



## Student Attendance Policy

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### Rationale

As a Catholic School in the Mercy tradition, Sacred Heart College Kyneton believes in the value of each individual student and the importance of maximising educational opportunities in reaching their potential. In Victoria, in accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years unless an exemption has been granted. Regular and punctual daily attendance is a protective factor that assists all students to achieve their personal, social and academic potential. It is the professional, pastoral and legal responsibility of schools to monitor student's attendance. Regular school attendance fosters student learning and healthy self-esteem, develops social skills, teamwork and communication.

This policy is informed by the Department of Education and Training School Attendance Guidelines, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) attendance requirements and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Attendance Policy. Parents/guardians must enrol a child of compulsory school age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction. Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance or attendance and enrolment for the student, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.

A principal or regional director (depending on the circumstances) may authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance or attendance and enrolment to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.

For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must promptly provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. The school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

All registered schools must ensure their students attendance recording system:

- Meets all legislative requirements.
- Discharges the school's duty of care for all students.
- Assists calculation of the school's funding.
- Enables school councils to annually report on student attendance.
- Meets VCAA attendance requirements for VCE students.

## 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 ensure adequate learning milestones are achieved.
- 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.

## Definitions

### Attendance

- A student is considered to be in attendance at school when onsite and/or involved in an offsite curriculum program or other activity organised by the school (for example an excursion or camp). A student is also considered to be in attendance when the student is engaged in a re-engagement program or another school part time to make up full time attendance and the schools or settings have agreed the time fractions, allocation of Student Resource Package (or other funding) and the educational plan for the student.

### Parent/guardian/carer

- Includes "a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the Family Law Act 1975 (Cwth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides".

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Students

Each student is responsible for:

- Attending school every required day attending all timetabled classes / school events punctually.
- Showing an explanatory note or medical certificate to their homeroom teacher or Student Reception the day after an absence has occurred, unless parents/carers have notified the College in advance by SMS, email or telephone.
- Advising their homeroom teacher or YLL in advance of any known possible reason for future absence. (e.g. medical procedure, sporting requirements, in-term holidays).
- Reporting to student reception when arriving after morning homeroom has concluded. An email, SMS, or note from a parent/carer detailing the reason for late arrival, is required.
- Signing out if being collected by a parent/carer at the Student Reception. Ensuring the minimum 80% attendance requirement for each VCE/VET/VCAL subject is attained.

## Parents /Guardians/Carers

As the primary educators of students, parents/guardians/carers must:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the student attends school each day.
- Avoid making non-essential appointments during the school day.
- Keep the College updated regarding parent/carer contact details.
- Inform the College of a student's absence prior to 9.00am on the day of the absence.  
NB: if the College is not notified by 9.00am, student reception will inform the parents/carer via SMS as soon as practical on the day of absence. The parent/carer should reply to the SMS acknowledging that they are aware of the absence, and provide a note/email to the College on the students return to school.
- Notify the College by email or in writing if a student is to be collected earlier than the designated school finishing time. If a student needs to be collected unexpectedly during the day, the parent/carer needs to complete an 'Early Leave Pass' at General Reception before leaving with the student.
- Communicate with the homeroom teacher or YLL if, for any reason the student is reluctant to return to school.
- Avoid arranging family holidays during the school term if possible. Where unavoidable, and the absence is for 5 days or more, notification of the absence should be given at least 2 weeks prior to the appropriate Head of School. Negotiations with teachers may need to take place in order for work to be provided while away.

## Homeroom Teachers

Homeroom teachers are the first point of contact for students at the beginning of the day. They are responsible for:

- recording student attendance and punctuality on SIMON at homeroom and communicating with parents/carers about unexplained, ongoing or excessive absences.
- Contact parent if student is absent for the 2nd day and contact has not been made by parent to determine reason for absence.
- If reason is not legitimate, notify Year Level Leader (YLL) of attendance concern. Contact again on the 4th day to maintain communication.
- Alerting the Year Level Leader if attendance becomes a concern.
- Ensuring all notes brought by students to explain absence are delivered to Student Reception for recording purposes.
- Noting the date(s) and reason of a student's proposed future absence and forwarding on to Student Reception for recording.
- Sending a SIMON Attendance Letter when attendance reaches 90%.

## Classroom Teachers

are responsible for;

- recording attendance for each lesson.
- taking note of continued absences in their class, sending a SIMON Letter and notifying Homeroom Teacher and Year Level Leader.
- sending SIMON subject attendance letters to VCE students whose absences are concerning. (Teachers should first consult with VCE Coordinator to ensure that there has not been further information regarding the absence provided).

## **Year Level Leader**

Each YLL has responsibility for the day-to-day management and smooth operation of their year level.

The YLL will:

- Monitor student absences and counsel students with ongoing attendance issues/concerns.
- Apply consequences in accordance with this policy to any student found to have deliberately missed a class without a valid reason.
- Liaise with parents/guardians/carers of students with ongoing attendance issues.
- Inform the appropriate Head of School of any ongoing attendance issues within their year level and document these in student files on SIMON.

## **The VCE, VET and VCAL Coordinators**

The Coordinators of students in VCE, VET and VCAL will:

- Communicate with parents/guardians/carers when any student is at risk of not satisfying the requirements of a unit due to absence.
- Pass on relevant information to senior teachers as regards information about student attendance.
- Ensure all students enrolled in classes at the College, are aware of and adhere to the Attendance Policy and 80% attendance requirement.

## **Heads of School / Deputy Principal of Student Wellbeing.**

The Junior and Senior Head of School are responsible for overseeing attendance in their respective mini-school. They will:

- Work in collaboration with YLL to respond to chronic absenteeism or school refusal issues.
- Determine the cause(s) of absenteeism or school refusal and develop strategies to expediate the students return to school.
- Organise parent meetings to determine.
- Liaise with Wellbeing staff and engage with family.

## **If the Absenteeism becomes School Refusal**

After all avenues of support available to the College have been exhausted, the College will:

- Contact Child First to initiate family support for school refusal.
- Contact Catholic Education Office Northern Region to record concern over school refusal.

## **Student Reception**

The staff at Student Reception will

- Send an SMS message to parents/carers who fail to notify the College of their students' absence before 9.00am or as soon as practical on the day of absence
- Record any reasons for absence, late arrivals or early departures on SIMON
- Sign out students who are being collected during the day by their parent/ carer.
- Pass on to students' messages from parent/carers regarding changes to returning home

## **Attendance monitoring procedures**

### **Monitoring Daily Attendance**

Sacred Heart College Kyneton has implemented the following systems and procedures in Attendance to monitor the daily attendance of students and identify absences from College or class:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that they notify the College to explain the absence of their children on any particular school day. Notification may be provided via the Parent Access Module, email or by telephoning the College and should be made prior to the start of the College day.
- Homeroom teachers mark the roll at the beginning of the day on citing each student. Parents of any absent student are notified via SMS of the absence, if they have not already contacted the College, as early as practical that morning.
- Class teachers take the class roll at the commencement of each assigned lesson.
- All absences are recorded absences using SIMON student management software which then cross checks against the absentee notifications that have been provided to the College that day.

### **Following up Unexplained Absences**

Sacred Heart College Kyneton has implemented the following systems and procedures in order to follow up unexplained absences from the College:

- Where an absence has not been explained, an SMS Text message is forwarded to the student's parent/guardian notifying them of the absence and requesting that they immediately contact Student Reception.
- If the parent/guardian does not respond the absence is recorded. Homeroom teachers monitor the absences in their Homeroom, and contact home if parents have not contacted the College. If no verbal verification has taken place with any contact, a voice message will be left with one of the contacts.
- Where the absence remains unexplained the matter will be reported to the Year Level Leader/House Leader for investigation and follow up.
- All information in relation to unsatisfactory attendance is recorded on students' SIMON files and information with respect to attendance is provided in each student's school report via the school portal/SIMON PAM.

## Notification of Parents & Guardians of Unsatisfactory Attendance

Sacred Heart College Kyneton has implemented the following systems and procedures in order to notify parents and guardians of unsatisfactory attendance:

- Where a student is unsatisfactorily absent from College, the College will contact the parents directly to seek an explanation and to remind parents of their child's obligation to attend school.
- Where parents repeatedly fail to inform the College of absences the Year Level Leader will contact them directly seeking an explanation and to remind them of their obligation to report absences.
- Where continual low attendance and failure to inform the College occurs, the Year Level Leader will consult with the Head of School and parent meetings and Wellbeing support is organised. Student Support System may be initiated. Outside community agency involvement may be investigated.
- If refusal to attend continues, the Head of School/Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing will make referrals to Child First and the Catholic Education Office Northern Region.

Responsibility	Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing
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