



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Related Documents | College Assessment Policy Student Academic Guide |
| Policy Review | This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or as needed in line with legislative changes. |
| Implementation Date | February 2026 |
| Last Review Date | February 2026 |
| Constructed / Reviewed by | St Philip's Christian College Cessnock |
| Approved By | Matthew Connett (Principal) |
| Date | February 2026 |

1 General Statement

St Philip's Christian College Cessnock (**the College**) is committed to providing a safe, respectful learning environment that is inclusive and supportive for all students.

Regular school attendance is vital for students' academic achievement, personal development, and social engagement. Students are expected to attend school on a regular basis, however the College recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where extended leave during term time is necessary.

Students are encouraged not to take unnecessary leave during term time. Regular attendance is essential for academic progress and participation in school life.

2 Scope

This policy applies to students enrolled at St Philip's Christian College Cessnock. A Year 12 student is considered to be enrolled until the first business day after the HSC exam period concludes.

This policy outlines the circumstances under which students may be granted Principal's Approved Leave during term time, and the conditions associated with such leave.

3 Definition

Principal's Approved Leave refers to leave granted at the discretion of the Principal (or their delegate) for circumstances not otherwise covered by other leave categories (i.e illness, funeral etc.)

Principals, or their nominated delegate, have the authority to approve leave for students in special circumstances, such as illness, misadventure, or representative activities. The Principal must be satisfied that the leave is justified and that the student will not be disadvantaged

academically. Supporting documentation may be requested. The granting of Principal's Approved Leave does not set a precedent and does not automatically apply to all future requests.

4 Alignment with NESA Requirements

The College's approach to Principal's Approved Leave is consistent with the guidelines set by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). Students seeking Principal's Approved Leave must submit a formal request with supporting documentation for consideration by the Principal. Approval of leave does not automatically entitle students to extensions or alternative assessment arrangements; any adjustments to assessment tasks will be managed in accordance with the College's published assessment policy. All absences and related documentation will be recorded and retained as required by NESA. Students and families should be aware that prolonged or frequent absences may affect eligibility for the Record of School Achievement (ROSA) or Higher School Certificate (HSC), and in such cases, the College may be required to notify NESA. It is the responsibility of students and families to ensure all procedures are followed to maintain compliance with both College and NESA requirements.

5 Eligibility for Principal's Approved Leave

Principal's Leave requests are typically longer than a 5-day period.

Principal's Approved Leave may be granted only in the following exceptional circumstances:

- **Representative Commitments:** Where a student is required to participate in a representative event and rescheduling is not possible.
- **Compassionate Leave:** To respond to serious illness or bereavement of an immediate family member.
- **Special Circumstances:** Special circumstances leave is intended for situations where students are unable to attend school due to events beyond their control. This type of leave is reserved for significant reasons such as representing the school or region in sporting events or responding to serious illness or bereavement within the immediate family. It is not designed for routine absences or holidays, but rather for exceptional cases where attendance at school is genuinely not possible.

6 Exclusions

Holiday's during term time will not typically be considered grounds for Principal's Approved Leave.

7 Attendance Record

Approved Principal's Leave requests are recorded on TASS as 'Accepted by Principal Special'.

If Principal's Approved Leave is declined, and leave is still taken, it is reported on TASS as "Parent Declared Absence."

The granting of Principal's Approved Leave does not constitute an exemption from attendance under the Education Act.

8 Notification Timelines

Principal's Approved Leave requests must be submitted for consideration (*except in the case of extenuating/emergency circumstances) no later than:

- **Two** months (8 weeks) prior to the intended date of leave for Stages 4, 5 and 6 (Year 7 – Year 12).
- **One** month (4 weeks) prior to the intended date of leave for Stages 1, 2 and 3 (Kindergarten – Year 6).

If notification is not received within this timeframe, the College is not obligated to make any changes or modification to assessment requirements, and students are expected to meet all original assessment deadlines.

*Extenuating circumstances will be considered at the discretion of the Principal or their delegate (e.g – family medical emergency)

9 Application Process

Parents/Carers must submit and application by completed the College *Principal's Approved Leave Application Form* for leave in advance, outlining the reason and providing supporting documentation where applicable.

The online form will be available via the Parent Portal on MySPCC iLearn or also using the link below in Appendix 1.

The Principal will review each application and determine eligibility based on the criteria above.

Leave requests may be denied under the following circumstances (not exhaustive):

- Late application
- High absence rate
- Impact on educational outcomes and assessment program
- Length of leave request
- Previous approved Principal's Leave in the same calendar year

Students are advised to begin working on any assessment's tasks assigned before taking leave, as they will likely still be required to submit these tasks via iLearn, even if their leave is approved.

10 Communication of Outcome

The Principal's Approved Leave outcome will be communicated via email from the Front Office Administrator to relevant parents, administrators, Heads of School, Directors of Studies and Curriculum Office.

Directors of Studies will then communicate with the relevant student and their family regarding any assessment adjustments if applicable.

11 Assessment Responsibilities and Requirements for Approved Principal's Leave

Students are expected to meet their responsibilities regarding all assessment tasks and exams.

The conditions of leave will specify the student's assessment requirements.

Students are generally required to digitally submit hand-in assessments, where possible, while on leave.

For in-class assessment tasks, alternative arrangements or a moderated mark may be provided.

Should Principal's Approved Leave be granted, the College will be unable to accept requests for appeal or extension for the loss of preparation time of any assessment task during or after the leave has occurred.

Students are responsible for determining any coursework they will miss during their leave and ensuring all missed work is completed after they return. Teachers are not responsible for providing any additional work or resources beyond what is already made available to all students in the classroom.

If Principal's Leave is granted, teachers are not obligated to provide assessment tasks to students in advance or to create alternative tasks to be completed prior to travel.

Any assessment tasks, whether the due date remains unchanged or is adjusted to reflect the approved leave, will be managed in accordance with the College Assessment Policy. The specific procedures, expectations, and penalties are detailed in the individual Student Academic Guides, ensuring consistency and fairness for all students.

12 Unapproved Leave

Should Principal's Leave be denied, the student's published assessment dates will remain unchanged and stand as per their original assessment notification. Students are expected to complete all assessment tasks by the scheduled deadlines, and standard penalties for late or missed submissions will apply as outlined in the assessment policy.

13 Communication Regarding Assessment Adjustments

The relevant Director of Studies will provide clear communication to students regarding their assessment requirements during any period of approved leave. This communication will outline expectations for the completion or submission of assessment tasks, any alternative

arrangements, and relevant deadlines. Students and families are responsible for reviewing and adhering to these instructions to ensure academic requirements are met during their absence.

It is the responsibility of the student and their family to communicate with teachers regarding assessment requirements and to ensure all work is completed as per the conditions of leave.

14 Review

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and in line with NESA requirements.

15 Appendix

[Principal's Approved Leave Application Form](#)