

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Sources of Authority:	
CECWA Policy	Community
Executive Directive	Student Safety, Wellbeing and Behaviour

### **Objective**

The Executive Directive – Student Safety, Wellbeing and Behaviour guides the creation of cultures of safety and wellbeing where students feel safe and can flourish in their learning and development.

### **Rationale**

The *School Education Act 1999* mandates that all children of primary age attend school. Other things being equal, time spent learning face-to-face at school is the single biggest factor in learning success. Parents/guardians are encouraged not to allow students to miss school unnecessarily as most instruction is sequential and lost lessons may be difficult for children to make up. Parents/guardians must enrol a child of compulsory age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction. Parents/guardians must provide an explanation for any absence their child has and work in partnership with the school to support attendance.

St Andrew's Catholic Primary School monitors and manages student attendance in order to maximise the opportunities of all students to learn. St Andrew's follows the CEWA Student Attendance Process.

### **Definitions**

**AUTHORISED ABSENCE (EXPLAINED):** A principal can record an absence as 'Authorised' if there has been a reasonable explanation for a student's absence.

A reasonable excuse for the purposes of explaining a school absence can include:

- medical or dental appointments
- bereavement or attendance at a funeral, including Sorry Business
- illnesses and accidents
- unforeseen and unexplained circumstances
- compliance with another law that results in the child's absence
- The child is receiving distance education through a registered school

- The child is undertaking approved education, training and/or employment
- The child has been suspended
- The child is attending or observing a religious event, culture observance or obligation.

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (UNEXPLAINED):** A principal can record an absence as 'Unauthorised' when there has been no reasonable explanation provided for the absence. If a reason is given to the principal and it is not approved, then the school will notify the parent/carer in writing.

In general, it is expected that these absences would not be excused:

- The parent did not seek approval beforehand, or in accordance with school procedure.
- The student was absent due to leisure or social activities without approval.
- The conditions of an authorised absence were not met (for example, a student absence learning plan during a family holiday was not completed).
- The parent has provided no explanation for the absences.

**PARENT:** In relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child.

### **Principles**

St Andrew's Catholic Primary School will keep accurate attendance records for all students enrolled at the school that are able to be reproduced in written form to record whether a student's absence was authorised or unauthorised. We will record a student as:

- present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction
- present if they are on a school-approved activity or attending off-site
- retain attendance records in accordance with the *School Education Regulations 2000* and the Retention and Disposal Schedule for Department of Education School, College and Campus Records
- retain documentation of all contact and intervention strategies implemented in addressing a student's absence.
- include the attendance data of every student enrolled in response to requests for school attendance data (for example, participation in the Attendance Data Collection).
- request a reason for a student's absence be provided to the Principal's satisfaction

### **PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING ATTENDANCE**

1. Classrooms open at 8:20 am with classroom instruction commencing at 8:30am. Students should be in their class by 8:30am.

2. Students arriving after 8:30am must sign in the Late Register in the office and take a Pass to the class teacher. If students arrive late to class without a Pass, teachers should send the student back to the office to sign in.
3. Teachers will mark students absent or present by 9:00am on SEQTA.
4. Parents are asked to notify the school if their child will be absent by phone or email by 9:00am. If verbal notification has been given, this must be followed by written notification, via note or email, on the child's return to school.
5. Teachers will again mark students absent or present at 1:05pm on SEQTA.
6. Parents planning an extended absence from school (e.g. holiday) are required to send in a written explanation to the Principal before departure - a month in advance if possible.
7. Notified absences are recorded on SEQTA by the Administration Officer.
8. The Administration Officer will send an SMS message to the parents of students who are absent without notification before 10:00am. If parents do not respond to the SMS message, the Administration Officer will follow-up with a phone call directly to the parents.
9. On a regular basis, teachers/the Administration officer will send follow-up letters to the parents of all students who have been absent without notification or have not submitted written notification of their absence for the previous term.

### **STRATEGIES USED TO RE-ENGAGE STUDENTS WHOSE ATTENDANCE HAS FALLEN BELOW ACCEPTABLE LEVELS**

1. When a student's attendance is below 90% or is identified as a concern, the class teacher will contact the parents to investigate the reasons for the student's absence and/or help develop and implement strategies for improved attendance. At this meeting, parents will be offered support and advised of the importance of attendance at school. The school will also develop and implement individual attendance planning.
2. If student attendance does not improve to a point where it is no longer a concern, a case conference will be convened with the parents, teacher, student (if age appropriate), Assistant Principal and if required, relevant external agencies and the school's Pastoral Care Officer. The school will reassess the individual attendance planning that is in place and make modifications as required.
3. If required, the school will also liaise and seek advice from the CEWA Psychology Team.
4. The Principal will document and monitor all intervention strategies used to address a student's absence.
5. Where persistent absence persists, the Principal will contact the School Attendance Officer at the Department of Education's North Metropolitan Regional Office and the CEWA Regional School Improvement Advisor.