

Student Attendance Policy

Rationale:

The *Education Act* requires that children of school age (six to sixteen years) residing 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 Regional Director.

Regular school attendance is important to the development of a student's understandings and skills. If a student misses the basic skills in the early years of schooling, he/she often experiences continuing problems later on. Attending school every day gives the child the greatest opportunity for learning at school and helps to build and maintain friendships. Regular attendance at school will help the child develop skills for success later on in life.

Schools are efficient organisations that need to run on time. Continual lateness by students can cause unnecessary interruptions and compromise the school's capacity to operate effectively.

All schools are required to keep accurate records of attendance that comply with legal requirements. Attendance Guidelines introduced in 2018 require all schools to advise parents/guardians of unexplained absences on the same day, as soon as practical.

Aims:

- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly and without unnecessary absences/lateness.
- To ensure all enrolled students attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for absence.
- To have consistency in the recording of student lateness/absences.
- To ensure that nForma is an accurate record of attendance and complies with the legal requirements of the VRQA.

Attendance Implementation:

- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- The Principal has a responsibility to communicate attendance expectations to parents and students when they enrol at the school, and to regularly communicate with all parents about attendance issues.
- Parents/Carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents/Carers must notify the school the morning of (if not before) their child being absent. If there is no notification of a child's absence by 9.30am, nForma will automatically send a text message on behalf of the school to prompt parents/carers to call the school. If no contact is made by 11am, school office staff will call the parents and then emergency contacts provided until the absence has been explained and recorded on nRoll.

- Classroom teachers have a responsibility to monitor attendance.
- When a student has been absent for 5 or more days in a Term without reasonable or valid grounds, the classroom teacher will discuss the matter with the Deputy Principal or Student Wellbeing Leader. Contact will then be made with the parents with the view of developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- When unreasonable absences continue to occur after plans and strategies have been implemented, the Deputy Principal or Student Wellbeing Leader will refer the matter to DHHS and CEM for further support.
- The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school and accurately recorded in student files.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- Procedures in the St. Paul's *nForma* Policy will be followed in all matters related to the attendance data.

Lateness Implementation:

- Classroom teachers take the roll each morning at 8:50am and enter any student absences on the electronic roll *nRoll*.
- All students arriving after 8:50am must enter through the main office where office staff fill in a *late arrival slip* and update the electronic roll *nRoll* to show student late arrival.
- Students are given a yellow copy of their *late arrival slip* which they hand to their classroom teacher.
- Classroom teachers collect and collate yellow *late arrival slips* for their own class.
- Office staff put the green copy of the *late arrival slip* into class tubs so that students can take them home at the end of the day.
- Each week, year level coordinators collect and file the yellow *late arrival slips* for their level and make contact with families of children who have received two or more *late arrival slips* over the period of one week.
- If a student continues to be late on two or more occasions over the next two week period, the year level coordinator arranges for the classroom teacher to call the student's family to discuss the matter. Copies of all email and phone conversations are made and filed.
- If late arrival continues to be an issue over a four week period, the classroom teacher arranges a meeting with the student's parents and a member of the Leadership Team.
- Students with reasonable grounds for lateness will be assisted in their personal circumstances by the *Student Wellbeing Leader* and *Family Engagement Learning Leader* as appropriate.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the St. Paul's review cycle.