



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Rationale

The aim of this policy is to encourage regular attendance at school by all students. For students to succeed at school and to achieve their potential, research evidence points to the need for them to consistently attend their scheduled classes, to be punctual to school & classes, and to actively engage in required work. The policy will apply to all students of the College.

## Guiding principles

- The efforts and work of students when they successfully complete a year level should be rewarded and recognised through their reports and promotion to the next year level.
- The policy is to be read in conjunction with the College's other policies, especially the Promotion Policies at Years 9, 10 and 11.

## Specific aims

- To promote positive attendance behaviours in all students & parents/guardians,
- To improve student learning outcomes,
- To promote punctuality,
- To lift the expectations placed upon all students,
- To clearly differentiate between legitimate and non-legitimate absences from class and school, and
- To ensure consistent policy & practice in relation to recording, monitoring & improving attendance & punctuality across the whole College.

## Attendance requirements

- Students are required to attend school and all classes, except where compelling legitimate and serious reasons prevent such attendance.
- All students, at all levels, must maintain at least a 90% attendance rate in order to enable their promotion to the next year level.
- At Years 7 and 8 the 90% is determined by total number of days at school.
- At Years 9 to 12 it is determined by 90% attendance in each subject or unit of work.

Exemptions or variations to this policy may be made for students with special circumstances (see Applications for Exemptions, Page 2).

## Implications of not meeting requirements of this policy

- If, due to excessive absences, a student does not comply with this policy, an interview will be held with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the strategies to improve future attendance and/or pathway options available to the student for the following year.
- Students who do not achieve a 90% attendance rate will be deemed not to have satisfactorily completed the year level or subject/unit of work.
- At Years 7 & 8 this may result in the student not being promoted to the next year level.
- At Years 9 to 11, this policy will impact upon the student's ability to pass units and ultimately on their ability to be promoted to the next year level.
- At Year 12, this policy will impact upon the ability of students to pass units and ultimately on their ability to gain their VCE/VET/VCAL certificate.

## Types of absences and their impact on these requirements

Absences of all types - parentally approved, unapproved, suspensions and truancy - will normally count towards the overall school absences (see below for some key exceptions). Parents/guardians will be expected to formally notify the College by phone or in writing of an absence and the reasons for this absence.

Key exceptions to this policy include:

- Medically certificated absences. Certificates must be submitted to the College within 3 school days of the student returning to school. The College reserves the right to verify the authenticity of medical certificates.
- Extended family holidays. Parents/Guardians are required to consult with and notify in writing the Sub-School Team ahead of time of any such holiday arrangements. At this consultation any possible promotion implications will be discussed with the family of the student. Whilst absent from the College, students will be expected to complete work as set by their teachers. Parents/Guardians of students in Years 10, 11 and 12 should be particularly aware of the possible effect on a student's ability to meet the course requirements. At Year 10, holidays of longer than four weeks and at Years 11 and 12, holidays longer than two weeks of class time per semester would be of concern.
- Major religious and cultural events.
- College sanctioned activities. (These include activities such as: interschool sport, music lessons, College productions and performances, excursions, camps, work placements, student meetings, counselling, community involvement activities and other activities as determined by the Principal.) The College will make the final decision on what activities can be part of this group.

Note:

1. The types of absences listed above are not counted as absences affecting the satisfactory completion of a subject/unit or year level.
2. Students will be expected to catch up on the work missed through these absences as determined by their classroom teacher.
3. In order to meet the 90% attendance requirement, students can only be absent for a maximum of 9 days per semester without a medical certificate.

## **Absence Notification via SMS**

- Families are expected to notify the school of a student absence by contacting the school to record student absences before 10.30 am on the morning of the absence.
- The College will notify families via an SMS message if a student has been recorded for one or more periods absent without an explanation.
  - Notifications will be sent at 11.30 am and 4.00 pm
- Families are required to reply to these messages to notify the school of the reason for the absence.
- Families that do not reply will be contacted by the Year Level Coordinators to discuss the student's absence.

# Punctuality and Lateness

All students are expected to arrive on time for school and for all classes. Habitual lateness, like absences, has a negative effect on student learning.

The following consequences will apply to students who do not meet the expectations in relation to punctuality:

Lateness Record	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>ST</sup> LATE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinator warning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2<sup>ND</sup> LATE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student receives a lunch time detention – 12.45 PM- 1.10 PM</li> <li>Sub Schools to contact home by phone</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3<sup>RD</sup> LATE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student receives after school detention - 3.15 PM -3.45 PM</li> <li>Sub Schools to contact home</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4<sup>TH</sup> LATE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student receives after school detention - 3.15 PM -3.45 PM</li> <li>Student is placed on an 'Attendance Sheet' for two weeks</li> <li>Sub School to contact Parent/Guardian (via meeting where possible)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: for all subsequent detentions students will receive an after school detention - 3.15 PM - 3.45 PM</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5<sup>TH</sup> LATE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent contact/meeting by SSL or PCO</li> <li>Strategies discussed –suspension if appropriate</li> </ul>

## Applications for Exemptions

- The College, at its discretion, and only in exceptional circumstances, may grant exemptions to this policy.
- A student who has experienced exceptional circumstances, may, with support from their parent/guardian, apply for exemption to this policy. Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to, significant illness and significant social or emotional difficulties.
- Such an application must be made in writing to the Sub School Leader.
- The Sub School Leader, in consultation with a member of the Principal Class and any other relevant staff, makes the decision regarding the approval of applications for exemption.

## Appeal Process

- A student, with support from their parent/guardian may appeal a decision regarding satisfactory completion of a year or a subject/unit in relation to attendance.
- All such appeals should be made by formal approach to the Principal or Assistant Principal who will consider the reasons for the appeal and any other submitted documentation including medicals or other certificates and letters of support.
- The Principal or Assistant Principal may convene a panel made up of senior staff to consider the application. This panel can seek additional information from the student, any teachers, the Sub School Team and other relevant persons.
- The student and their parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the result of the appeal process.
- Students who are living independently may, if they wish, call on an advocate, from either within or external to the College to support them in this matter.

## Summary of Expectations in Relation to this Policy

### **Students are expected to**

- attend school and all scheduled classes,
- arrive on time to school and to every class,
- provide a note from their parent/guardian when they have been absent from school,
- after an absence, catch up on any work missed or complete any alternative set work,
- tell their classroom teachers of their involvement in College sanctioned activities that will result in their absence from class,
- students who are living independently must notify the Sub School Team of any absences and the reasons for those absences.

### **Parents/Guardians are required to**

- ensure that their child attends school at all times,
- ensure that their child is on time for school each day,
- notify the College by phone, or in writing, of the reason for any absence as soon as possible on the first day of any absence,
- where appropriate, provide the College with medical certificates explaining absences,
- notify the College in writing of the dates of any extended holiday that will cause their child to be absent from school,
- support their child's learning during continued or prolonged absences,
- work cooperatively with the school to improve their child's attendance where the reasons for absences have been deemed unsatisfactory by the school,
- ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date,
- where necessary, take an active part in this Policy's interview, exemption and appeal processes.

### **Teachers will**

- monitor accurately and record student attendance on COMPASS for every class, including extras,
- complete attendance rolls on time throughout each day:
  - i.e. Period 1 & 2 - by 11.00 am
  - Period 3 & 4 - by 1.30 pm
  - Period 5 & 6 - by 3.30 pm
- provide appropriate work for students during prolonged absences as requested by Year Level Coordinators,
- if a student is missing a number of lessons, advise the Year Level Coordinator, to ensure that the matter is being addressed by the College's attendance processes,
- towards the end of a unit/subject, consult with the Year Level Coordinator to ascertain if a student who has above 10% absence has legitimate reasons for those absences,
- record the student's subject or unit result as unsatisfactory (N) if their attendance is below 90%.

### **Year Level Coordinators and Sub School Leaders will**

- monitor overall student attendance and keep accurate attendance rolls. These rolls should include appropriate absence codes, and entry & exit dates,
- follow up all individual cases of student absence and lateness promptly and consistently, and implement appropriate monitoring and support strategies,
- contact the parent/guardian about student absences within 24 hours of the absence,
- if, for any reason, the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, follow up the absence with the student on their return,
- in cases of extended unexplained absences (more than 3 days), send a letter requesting an explanation to the parent/guardian,
- in consultation with the Student Wellbeing Team, establish a Student Support Group to ensure a coordinated response to individual students' attendance problems, and make appropriate referrals to community agencies for additional support as required,
- develop a Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time,
- notify the parent/guardian in writing and arrange an interview with the student's parent/guardian if the student's attendance pattern is becoming a concern,
- inform parents of the possible consequences on satisfactory completion of extended student absence due to family holidays or "parent choice",
- conduct interviews with students and their parents/guardians who do not meet the school's attendance and promotion requirements to discuss the students' pathway options,

- monitor and analyse Sub School attendance records on a regular basis at Sub School teams & Sub School Leaders' meetings and use Case Management Monitoring Tools to identify and provide support for students at risk of poor attendance,
- contact families regarding late attendance to school and classes as outlined in the punctuality table on page 3,
- maintain accurate student and family contact details.

**The school will:**

- promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations to parents/guardians, students and staff,
- promote awareness through assemblies, posters, staff meetings and newsletters, that absence results in lost learning time and opportunities,
- ensure whole-school modelling of punctuality to school and classes,
- ensure accurate and timely recording of attendance by staff in each class each day,
- maintain accurate attendance records on Compass & Cases21, and ensure the prompt processing of all student transfers,
- send SMS text messages daily if a student has been recorded for one or more periods absent without an explanation,
- organise emailed reports to be sent to parent/guardian on a weekly basis for any unexplained absences and lateness to school or classes,
- monitor and analyse school attendance records to ensure the early identification of, and provision of targeted support for, students at risk of poor attendance and disengagement from school,
- develop and maintain collaborative partnerships with parents and community agencies to promote positive attendance,
- ensure that the school's processes & policies for dealing with student attendance are coordinated and consistently implemented across the school.

**Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...	
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