

PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL FREE DAY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL) is committed to the effective use of pupil free days to support schools in their educational endeavours and in the delivery of expert teacher practice ensuring exemplary outcomes for all students in Catholic primary schools in the Diocese of Sale.

The approval for pupil free days is considerate of:

- student attendance research ensuring optimum opportunity for students to engage in meaningful learning at school
- professional learning and development opportunities for school staff
- parent expectations of schools
- local school circumstances.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 2.1 provide an evidence-based and consistent approach to pupil free days.
- 2.2 assist in decision making processes for improving expert teacher practice.
- 2.3 ensure consistent organisational practice within and across schools in relation to the practice of pupil free days.
- 2.4 provide clarity of expectations in relation to actions taken by schools.

3.0 PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Each year primary schools are approved to undertake up to eight pupil free days for the purposes of: professional learning and development, school planning and administration, curriculum development, and, student assessment and reporting.
- 3.2 Pupil free days assist the successful implementation of school and DOSCEL improvement priorities.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Pupil free days are full or half days on which learning programs are not offered to students during the gazetted school term dates.
- 4.2 Days excluded from this definition are half days at the end of a term where students are impacted by the government provided bus service. Schools must ensure alternate supervision arrangements are made for students who do not use the government provided bus service.

5.0 REQUIREMENTS

The following guidelines provide direction in relation to the nomination of pupil free days:

- 5.1 Up to eight pupil free days, within term dates can be allocated within a school year.
- 5.2 Approval of all pupil free days is the responsibility of the Deputy Director: Catholic Identity, Leadership, Learning and Teaching (the Deputy Director).
- 5.3 All pupil free days are to be clearly aligned to the DOSCEL Strategic Plan and the school's improvement agenda as articulated in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). The timing and focus for pupil free days will be determined by the school.
- 5.4 Primary schools within the Diocese of Sale will dedicate a day to meeting CIRE outcomes as articulated in the SIP/AIP.
- 5.5 Schools may collaborate to address professional learning needs.

6.0 TERM DATES

- 6.1 The school terms for DOSCEL schools are contained in the attached Proposed Pupil Free Day Template

7.0 PROCEDURES

- 7.1 Requests for pupil free days are to be submitted on the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Ltd template provided to schools during Term 3 of the previous year and be submitted for approval by Friday of Week 3 of Term 4 each year.
- 7.2 Schools will receive formal approval, from the Deputy Director for all pupil free days.
- 7.3 Any proposed changes to approved pupil free days, including change of dates must be approved by the Deputy Director.
- 7.4 Based on local circumstances, and through consultation with the Deputy Director, schools may request additional pupil free days.
- 7.5 To support families with arranging alternate supervision for students, notification of pupil free days should be communicated to parents after Deputy Director approval and prior to the conclusion of the current school year.
- 7.6 Where a school requests a change to an approved pupil free day and this approval is granted, the school must ensure early notification of this change to parents.
- 7.7 All proposed pupil free days, and proposed early finishes, are to be submitted on the template provided.

8.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 8.1 All primary schools will have a consistent start and finish date aligned with the gazetted school year.
- 8.2 All primary schools will have access to the same number of pupil free days.
- 8.3 Schools are supported in their educational endeavours.

9.0 REVIEW

Implementation Date: July 2020

Updated: September 2024

Review Date: September 2025

Proposed Pupil Free Days [Year]

Name of School _____

Town _____

2023 Term Dates	Start Date	Finish Date
Term 1		
Term 2		
Term 3		
Term 4		

Date	Focus	Purpose/Rationale/ Link to AIP
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Early finish dates and times for students on local government provided bus services		
Date	Early Finish Time	Arrangements for students who cannot be collected early

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

***All schools are required to email the completed Pupil Free Day template by [date] to:
[Name] - [Email Address]***

Office use only	
DOSCEL Approval	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Deputy Director's Signature	_____ Date _____