



# ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE

## STUDENT APPLICATION FOR LEAVE FOR TRAVEL OR EXEMPTION FROM ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Introduction and Purpose

The College recognises the need and requirement for all students to be at school during term time as it is bound by current legislative requirements around Leave from school and Exemptions from Attendance. From 2015, under changes to the legislation, **any family holiday taken during term time will be counted as absence** unless there are exceptional unavoidable circumstances as defined by the criteria below:

- Funeral of a close family member e.g. grandparent, parent, sibling
- Religious ceremony such as rites of initiation or wedding of an immediate family member e.g. grandparent, parent, sibling
- Travel associated with elite sport, State or Federal representation, or extension programs

Additionally, students at the College already enjoy generous holiday periods throughout the year. However, the College also recognises that there are circumstances where it may be necessary for parents to request time away from school (leave) for their children. The following outlines the process for applying for, and providing evidence of, Leave/Exemption.

### Processes

- Requests for leave for a period of up to **one or two days** should be directed in writing to the Director of the Junior School or the relevant Year Coordinator.
- Requests for leave **greater than two days** should be directed in writing to the Director of Wellbeing, accompanied by the "*Application for Leave from School*" form.
- Parents may request leave for their son of **up to SEVEN school days**. Approved leave greater than this amount would only be granted in the rarest of circumstances.
- Where requests for leave for these periods are made for family travel, families should demonstrate some cultural or family significance for such leave. Leave requests for general holidays should not be made. All absences from the College for leave for travel will be marked on attendance registers as Code 'L' and will be counted in attendance statistics.
- Requests for leave for travel should in normal circumstances be made **at least FIVE weeks** in advance. The College reserves the right to decline requests made under this time frame.
- Families may seek leave **up to TWICE** in during their son's enrolment at the College. Further leave would only be granted in the rarest of circumstances.
- Parents should not ordinarily request leave or an exemption from attendance for their son where it conflicts with major College events (e.g. Assessment Blocks, whole College liturgies, Speech Night, Founder's Day, sports carnival or other significant events). Parents are encouraged to

consult the College Calendar or seek advice from their son's Year Coordinator prior to making travel arrangements.

- Parents who do not work with the College according to the details contained in this policy may have unapproved leave recorded as unjustified by the College and may place their son's ongoing enrolment at the College in question. If Leave/Exemption has not been granted, and a student misses an Assessment Task, a mark of zero will be recorded.
- When processing the application for leave request, the following will be taken into consideration- the student's overall attendance rate, previous periods of leave, potential impact on learning and assessments, behaviour record, co-curricular involvement, the family's financial status at the College. The Director of Wellbeing will liaise with key members of staff prior to finalising the application.
- The College reserves the right to decline Applications for Leave or Exemption from Attendance. The Principal, when necessary, will make direct decisions in relation to student leave or exemptions and has the final decision in relation to all student leave or exemption from attendance matters.
- If leave is approved a Certificate of Extended Leave will be issued and emailed to parents. Parents will also be notified by email if leave is not approved.
- A copy of all Leave documents will be kept in the student's file. The copy of the Certificate of Extended Leave is to be kept by parents in case it is requested by border control or other authorities.

An Application for a Certificate of Exemption is still required for all non-holiday related requests for Leave. These include:

- exceptional domestic circumstances
- other exceptional circumstances – for example, a specialist appointment that cannot be made any other time;
- direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act, 1991
- participation in elite sports or elite arts programs
- employment in the entertainment industry
- school representation in a sporting, cultural or educational event

Parents need to submit an **Application for Exemption from Attendance at School** form to the Director of Wellbeing for approval at least 2 weeks prior to the requested Exemption period. If the reason for requesting an exemption is in keeping with the requirements under the Education Act and considered to be in the student's best academic interests, the Director of Wellbeing (after consultation with key staff) will accept the request and an Exemption will be granted and the absence will be recorded as "L" (Leave/Absence). If the request for an Exemption or Leave is declined and the student is absent, it will be recorded as "A" (Unexplained or Explained but Unjustified Absence).

The "*Application for Leave from School*" and "*Exemption from Attendance*" forms can be found on the College's website.