



St Anthony's Catholic School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Schools are an integral part of society that provides children with important and necessary skills for life. The Australian Government recognises the vital role schools play in the development of the person and have therefore made a legal requirement on attendance.

Under the Education Act 2016, children who are 5 years of age on or before the 1st January are required to be enrolled and attend a registered school on a full-time basis, unless officially exempt (under the Education Act), excused or approved for home education.

At St Anthony's School we believe that:

- regular attendance has a considerable impact on students' academic and social performance,
- a regular pattern of attendance at school helps to develop valuable life skills, such as commitment to family, work, social and sporting responsibilities,
- by making sure that students are at school for the required time, the school and parents are indicating a commitment to lifelong education,
- while there are, on occasions, special circumstances and family commitments which require students to be absent from school for a number of days, these occasions should be kept to a minimum,
- by adhering to this attendance policy, home-school communication is further strengthened.

Aims

- To encourage all students and parents to see the need for consistent attendance at school.
- To encourage all students and parents to develop sound attendance patterns.
- To maximise learning opportunities by ensuring absenteeism of students is kept to a minimum.
- To maximise the opportunities for students to develop social skills.
- To put into place processes for managing absenteeism and truancy.

Responsibilities

It is a parental responsibility to:

- Ensure children attend school each day as required by the Principal.
- Ensure children are not kept at home, unless they are genuinely sick. *Parents who fail to ensure that their child is enrolled in or attending at a school appropriate to the child's educational needs or is registered as a home educator in respect of that child may be prosecuted.*
- Ensure children are not taken out of school unless it is really necessary.
- Inform the school of their child's absence in the first hour of the same day and subsequent days.
- Provide a medical certificate after an absence of five days at the request of the Principal.
- Notify the school in writing when their child is leaving to attend another school.

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to:

- Record student absentees daily in the Absentee Record.
- Send Absentee Record daily to the school office.
- Notify the school principal of unexplained regular absences and/or when a student has an unexplained absence for five consecutive days, 10 days in one term or more.
- Send Appendix 1 to parents for any unexplained absence/unsuccessful contact once child returns to school.

It is the responsibility of the School Principal to:

- Follow up regular and consecutive unexplained absences from the student's parents/carers.
- Notify the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office when a student's absenteeism is of concern.
- Inform parents/carers about the Policy.

It is the responsibility of the Administration Staff to:

- Collect and collate information daily from each class Absentee record into the Daily Attendance Record Booklet.
- Attempt to contact parents of any students with unexplained absence by phone call.
- Enter data regarding absences on Filemaker Pro Student Records.

Policy Procedure

A school-aged child or young person is excused from attendance at a school if he/she is sick or incapacitated. In such instances, the parent must notify the school. In cases where the child or young person is absent due to sickness or incapacity for a period that extends beyond five (not necessarily consecutive) days, the parent must provide a medical certificate if requested to do so by the Principal.

- All full-time enrolled students are expected to attend all of each school day
- Class teachers will mark the absentee record in first half hour of each school day. Absence notes should be kept. Procedure attached *Appendix 6*.
- If students are to be absent from school, parents must inform the class teacher by note, or by contacting the school office, before the start of the school day. Office staff will relay any messages re student absence and record the reason/s for the absence.
- On the return of the student, if parents were uncontactable and no notification of absence has been given, the class teacher will send home a Student Absence Notification Form. *Appendix 1*
- No response to the letter will result in a phone call to the parent/carer by the Principal or Principal's nominee.
- Attendance records will form part of each child's half-year and end-of-year progress reports to parents.
- Class teachers are to bring to the attention of the Principal any student/s whose attendance is irregular, has unexplained absences, or whose absences appear unwarranted.
- Where there is a problem of absenteeism, the Principal will contact the parents/carers by letter to gain an explanation and will take further action as needed. *Appendix 2, 3 or 4.*
 - Appendix 2 – Up to 5 consecutive days 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised'*
 - Appendix 3 – 10 days in one school term 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised'*
 - Appendix 4 – 20 days in one school term 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised'*
- In the case of 20 absent days in one school term, or a pattern of absenteeism that is of concern, the Principal will initiate an intervention process with the parent/carer to support the student to return to regular attendance.
- School procedure/chart outlining the follow-up of absenteeism is attached. *Appendix 5.*
- With the introduction of the policy all families will be provided with an outline of the policy.
- New families to the school will be provided with an outline of the Policy at the time of their child/ren's enrolment.
- This Policy will be reviewed by staff at the beginning of each year so that all are familiar with it.
- Relevant details of any contact/attempt to contact parents/carers in relation to a child's absence are to be documented.

Policy Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's policy review cycle.

Implemented: March 2007

Previous policy update 10/10/01

Updated 4 April 2008

Updated 5th August 2015

Updated 1st July 2019