exceptional Circumstance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direction under Section 42D of the <i>Public Health Act 1991</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment in entertainment industry/participation in elite sporting event for short periods of time i.e. for one or two days, and at short notice	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide more detail about the reason for the application for exemption here:

NOTE: Where the reason for application for exemption includes long term travel arrangements of more than 20 school days, copies of travel documentation should be included with the application.

DETAILS OF PRIOR/CURRENT EXEMPTIONS (if applicable)

Date of prior/current exemption from: ____ / ____ / ____ to: ____ / ____ / ____

Number of school days: _____

Copy of Certificate of Exemption attached: (Please tick one box) Yes No

PARENT DETAILS

Family name: _____ Given name(s): _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____ Relationship to student: _____

As the parent of the above-mentioned student, I hereby apply for a Certificate of Exemption from attendance at school, under the *Education Act 1990*. I understand that if the exemption is granted:

- I am responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption
- the exemption is limited to the period indicated
- the exemption is subject to the conditions listed on the Certificate of Exemption
- the exemption may be cancelled at any time.

I declare the information provided in this application for a certificate of exemption is to the best of my knowledge and belief accurate and complete. I recognise that should statements in this application later prove to be false or misleading any decision made as a result of this application may be reversed. I further recognise that a failure to comply with any condition set out in the exemption may result in the exemption being revoked.

Signature of applicant/s: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

To be completed by the Principal where the exemption period requested exceeds 100 school days and forwarded to the delegate responsible for approval

Prior to forwarding this application for exemption from attendance at school to the delegate responsible for issuing the Certificate of Exemption (See page 4, *Guidelines for Exemption from School*), the Principal should complete the following advice for the delegate.

I recommend that this application from attendance at school is (Please tick one box):

Granted

Not granted

Please provide more detail here (if required):

Principal's name (please print): _____

Telephone number: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Note: Please complete the Certificate of Exemption from Attendance at School if exemption is granted



Certificate for Exemption from Attendance at School under Section 25 of the *Education Act 1990*

STUDENT DETAILS

Family name: _____ Given name(s): _____

Date of birth: ____ (dd) / ____ (mm) / ____ (year)

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

School name: _____ School's telephone number: _____

Date of exemption from: ____ / ____ / ____ to: ____ / ____ / ____

Reason for the exemption:

Conditions of the exemption (note: for a part day exemption the hours of program participation must be specified, including the plan to have the student attend school full time).

It has been explained to the parent of the above-mentioned student that they are responsible for his/her supervision during the period of exemption.

The parent understands that this exemption is limited to the period indicated, acknowledges that the exemption is subject to the conditions listed and that the exemption may be cancelled at any time.

Name of Principal: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Date: ____/____/____

This certificate has been issued without alteration and must be produced when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers



LETTER DECLINING AN APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION

Parent / Guardian Name _____

Address _____

Date _____

Dear _____

You recently applied for a Certificate of Exemption for _____ from attendance / enrolment at school. Certificates of Exemption may be granted when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is necessary or desirable and that alternatives to exemption have been considered. Further, the exemption must be in the student’s best interests in the short and long term.

I have carefully considered your application and I am not satisfied that an exemption from attendance / enrolment is in _____ best interest. My reasons for declining your application are:

If you need further advice on this matter or would like to discuss my decision, please contact the school on (02) 6689 7033 to make an appointment.

You have the right to appeal this decision if you consider that the correct procedures have not been followed or that an unfair decision has been made.

Kind regards

Marga Helms
Principal



Application for Extended Leave – Vacation/ Travel

NOTE: PART A is to be completed by the student's parent and returned to the Principal.

PART A: STUDENT DETAILS

Please complete table below with details of all students associated with the period of travel:

FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	DOB	AGE	GRADE	SRN

Student address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

School name: _____

Dates of extended leave applied for: From: __ / __ / __ to __ / __ / __

Number of school days: _____

Reason for travel: _____

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.

PART A: DETAILS OF PRIOR EXEMPTIONS/ EXTENDED LEAVE – VACATION/ TRAVEL (if applicable)

Date of prior exemption/extended leave: From: __/ __/ __ to) __/ __/ __

Number of school days: _____

Copy of Certification of Exemption/Extended Leave – Travel attached (Please tick) Yes No

PARENTS DETAILS (Applicant/s)

Please print - Parent 1 Family name: _____ Given Name: _____

Parent 1 Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____ Relationship to student: _____

Please print- Parent 2 Family name: _____ Given Name: _____

Parent 2 Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____ Relationship to student: _____

As the parent/s and applicant/s, I hereby apply for a *Certificate of Extended Leave-Vacation/Travel* and understand my child will be granted a period of extended leave upon acceptance by the Lead Teacher of the reason provided.

I understand that if the application is accepted:

- I am responsible for his/her supervision during the period of extended leave
- The provided period of extended leave is limited to the period indicated
The provided period of extended leave is subject to the conditions listed on the *Certificate of Extended Leave-Vacation/ Travel*
- The period of extended leave will count towards my child's absences from school

I declare the information provided in this application is to the best of my knowledge and belief; accurate and complete. I recognise that should statements in this application later prove to be false or misleading any decision made as a result of this application may be reversed. I further recognise that a failure to comply with any condition set out in the *Application for Extended Leave- Vacation/ Travel* may result in the provided period of extended leave being cancelled.

Signature of Parent 1: _____ Date: ____/ ____/ ____

Signature of Parent 2: _____ Date: ____/ ____/ ____

Certificate of Extended Leave – Vacation/ Travel

The student/s whose details appear below has been provided a period of extended leave from school for the purpose of travel.

Note: Where an application is made by a parent with more than one child a separate copy of this Certificate should be placed in each student's file.

STUDENT DETAILS

Please complete table below with details of all students associated with the period of travel:

FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	DOB	AGE	GRADE	SRN

Student address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

School name: _____ School Phone: _____

Dates of extended leave applied for: From: __/__/__ to __/__/__

Number of school days: _____

Reason for providing the period of extended leave – vacation/ travel:

Conditions applicable to providing the period of extended leave – vacation/ travel:

It has been explained to the parent of the above mentioned student/s that they are responsible for his/ her supervision during the period of extended leave.

The parent acknowledges that the period of extended leave is limited to the period indicated and acknowledges that the provided period of extended leave is subject to the conditions listed.

Principal name: _____

Principal signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

This certificate has been issued without alteration and must be produced when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers.



UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE LETTER

Child's name _____ Class _____

Date _____

Dear _____

Your child _____ has not attended school for the last ____ school days.

(Dates: _____)

The school has not received any notification from you regarding your child's absence. Rainbow Ridge School has a responsibility to monitor the daily attendance of all students at the school and a legal obligation to record student absence, including the reasons for student absence.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) also have legal obligations in relation to their child's school attendance, and more information about this is in the enclosed brochure, 'Compulsory School Attendance – Information for Parents,' which is published by the NSW Government.

**Please contact the school office immediately on (02) 6689 7033
to give notice of your child's absence.**

If you wish to speak with your child's teacher or the Principal, please contact the office to request a meeting time.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,