

While parents retain parental responsibility for their children up to the age of 18, it is generally accepted that as children become older and more mature, they are more capable of making their own decisions about a wide range of issues.

There is no specific law about when a child is considered sufficiently mature and responsible to make his or her own decisions about welfare and educational matters. However, case law has established a set of principles that are to be used in considering whether a child is a "mature minor".

This table identifies when students may provide consent that is ordinarily required of parents/guardians.

When	then the student may
a student is 18 or over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide their own consent as they are considered an adult
<p>a principal agrees, based on being satisfied that: the student (usually over 15):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is living separately and independently from parents/ guardians is unable or unwilling to obtain parental consent has sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to make up their own mind about the issue parent/guardian consent may be difficult or inappropriate to obtain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sign enrolment forms enter into agreement with the school about such things as the purchase of educational and school materials including text books and stationary participate in outdoor education activities pay for required curriculum options and camp/excursion expenses consent to medical treatment. <p>Note: If the principal does not believe the student has sufficient understanding to provide their own consent, the principal must make a report to the Department of Human Services.</p>

At Wodonga Senior Secondary College, 18 year old Students who wish to sign their own permission as required need to submit the attached application to the Principal.

Independent Students

To ensure the safety, effective management and support of students, Wodonga Senior Secondary College requires Independent Students to nominate a responsible adult who can be contacted and relied upon to act in the interests of the student and the support of the school. Enrolment is dependent on such an adult being nominated and accepting responsibility for the above.

In line with Department of Education guidelines parental consent is required in a range of circumstances throughout a student's schooling, for example; participation in school camps and excursions. These requirements do not apply to adult students (eighteen years of age and older) who are living independently and who should complete and sign their own forms.

In situations where a student is under the age of eighteen years and is living separately and independently from parents/guardians, the consent of parents/guardians may be inappropriate or may be difficult to obtain. In such circumstances, where the Principal is satisfied that:

- The student is living separately and independently from parents/guardians and other guardians, **and**
- The student is unable to obtain the required parental consent, **or** is unwilling to approach their parents/guardians, **and**
- The student has sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up their own mind on the issue in question (such student will generally be fifteen years and over),

The student may:

- Sign enrolment forms and
- Enter into agreements with the school about such things as the purchase of educational and school material, including textbooks and stationery, and the payment for required curriculum options and camp/excursion payments.

In relation to medical treatment and participation in outdoor education activities, including camps and excursions, these students may give effective consent if fully comprehending the nature and consequences of whatever is proposed, without requiring the consent of parents/ guardians. In these cases, the consent forms may require amendment.

A report to the Department of Human Services should be made where a student does not appear to have sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up their own mind on the issue in question.

Consequently independent student status may be recognised by Wodonga Senior Secondary College when,

- Students are able to establish to the satisfaction of the Principal that they are independent students and capable of making up their own mind on the issues in question. Evidence in support of this may include the above or:
- Students have been recognised by the relevant authority as homeless and are receiving appropriate allowances.
- Parents (both mother and father) and / or guardians make it clear to the school (usually in writing) that their child no longer is in their care and thus lives independently. The child must be living independently of the parents or other guardian in this situation.

or

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) state in writing the status of their child, indicating that they wish the school to have no further contact with them.

Independent Students and the School Processes

An independent student is expected to follow all the same school rules and procedures as dependant students, however, the independent student may;

- Write their own notes for excursions and school activities
- Write their own notes for absences and have them approved by the Student Services Coordinator, Principal Class or House Leader. Absences must be deemed reasonable and necessary considering the individual student's circumstances and should be supported by evidence where possible (medical certificate). Independent students must not accumulate more than five unapproved absences per term or Youth Allowances penalties will apply, see *attendance policy 421*.
- Independent students may have an adult advocate support them in place of parents if appropriate and desired by the student
- Keep the School informed of their current address **AND** emergency contact person.
- Where discipline and /or welfare issues arise, a responsible adult must be nominated to act in support of the student and liaise on their behalf with the school.

Independent Students aged 18 and above.

Whilst an Independent Student aged 18 is permitted by Victorian Law to gain a driver's licence and therefore transport others in their vehicle, the Department of Education Employment and Training and Wodonga Senior Secondary College **do not** permit students of the school to drive other students in their vehicles. This is a school and Department policy and rule and should it be breached, strong discipline action will be taken. Such action will apply to any driver or passenger who is a student of Wodonga Senior Secondary College.

DOWNLOAD [Application for Special Exemption In Lieu of Parent Signature](#)