

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**RATIONALE**

The *Education and Training Reform Act (2006)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations (2017)* require that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Director.

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find ‘catching up’ difficult. Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.

**AIMS**

To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

• Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find ‘catching up’ difficult.

• Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.

• All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.

• Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, whereas social activities are not.

**Parent Responsibility**

Parents have a **legal** responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and that children are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
Parents have a further responsibility to communicate a message to the school on or before 9:15am on the day of the absence explaining why an absence has occurred.
Parents have a responsibility to provide the school with a **doctor’s certificate for a child’s absence in excess of 3** **days.**Parents have a responsibility to notify the Principal via email advising of an upcoming child absence due to holiday outside of term break.

**Teachers**

• Student attendance and absences are to be recorded via nForma, both in the morning (before 9:00 am) and in the afternoon (before 2:15 pm) by the classroom teachers.

• Specialist teachers are to record attendance and absences when they are responsible for students at the above times.

• Classroom teachers are required to develop and maintain positive and open relationships with parents around matters concerning non-attendance.

• Classroom teachers are required to submit concerns to the Principal where a child has missed more than 5 days across the school year with unapproved absences.

• Classroom teachers are required to submit concerns in nForma Wellbeing Case management.

**School Administration Staff**

• Administration staff must check nForma responses daily at 9:30 am for student absent notes and reasons given, before making contact with parent / carer via telephone call or text message.

• Administration staff must notify either Principal or Deputy Principal if absence is unexplained or not considered valid.

• Administration staff to check and record late and early departures and record whether these are approved or unapproved according to the criteria in the Student Attendance Policy. If in doubt administration staff should discuss the rating of approved or unapproved with the Principal or Principal delegate.

• Administration staff will print out student reports each semester, detailing student absence figures, as explained and unexplained.

**Principal and Principal delegates**

• If absence is recorded but no communication has been submitted to the school by the parent, / carer, then a follow up phone call or text message will be sent to individual parents / carers requesting an explanation for absence.

• If there is no response to the follow up call or text message sent to the parent then the Principal or Principal Delegate will call the parent directly to locate the whereabouts and reason for absence. If contact cannot be made with the primary carers, the school will contact the emergency contacts. If no contact can be made with the above, then the school will take into consideration the context of the family situation before seeking further advice from Catholic Education Melbourne as to the next course of action.

•  If the Principal or Principal Delegate identifies a student as having missed more than 5 days with unapproved absences, then the Principal will write a letter requesting a meeting to discuss the issues with attendance.

• The Principal and/ or Principal Delegate will arrange a meeting time to discuss the issues and will discuss issues and possible strategies to improve the student’s attendance. Minutes will be taken at this meeting, regarding agreed actions and strategies.

• Attendance meetings with parents and students should be convened following initial contact with the parents when a student's attendance is of concern to the school. The purpose of the meeting is to develop attendance improvement strategies to support the student and to examine why non-attendance continues to be a problem.

• At the first meeting, the principal or nominee should focus on:

• establishing a shared understanding of accountability and strategies for improving attendance ensuring parents are aware of the absences and fully appreciate the educational implications for the student identifying the reasons for the absences exploring any factors preventing attendance or participation
• requesting parents engage with alternative strategies to improve attendance
• identifying appropriate attendance improvement strategies
• documenting which improvement strategy has been selected, with clear discussion about the ways in which it will be monitored and when it will be reviewed
explaining the possible consequences of repeated non-attendance, including referral to the Student Well Being Unit at CEM

*Meetings with parents of students with attendance issues should feel supportive rather than disciplinary, with a focus on positive and proactive solutions.*

**Catholic Education Melbourne**

• Aggregated attendance data will be communicated to the Catholic Education Office.

• The Catholic Education Office and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.

• Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Catholic Education Office and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

EVALUATION

The Student Attendance Policy will be evaluated and reviewed as part of the 4 year School Review cycle.

Date of last review: July 2018 Date for review: July 2022

