



# ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## Rationale

Novoschool is a progressive high school providing a student centred education and operating within the policies of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for Year 7 to Year 9, with a plan to extend to Year 12.

This policy gives guidance to those within the School community and to those who would join it concerning enrolment criteria and procedures, and attendance. While the policy is as comprehensive as possible, there will inevitably be some situations which are not specifically covered. In such instances, it is the Principal or delegate's responsibility to decide the appropriate course to take in the circumstances.

It is a NESA requirement that all registered schools mark attendance rolls each day for all students. NESA also requires teachers to maintain accurate attendance records for their classes. These records must be maintained according to prescribed NESA standards.

NESA also requires schools to appropriately manage all circumstances of student non-attendance. In doing so, Novoschool will ensure that the safety and wellbeing of each student is considered as a paramount concern whilst also seeking to satisfy the need for NESA compliance.

## Definitions

Throughout this policy, unless the context requires otherwise:

- parents include legal guardians or any other person who has applied to have a child on the waiting list or enrolled at the School and, where the child has only one parent, means that parent.
- disability, in relation to a child, means:
  - (a) total or partial loss of the child's bodily or mental functions; or
  - (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
  - (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
  - (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
  - (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the child's body; or
  - (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the child learning differently from a child without the disorder or malfunction; or
  - (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a child's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour; and
  - (h) includes a disability that:
    - presently exists; or
    - previously existed but no longer exists; or
    - may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
    - is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.



# Enrolment

## Enrolment Process

All enrolments are at the discretion of the Principal or Delegate.

**Step 1:** Parents/carers enquire with the Principal about enrolment at Novoschool.

**Step 2:** Parents/carers are directed to review enrolment procedures on the School's website; if required a hard copy of the Application for Enrolment is made available.

**Step 3:** Parents/carers submit the Application for Enrolment online (there is no application fee).

**Step 4:** Child/(ren) placed on the Novoschool waiting list.

**Step 5:** When a place becomes available, the School undertakes a pre-enrolment interview with parents/carers, the child/(ren) and the Principal or their delegate/s.

**Step 6:** Successful applicants will be contacted by the School and an official offer of placement will be sent.

**Step 7:** Parents accept or decline offers within 7 days. The Acceptance of Offer is complete when the non-refundable Entry Fee has been paid.

Applications are processed in the following order:

- Siblings, children of alumni and staff children;
- Date of application order.

If parents have already indicated specific learning needs, an alternative and/or additional assessment processes will be required.

In considering all prospective enrolments, the School may ask parents to authorise the Principal or delegate to contact:

- (a) the Head of School of the child's previous school to obtain or confirm information pertaining to the child or the child's enrolment;
- (b) any medical or other personnel considered significant for providing information pertaining to the needs of the child; and
- (c) a financial check.

An enrolment may be declined (this includes sibling enrolment) where information obtained by the School suggests:

- (a) a profile of wilful misconduct, illegal activities or strong anti-social behaviours that indicate that the child's enrolment at the School is likely to be detrimental to other students, the staff or the School; or
- (b) the parents may not be able to meet the financial commitment required by having a child at the School.

## Disability

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 ('the Standards') are formulated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). The primary purpose of the Standards is to clarify and make more explicit the rights of students with disabilities and the obligations of providers in relation to:



- Enrolment;
- Participation;
- Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery;
- Student support services;
- Elimination of harassment and victimisation;
- Special provisions for students in assessments and examinations.

The key concept of the Standards is the principle of treating a student with a disability on the same basis as a student without a disability. Achieving this equality involves education providers making adjustments for students with a disability. Only reasonable adjustments are required. An educational provider can be exempt from making an adjustment where it is proven that such an adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship.

Where a child has declared education support needs, or a disability, or other information has come to light indicating a possible need for education support services, or for some measures or actions to assist the child to participate in the School's courses or programmes, or to use the School's facilities or services, the School will make an initial assessment of the child's needs. This will include consultation with the child or the child's parents. In addition, the Principal or delegate may:

- (a) require the parents to provide medical, psychological or other reports from specialists outside the School;
- (b) obtain an independent assessment of the child.

Where information obtained by the School indicates that the child has a disability, the Principal or delegate will seek to identify the exact nature of the child's needs and the strategies required to address them. Having obtained this information, the Principal will determine whether the child, if enrolled, would require some measures or actions to assist the child to participate in the School's courses or programmes or to use the School's facilities or services that are not required by students who do not have the child's disability.

Where the Principal or delegate determines that the child would require some such measures or actions, the Principal or delegate will seek to identify whether those measures or actions required are reasonable in that they balance the interests of all parties affected. In assessing whether a particular measure or action for a particular child is reasonable, the Principal or delegate will have regard to all the relevant circumstances and interests, including:

- (a) the child's disability;
- (b) the views of the child or the child's parents about:
  - whether the particular measure or action is reasonable;
  - the extent to which the particular measure or action would ensure that the child was able to participate in the School's courses or programmes or to use the School's facilities or services on the same basis as a child without the disability;
- (c) the effect of the adjustment on the child, including the effect on the child's:
  - ability to achieve learning outcomes; and
  - ability to participate in courses or programmes; and
  - independence;
- (d) the effect of the particular measure or action on anyone else affected, including the School, its staff and other students;
- (e) the costs and benefits of taking the particular measure or action.

The School will take measures and actions that are reasonable but will not necessarily take measures or actions that are unreasonable or that would impose unjustifiable hardship on the School. In determining whether taking the required measures or actions, even though they are reasonable,



would impose unjustifiable hardship on the School, the Principal or delegate will take into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including:

- (a) the nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by any persons concerned (including other students, staff, the School, the child, the family of the child, and the School community); and
- (b) the effect of the disability of the child; and
- (c) the School's financial circumstances and the estimated amount of expenditure required to be made by the School; and
- (d) the availability of financial and other assistance to the School.

Where the Principal or delegate determines that the enrolment of the child would require the School to take unreasonable measures or actions to ensure that the child is able to participate in the School's courses or programmes, or to use the School's facilities and services, on the same basis as a student without a disability, or would cause unjustifiable hardship, the Principal may decline the offer of a position or defer the offer.

## Relevant Legislation

The School is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the law in this Enrolment Policy. The following is the relevant legislation:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984; amended December 2018
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975; amended December 2015
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 No 48; amended December 2020

These Acts make it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status or race by refusing to enrol them at the School.

## Interview

When a position becomes available, the School will invite the parents of a child on the waiting lists to attend an interview at the School with the Principal or delegate. At the interview, among other things, the School's representative will:

- (a) inform the parents of their responsibility to the School in relation to fees and communication with the school; and
- (b) will seek to establish that the expectations and commitments of the parents are consistent with the vision, values, goals, policies and resources of the School.

## School Rights

The Principal reserves the right not to offer any child a place at the School or to defer the offer of a place to any child in its discretion but particularly when the parents, having been aware of their child's specific educational needs, decline to declare those needs or to withhold relevant information pertaining to their child.

The School also reserves the right to terminate an enrolment where the parents have not declared or have withheld known information pertaining to their child's needs.



## Offer

At the satisfactory conclusion of the assessment process, the School may make an offer to the parents to enrol the child. To accept the offer, the parents must, within seven days of receiving it, deliver to the School:

- (a) the Acceptance Form which includes acceptance by the parents of the current Conditions of Enrolment;
- (b) the non-refundable Entry Fee.

Failure to reply within the required time may result in the position being re-offered where other children are waiting for entry to the School.

## Records

The Register of Enrolments is maintained by the Principal or delegate in print and/or electronic form for a minimum of five years before archiving.

# Attendance Procedures

The principal of Novoschool 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 B7.1 of the NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools Manual.

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

Novoschool will monitor student attendance data and implement intervention strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance of students.

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 the NSW Department of Education.

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 and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances.

## School Hours

School commences at 8:50 am and finishes at 3:10 pm each afternoon.

Students can arrive at school from 7.30 am when there are staff on duty. Students can stay until 5:00pm and will be under the supervision of staff. Novoschool closes at 5:00pm.

## Roll Marking

Rolls are marked each day during check-in. This will normally be completed by 9:30 am each day. Per NESAs requirements, absence notes are archived until a given child reaches the age of 25.

## Absences



A parent can phone, or email the Novoschool Office as soon as possible to explain the absence or send a note of explanation on the student's next day of attendance. The School App may also be used for this service.

Unexplained absences are not acceptable and will be monitored by the Advisory Teacher.

Hardcopy notes and/or notes provided by email are to be collected by the Advisory Teacher or other supervising teacher and given/forwarded to the Novoschool office for entry and archiving.

## Unexcused Absences

Any unexcused absence from school or a class period/activity is recorded and monitored. Parents/carers will be notified initially by text/school app, and then through emails generated by the Novoschool Office.

## Excursions/Camps

Students attending excursions or camps arranged by Novoschool are regarded as present at school. The supervising teacher will mark the roll prior to leaving and the Novoschool office will mark the student present for the remaining time of the excursion.

Teachers who are unable to mark the roll electronically must communicate with the Novoschool office before 10:00am on the day of departure to report any absences.

## Lateness

Students arriving at school after 9:30am must come to the Novoschool office to get their attendance marked. Parents are required to provide a reason for their child's lateness.

A parent can phone or email the school office as soon as possible to explain the lateness or send a note of explanation on the student's next day of attendance.

Parents will be contacted if lateness is habitual.

## Leaving Grounds Early

Students are not permitted to leave Novoschool during school hours without written permission or a phone call from a parent or carer. Students being picked up before the end of school must bring a note from a parent or parents must call/email to school giving consent to leave early and the time they are leaving. Students must go to the Novoschool office to be signed out before leaving. Alternatively, a parent must come to the Novoschool office to sign out their child.

## Unacceptable Patterns of Attendance

If a pattern of poor attendance becomes apparent to the school, parents will be contacted by the teacher to address the problem. In some cases, the AIS will be notified and the school will work with parents and agencies on an attendance plan for the student. Students and parents/carers will be reminded of the legal obligation for students to be attending school unless there is an acceptable reason for being absent.

## Exemptions





Students who will be absent from school for long periods due to reasons other than illness, can apply for an exemption. An exemption prevents the absence from being counted in their tally of absences for the year. The Principal, or delegate, will only approve the absence as an exemption if set criteria is met. If approved as an exemption, the absence is then noted as exemption on the roll. Parents need to discuss potential exemptions with the Principal prior to applying.

## Teacher Responsibilities

The Advisory teacher, in collaboration with the office, is responsible for marking rolls and monitoring issues of lateness and absence.

### Key Tasks

- Mark the roll each morning
- Collect absence and late notes and forward to or communicate with the Novoschool office re: absences (office staff will amend the roll to account for unexplained absences and tidy up issues of lateness and early leave from the previous day.)
- Forward absent notes to the office for archiving at the end of each term.
- Regularly audit the class roll looking for patterns of absence or lateness. Ongoing unexplained absence and lateness will be followed up firstly by the office, with Class Teacher communicating with the respective parents for issues extending into patterns of absence.

## Management of Student Absences

If students are absent from school for one or more days they must bring a note of explanation from their parent/guardian on the first day they return to school or the parent must email/call the school. Notes must include the name of the student, the date of the day/s absent, an explanation for the absence and the name and signature of the parent/guardian. If a note is not submitted to the school within 7 days of returning to school, the absence must be recorded as "Unexplained" on the Class Roll.

All student attendance data is maintained on the school's database which links to Student Reports and other academic records.

The following process is to be followed regarding notification of student absences from school:

### Up to 5 Consecutive or Habitual Days

The office will contact parents/carer when absences are between 3-5 days either consecutive or habitual. Notes are recorded regarding these conversations, including the anticipated return date to school. If communications suggest issues that need attention, the Advisory Teacher will contact the parents/carers to seek solutions.

### Up to 10 Consecutive or Habitual Days

The principal (or delegate) makes phone contact with parents to discuss the absences, either consecutive or habitual. Notes are made regarding the conversation and anticipated return to school dates. Additionally, Attendance Letter No. 1 is sent home.

### Up to 15 Consecutive or Habitual Days



The principal (or delegate) to contact and meet with parents/carers. A Return-to-School Action Plan is discussed and completed with parent/s including proactive/supportive strategies considering the specific wellbeing needs of the given child. In doing so the following must be addressed:

1. Are there wellbeing related reasons for non-attendance?
2. Novoschool to provide support and/or connection to external agencies as appropriate.
3. Wellbeing Plan created/implemented and attached to the student's file.
4. Return-to-School Action Plan attached to student's file.

Additionally, Attendance Letter No. 2 and Back-to-School Plan is sent home to parents/carer.

## 20 Consecutive or Habitual Days

A meeting is arranged between the parents/carers and the Principal to discuss attendance at school and how to move forward. Attendance Letter No. 3 is sent home.

The following actions are taken:

1. Wellbeing Plan updated/implemented and attached to the child's file.
2. Family Referral Service notified.
3. School Liaison Officer Notified.

## 30 Consecutive or Habitual Days<sup>1</sup>

The following actions are taken:

1. Police Liaison Officer notified by Principal, with a visit to follow.
2. AIS notified by the Principal.
3. Attendance Letter No. 4 is sent to family.
4. Wellbeing Plan updated/implemented and attached to the child's file.

## 40 Days

At 40 days, a FaCS report is made. A letter is posted to the family on behalf of the Principal. The student's Wellbeing Plan is updated/implemented and attached to the child's file.

Where absences occur at a habitual level, the following processes are to be followed by the Principal, or their delegate:

1. In the first instance, report the habitual absence to the local NSW Police – School Liaison Program for attention/action.
2. For further assistance/guidance, the support of the AISNSW Student Service Team (office) 02 9299 2845 may also be sought.

## Application for extended school absence

Students may also be approved, in writing, for a period of extended school absence, as per Section 25 of the NSW Education Act (1990) by the Principal, or their delegate.

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<sup>1</sup> Habitually absent is a minimum of 30 days absence within the past 100 school days. However, this is context/age dependent. A range of contextual factors may impact the level of risk and these factors are not necessarily quantifiable. It is not necessary to wait 30 days if the context suggests a more immediate response. (NSW Mandatory Reporters Guide 2013)



An approval of an extended absence from school must be in response to a written application from a parent/carer. Such approval would cover an absence exceeding 10 school days for matters including, but not limited to:

- Travel/bereavement
- Accredited sporting commitments
- Treatment for/recovery from a diagnosed medical condition.

Any such written approval by the Principal, or their delegate, must include a commencement and expiry date for the period of approved absence.

In circumstances where the period of intended school absence exceeds a school term, consideration should be given to other options for education, such as enrolment in Distance Education.

## Leaving School Under 17 Years of Age

As of January 2010, New South Wales has a new school leaving age, meaning students will complete Year 10 and then have a number of options in which to participate until at least age 17.

The options are:

- Attend a school or be registered for home schooling
- Be in approved training or education
- In full time paid employment for over 25 hours per week

Upon deregistering as a student from Novoschool, the destination of the given student/s will be recorded on the school's deregistration forms.

Where the destination of a student below 17 years of age is unknown, the Principal, or their delegate, will notify an NSW Department of Education Officer with home school liaison responsibilities of the following details pertaining to that student/s:

- Full name and date of birth
- Last known address
- Last date of attendance
- Parents' names and contact details
- An indication of a possible destination
- Work, Health and Safety risks associated with contacting the parents/student
- Any other information that may assist the officers to locate the student