



# Attendance Policy

## **1. Rationale**

The aim of this policy is to encourage students to come to school each and every day. Regular attendance at school provides students with the strong foundations necessary to develop academic skills and emotional and social connections. Students develop good habits by attending school every day – habits that are necessary to succeed after school, whether in the workplace or in further study.

The policy will apply to all students of the College.

## **2. Aims**

- To promote positive attendance behaviours in all students & parents/guardians.
- To improve student learning outcomes.
- To promote punctuality.
- To clearly differentiate between approved and unapproved absences from class and school.
- To reward the efforts and work of students when they successfully complete a year level and recognize them through reports and promotion to the next year level.
- To promote the policy in conjunction with the College's other policies, especially the Promotion Policies at Years 9, 10 and 11.
- To eliminate deliberate truancy.

## **3. Attendance requirements**

3.1 Students are required to attend all timetabled classes and school activities.

3.2 All students must maintain at least a 90% attendance rate in each subject or unit of work. Exemptions or variations to this policy may be made for students with special circumstances (see Clause 8: Applications for Exemptions).

## **4. Implications of failing to meet requirements**

If, due to excessive absences, a student does not comply with this policy, an interview will be held with the Middle/Senior School Leader and parents/guardians of the student to discuss the strategies to improve future attendance at school and/or pathway options available to the student.

## **5. Types of absences and their impact on these requirements.**

5.1 Absences of all types - parent approved (excluding illness), unapproved, suspensions and truancy – will normally count towards the overall school absences (see below for some key exceptions). Parents/guardians will still be expected to formally notify the College via telephone or in writing of an absence and the reasons for this absence.

5.2 Key exceptions to this policy include:

- College sanctioned activities. These include activities such as: interschool sport, sport development program activities, music lessons, College productions, rehearsals and performances, excursions, camps, work placements, student meetings, counselling, community based activities and other activities as determined by the Principal. The College will make the final decision on what activities can be part of this group.
- Legitimate illness - medical certificates need to be handed in within five days of the student's return to school, either to the front office or to the home group teacher.



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## Note:

- a. Due to the nature of some work/subjects it may not be possible to catch up on work missed and therefore the achievement of learning outcomes may not be possible.
- b. Students will be expected to catch up on the work missed through these absences as determined by their classroom teacher.
- c. If a student has poor attendance, they may not be able to participate in extra-curricular activities that interrupt regular classes.

## **6. Late arrival**

- 6.1 All students are expected to arrive on time for school and for all classes and home group sessions.
- 6.2 Students who arrive after their class has commenced will be entered on the roll as late. Parents are able to check this information on Compass.
- 6.3 Habitual lateness will be monitored by the Year Level Coordinator who will follow up with the student.

## **7. Truancy**

- 7.1 Truancy is a deliberate absence initiated by a student without the knowledge or consent of their parents/guardians.
- 7.2 Truancy occurs when a student misses a scheduled lesson or activity, regardless of whether or not they remain on school grounds, or when they return to school after an unauthorized departure.
- 7.3 Truancy is regarded as a serious matter as it involves deliberate dishonesty.
- 7.4 Truancy is assumed to have occurred when a student has attended school in the morning and then, without signing out of the College, has not attended some or all of their classes or scheduled activity.
- 7.5 Truancy will be monitored on a daily basis by the Year Level Coordinators and followed up with appropriate behavioural consequences.

## **8. Applications for exemptions to the policy**

The College, at its discretion, and only in exceptional circumstances, may grant exemptions to this policy.

- Authorised absences with medical certificate. Certificates must be submitted to the College within five school days of the student returning to school. The College reserves the right to verify the authenticity of medical certificates.
- Extended leave. Parents/guardians are required to apply in writing to their child's Middle/Senior School Leader using the Application for Leave form. This must be submitted four weeks prior to leave.
- Major religious and cultural events. A note from the parent/guardian is required.

## **9. Expectations in relation to this policy.**

9.1 Students are expected to:

- attend school and all scheduled classes and activities;
- arrive on time to school and to every class/activity;
- inform their classroom teachers in advance of their involvement in College sanctioned activities that will result in their absence from class;
- following an absence, catch up on any work missed or complete any alternative set work.

9.2 Parents/Guardians are required to:

- ensure that their child attends all scheduled classes and activities every day;
- ensure that their child arrives to school every day on time;

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- notify the College by telephone or in writing, of the reason for any absence as soon as possible on the first day of any absence;
- where appropriate, provide the College with medical certificates for their child;
- apply to the Middle/Senior School Leader (one month prior to departure) in writing of the dates of any extended holiday that will cause their child to be absent from school;
- support their child's learning by complying with a Student Absence Learning Plan during continued or prolonged absences;
- work cooperatively with the school to improve their child's attendance where the reasons for absences have been deemed unsatisfactory by the school;
- ensure that their contact details are correct and up to date;
- where necessary, take an active part in this Policy's interview and exemption processes related to attendance.

## 9.3 Teachers will:

- accurately monitor and record student attendance on Compass for every class/activity, including extras (within the first 10 minutes in class);
- provide appropriate work for students during prolonged absences as requested by the Middle/Senior School Leader;
- arrange to send "At Risk" letters to parents/guardians of students who are at risk of unsatisfactory completion, and record actions on Compass.

## 9.4 Year Level Coordinators and Middle/Senior School Leaders will:

- Year Level Coordinators will use Compass to monitor attendance. They will discuss poor attendance with students and/or parents as early as possible to avoid the academic consequences of habitual absences;
- contact the parent/guardian if the student is truanting or the attendance rate falls under 90%;
- if, for any reason, the parent/guardian cannot be contacted on the day, follow up the absence with the student on their return and record on Compass;
- develop a Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time;
- send a letter to parents/guardians at the end of each term showing all unexplained absences and late arrivals for their child which will need to be filled in by the parent/guardian and returned to school for entry onto Compass.

## 9.5 Text Messages via Compass:

A text message in the form of an SMS will be sent to parents via Compass when a student is absent from school.

## 9.6 The Principal/Leadership Team will:

- promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations to parents/guardians, students and staff;
- promote awareness through assemblies, posters, staff meetings and newsletters, that absence results in lost learning time and opportunities;
- ensure whole-school modelling of punctuality to school and classes;
- ensure accurate and timely recording of attendance by staff in each class each day;
- maintain accurate attendance records and ensure the prompt processing of all student transfers.



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## **10. College Attendance Officer**

10.1 The role of the College Attendance Officer is to follow up unexplained student absences with the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be asked to provide a reasonable excuse for their child's absence and a medical certificate if the child was reported to be ill for more than 2 consecutive days.

10.2 The College Attendance Officer will follow the school's process where a parent/guardian cannot be contacted or a student has frequent unexplained absences, and make referrals to the DET School Attendance Officer where appropriate.

10.3 For students who are exiting the College or pursuing a chosen pathway, the applicable processes will be followed in liaison with the Careers team.

## **11. Navigator**

11.1 The Navigator program works to support disengaged young people to return to education and learning.

Navigator provides intensive case management to young people and their families, using support networks to address issues underlying disengagement and help them re-engage with their education.

11.2 Navigator is available to students who:

- are aged between 12 and 17 years; and
- have attended less than 30% of the previous school term.

11.3 The Middle School Leader and Senior School Leader may use the online referral form to refer students to Navigator in consultation with their Campus Principal and the Wellbeing team:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/behaviour/engagement/Pages/navigator.aspx>

## **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – DET Every Day Counts – Secondary School Attendance

Appendix 2 – DET Every Day Counts – Anxiety About Going to School

## **13. Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the school review cycle.