

Attendance Policy

Rationale

Student learning is maximised by student attendance of timetabled classes.



Guiding Principles

Students are expected to attend all timetabled classes and school activities.

Students must achieve a 90% Attendance Rate to satisfy course requirements at all year levels.

Student attendance will be monitored and recorded and absences followed up with parents or carers.

Attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory Attendance Rates will be clearly communicated to students, their parents or carers and the teaching staff.

Absences

Absences are classified as either explained or unexplained.

Explained absences include:

- illness with a medical certificate,
- attendance at an approved College activity e.g. a meeting with teachers or welfare staff, an instrumental music or a drama production, a camp, an excursion or a sporting event, instead of a timetabled class,
- suspension from school, and
- absence as a result of overseas travel or a serious family issues of which the College has been notified.

An explanation will be sought for all unexplained absences.

Attendance Rates

Attendance Rates will be calculated as a percentage of *the number of classes attended* divided by *the total number of classes*. Our current procedure for calculating attendance rates includes *explained absences* in *the total number of classes attended*. Therefore, only *unexplained absences* decrease attendance rates.

However, a large number of explained absences may still result in non-completion of a VCE/VCAL/VET unit or the unsatisfactory completion of a year of study e.g. a long period of illness or overseas travel.

Consequences of Unsatisfactory Attendance Rates

Students not achieving Attendance Rates of 90% will be closely monitored and if this occurs in a number of subjects, action will be taken in line with the College Promotion Policy.

A VCE/VCAL/VET student not achieving an Attendance Rate of 90% for a unit will receive an N result for that unit. The student will be interviewed by a Team Leader, Campus Principal or nominee and the Subject Teacher, and/or the College Promotion Panel. They may then recommend removal from the subject, repeating the unit, consideration of redemption or upholding the N result.

Implementation

Teachers monitor and record student attendance for each lesson, maintain an accurate personal class roll and pass on details of student absences through the College Attendance System. Particular staff have additional responsibilities in relation to student absence.

Any unexplained absence is a cause of concern and needs to be followed up by the Subject, Homegroup or Mentor Teacher, Team Leader and Welfare staff as appropriate.

Students must inform teachers of upcoming known absences, provide notes from parents or carers, provide medical certificates for illnesses or discuss causes of absences with Team Leaders, catch up as required, and, if eligible, apply for the re-scheduling of any missed assessments.

The College Attendance System will assist all teachers to have knowledge about explained absences.

References

- Education Act, Victorian Government, 1958
- Community Services Act, Victorian Government, 1970
- Attendance Guidelines, Department of Education, 1997
- It's Not OK to Be Away, Department of Education, 2004

Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- For illness, students are to provide notes from parents or carers or medical certificates as required.
- If senior students know that they will be absent from a class because of attendance at an approved College activity, they are to inform their subject teacher prior to the activity.
- Students should notify the College as soon as possible about serious family issues.
- All students should catch up on missed work in a timely manner, seeking support from teachers as required.
- Senior students who have missed a School Assessed Coursework or Task because of their absence, must apply for a re-scheduling of this assessment by submitting an Application for Extension of Time of a School Assessed Coursework or Task to their Team Leader. They can only apply if the absence is classified as explained in terms of this policy.

Parents or Carers

- Parents or carers should provide explanations for all absences. An explanation may be provided through contact by telephone, in person, or by a note that states the reason for absence and a contact telephone number.
- Parents or carers should notify the College as soon as possible about serious family issues.

Staff

Teachers

- monitor and maintain accurate and up-to-date records of student attendance of all timetabled classes and school activities.
- provide student absence data in a timely manner to the College's Attendance System.
- alert Homegroup or Mentor teachers or Team Leaders, as appropriate, of unexplained student absences and help students catch up work missed.
- refer all explanations for absence that are a result of serious family issues to Team Leaders.
- communicate intended and actual attendees of any approved College activities e.g. camps, excursions or sporting events to Homegroup or Mentor Teachers, Subject Teachers, Team Leaders and Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants.

Homegroup or Mentor teachers

- follow up all unexplained absences, seek information regarding absence from students, or parents or carers.
- communicate any explanations for absence to Subject Teachers or Team Leaders and Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants.

Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants

- enter explanations for absences, record late passes and enter scheduled absences e.g. camps, excursions and suspensions in the College's Attendance System.
- distribute relevant reports regarding individual and group absences to Team and Campus Leaders, Homegroup and Mentor Teachers and Campus Principals.
- on Junior Campuses, enter homegroup absences from information supplied by Homegroup Teachers.
- assist Homegroup and Mentor Teachers in the follow up of unexplained absences.

Team Leaders

- discuss attendance concerns with Homegroup or Mentor Teachers and arrange meetings with parents or carers, in conjunction with Homegroup or Mentor Teachers, to discuss attendance concerns, attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory Attendance Rates.
- classify absences as either explained or unexplained in terms of this policy, in consultation with Campus Leaders and Campus Principals.
- communicate any explanations for absence, such as suspensions, to Homegroup or Mentor Teachers, Subject Teachers and Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants
- alert Campus Leaders of students with serious attendance concerns or unsatisfactory Attendance Rates.

Campus Leaders

- ensure that all teachers are monitoring and following up student attendance.
- alert Campus Principals and Welfare Personnel of students with serious attendance concerns or unsatisfactory Attendance Rates.
- communicate any explanations for absence, such as suspensions, to Team Leaders and Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants.
- assist Team Leaders in the resolution of attendance concerns.

Welfare Personnel

- communicate any explanations for absence to Team Leaders, Campus Leaders, Campus Principals and Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants, as appropriate.
- assist in the resolutions of issues contributing to serious attendance concerns.

Campus Principals

- assist in strategies to resolve issues contributing to serious attendance concerns or unsatisfactory Attendance Rates.
- communicate any explanations for absence, such as suspensions, to Team Leaders, Campus Leaders and Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants, as appropriate.

Appendix 2: Processes

Recording of Absences

- Teachers record each student's attendance with diagonal lines (present) and circles (not present) in their own rolls, for every timetabled class or school activity. Circles are annotated with **M** (medical certificate), **N** (note other than a medical certificate), **S** (suspension), **A** (attendance at another school activity such as SRC, an excursion, a sporting event, or a meeting with another teacher) if this information has been officially communicated to the teacher e.g. a note has been provided by a parent or carer, the teacher has been informed of students attending another activity. Circles should be annotated with **L** for students who arrive late to class.
- Teachers are to hand in to the office all student lists recording attendance for all official College activities such as camps, excursions, SRC meetings, instrumental music classes and sporting activities.
- On the Senior Campus, teachers enter the students absent from each class in computerised attendance system, before the end of each class.
- On the Junior Campuses, during homegroup, teachers fill in absence slips listing the CASES Code of all absent students and send these slips to the office.
- On the Junior Campuses, teachers enter the students absent from each class in the computerised attendance system, ideally before the end of each class, otherwise no later than 4pm each school day.
- On the Junior Campuses, Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants record students who are late to school in the computerised attendance system, sending them to their teacher with a Late Pass.

Recording Explanations of Absences

- Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants enter details of scheduled absences such as camps and excursions in the computerised attendance system.
- Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants also enter explanations for absences in the computerised attendance system as notes and information regarding absence is provided.
- Explanations for absences and information regarding absence are communicated to Team Leaders, and Homegroup or Mentor Teachers, who then communicate this to teachers for their attendance records.
- Subject or Homegroup or Mentor Teachers with notes regarding reasons for student absence provide these to the office as soon as possible.
- Team Leaders or Campus Leaders who have information regarding reasons for absence that have been verified with parents or carers provide this to the office also.
- Teachers are to maintain accurate attendance records for all timetabled classes and school activities, following up explanations for unexplained absences, and passing on to the office and Team Leaders any attendance concerns and information regarding absences.

Retrieving Attendance Information

- Homegroup, Mentor and Classroom Teachers should regularly monitor attendance data that is accessible to them to remain alert to all attendance issues.
- Team Leaders, with the support of Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants, are to constantly monitor student attendance, printing out relevant reports from the computerised attendance system that will enable them to act upon student attendance issues.
- Campus Leaders, with the support of Office Staff/ Secondary Teaching Assistants are to ensure that student attendance information is being retrieved and monitored by Team Leaders and that issues are acted upon.

Resolving Attendance Issues

- Subject Teachers, Homegroup or Mentor Teachers, Team Leaders, Campus Leaders, Welfare Personnel and Campus Principals have various responsibilities to monitor and record attendance, follow up explanations for absences, communicate information regarding absences to each other, and resolve attendance issues with students themselves or parents or carers.