
Sacred Heart Catholic School Geeveston

Student Attendance Policy



Date	23rd February 2015
Version No	0
Responsible Person	Luch Brighella
Approved By	Luch Brighella, SHCSG Advisory Board
Review Date	2018
Related Documents	Education Act

RATIONALE

Education in a young person's life is extremely important in terms of health and well-being, peer relationships and future career options. The *Education Act* in Tasmania requires that children of school age 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 Education Department. It is a legal requirement in Tasmania for every child between the ages of five (5) and seventeen (17) to attend school on a full time basis unless otherwise exempted. Schools are required to maintain an accurate record of student attendance.

Sacred Heart Catholic School supports the legislation and believes that students need to attend school every day in order to fulfil their potential and achieve excellence.

The Principal and staff have a duty of care towards students attending our school at any given time. The Principal, as part of his/her day-to-day management of the school, has a responsibility to follow up unexplained absences of students enrolled at the school. The Principal, Leadership Team and class teachers will monitor continued and unexplained absences of students.

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in their learning, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.

The Sacred Heart Catholic School *Student Attendance Policy* aims to ensure students and parents/guardians have a clear understanding of the importance of regular attendance. It is important that students, staff and parents/guardians have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.

At Sacred Heart Catholic School, we:

- Believe all students should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day.
- Believe attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.
- Believe non-attendance or truancy can place students in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.
- Monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance.

PURPOSE

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

RESPONSIBILITIES

School Responsibilities

- A safe and supportive learning environment.
- Clear communication of expected dates of attendance.
- Notify parent/guardian of student absence.

Student Responsibilities

- Punctual, regular school attendance.
- Commitment to learning.

Parent Responsibilities

- Ensure the child attends school and that it is seen as a priority.
- Notify school promptly of student absence.
- Ensure a safe and reliable mode of transport to and from school.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
2. While illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, shopping excursions or birthdays are not.
3. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
4. Parents have a further responsibility to provide either a written note or telephone call informing the school about the absence.
5. The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
6. All student absences are recorded daily by teachers and are aggregated on our database.
7. Daily telephone calls are placed by the School Office Staff to ascertain the status of absent students.
8. The Principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. The Principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, using the protocols issued by the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office. (See below.)
9. Student attendance and absence data will appear on student midyear and end of year reports.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSE TO STUDENT ABSENCES

1. Parents/guardians are requested to telephone the School Office prior to 9.00 am to inform of their child/children's absence and the reason for the absence. Alternatively, parents may inform the class teacher/s of the absence. If the absence extends beyond one day, parents/guardians are asked to telephone the School Office each day the child is absent.
2. Office staff will contact parents/guardians by 9.30am each day to ascertain the whereabouts of any child who has not been advised as absent by parents/guardians.
3. Parents/guardians are requested to inform the Principal in advance and in writing of any anticipated extended absences from school, e.g. for health, family or holiday reasons.

PROLONGED STUDENT ABSENCES

Prolonged student absences are generally a matter of:

- Illness/health
- Attendance at intra-state and inter-state competitions
- Family holidays during school terms

Students are not encouraged to be absent without good reason. Long absences and or inconsistent attendance may result in the student failing to meet specific curriculum requirements and consequently affect their overall academic progress and development.

Attendance at Intra-State or Inter-State Competitions

In the event of a student seeking permission to be absent for a prolonged period of time for such competitions, it is the parent/guardian's obligation to obtain permission by applying in writing to the Principal ahead of time so appropriate staff may be informed.

Family Holidays in Term Time

There may be occasions when there is an exceptional travel opportunity or cause for travel for the student and family for certain reasons. It is the parent/guardian's obligation to inform the Principal in writing regarding the intended holiday, giving details of the dates in which the student will be absent from school.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND TASMANIAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE (TCEO) PROTOCOLS FOR UNEXPLAINED AND UNAUTHORISED STUDENT ABSENCE

1. **Level 1** - An Admin Staff member will make telephone or SMS contact with parents/guardians when any absence is not reported to class teachers, or Admin Staff.
2. **Level 2** -If a student is absent for **three (3) days unexplained or unauthorised absence** and there has been no notification from the parents/guardians, Admin Staff will contact the parents/guardians by telephone or SMS to establish the reason for the student's absence.
3. **Level 3** - If a student is absent for **five (5) days unexplained or unauthorised absence** and there is no contact from parents/guardians, a letter is sent by the Principal to the parents/guardians with a request for the parents to contact the College to discuss the student's absence. A medical certificate will be requested if the student has been absent for more than five (5) days duration because of illness.
4. **Level 4** -If a student is absent for **ten (10) days unexplained or unauthorised absence** in any one school term or if there is a pattern of absence which is of significant concern, a letter is sent by the Principal to the parents/guardians outlining attendance concerns and asking them to attend a meeting with the Principal. The letter will include a print out of the student's recorded absences. The meeting will involve the development of a plan to support the student's attendance.
5. **Level 5** - If a student is absent for **fifteen (15) days unexplained or unauthorised absence** in any one school term, the school will initiate a case management approach, involving a meeting with the parents/guardians, with an emphasis on restating the plan to support the student's return to regular attendance. If there is difficulty in contacting the parents/guardians, sending a letter by registered mail may be necessary.
6. The Principal will inform the TCEO when a student has been absent from school for **twenty (20) days or more of unexplained or unauthorised absence**. The TCEO will ensure that an investigation is made and appropriate measures are undertaken, including prosecution where appropriate.

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

The person responsible for the implementation of this *Policy* is the Principal.

POLICY REVIEW

The *Policy* shall be reviewed every three years, or in the event of any information that would demonstrate the need for a review, or resulting from any legislative or organisational change that would warrant a review.

POLICY DATES			
<i>Formulated</i>	October 2014	<i>Adopted</i>	FEBRUARY 2015
<i>Implemented</i>	February 2015	<i>Reviewed</i>	
<i>Next Review Due</i>	FEBRUARY 2018		
POLICY AUTHORISATION			
<i>Principal</i>	Mr Luch Brighella	<i>Signature</i>	