



College Attendance Policy

Rationale:

- As of January 2010 the minimum school leaving age for all young people in the State of Victoria is 17 years of age.
- The State of Victoria requires that children in the state are to be in full time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless formally exempt. All Victorian students are required to complete at least Year 10 and remain engaged in some form of education, training or employment until the age of 17.
- In developing and implementing an attendance policy, the school understands that when students are absent from school, irrespective of the reason, they are likely to fall behind in their schoolwork, decline in their academic performance, and may lose their attachment or positive attitudes towards school.
- The school recognises that students who are routinely absent represent a diverse group. Some have personal issues that make regular school attendance difficult for them, such as chronic physical or mental health problems; others face family and economic challenges that pose obstacles to attendance, such as responsibilities for helping out with younger siblings or contributing extra income to the family, others are absent because of problems experienced within the school setting itself; for example, safety concerns or academic needs that are not being met. Some may also be viewed as “school refusers” and others may be regarded as “truants” and defined as those absent from school without approval from parent, guardian or the school.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- The school also recognises that the causes of most student absence cannot be neatly categorized and the diversity of causes requires interventions that encompass a range of strategies. Without intervention, regular absence will likely become increasingly serious over time.
- The school also recognises the need to focus on improved school attendance regardless of whether an absence is excused or not since chronic truancy and problems such as chronic health issues both result in the same outcome: numerous days out of school, increased risk of not completing secondary education and increased risk of social and economic dysfunction.

Aims:

- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that students required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.
- To reduce the average number of days absent to less than 13 days per student per year.

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 to achieve to their potential at school.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary. Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note to the school clearly explaining why an absence has occurred. This note is to be sent with the student on their return from absence.
- The attendance officer will initially alert form teachers of absent students if communication from parents is not forthcoming.
- Parents will be immediately contacted if the number of consecutive absent days exceeds 2 school days.
- The school will provide, to the best of its ability, engaging Later Years programs that will enable all students to achieve their full potential.
- The school will implement the “It’s not OK to be away” program.
- Initially the Attendance Officer will be responsible for monitoring student absences and Form Teachers will be responsible for ascertaining the reason(s) for the absence(s). Where issues continue to exist the Form Teacher will alert the attendance officer and refer to student management for their intervention.
- Unexplained or inadequately explained absences will be addressed by Student Management office to communicate with parents and the student involved in order to resolve the problem.
- Parents of students who are to be absent are required to telephone the school before 9:00am to report the absence (Phone 59731098). The absence is then to be confirmed in writing by a note from parents when the student returns to the College.
- Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues for students required to attend could negatively impact on school year level progression and may be reported by the Principal to the Regional Office of the DEECD and the Department of Human Services.
- The Principal will ensure all student absences are recorded each period by teachers, are aggregated on the CASES database and communicated to the Department of Education.
- The Department of Education and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on all students reports and will be available to parents in the latter half of 2010 via the Ultranet.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and Training and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

Evaluation:

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

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

July 28th, 2010