

Absenteeism & Punctuality Policy

Rationale:

Absenteeism is an increasing problem, and it is an issue that is not owned exclusively by schools. The wider school community, parents and students need to fully understand the impact of missing too many school days.

The 'impact' of poor attendance is that students are at risk of not achieving their potential and therefore limiting their life choices. Other consequences could include:

- placing themselves at risk of harm while absent
- having gaps in their learning
- feeling insecure in the school environment
- being socially isolated
- being the victims of bullying and harassment

Schools, parents and the wider community need to work in partnership with each other to ensure students enjoy school and look forward to broadening their horizons.

Aims:

Children are to attend school on all school days unless they:

- are too sick or injured to come to school
- have an infectious disease
- have exceptional circumstances e.g. family travelling overseas.

Children are to arrive at school on time.

Legitimate reasons for absences should be provided by parents verbally or in writing.

Implementation:

- Information about the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality will be featured in the newsletter.
- Teachers will display in their classrooms two charts one with a list of reasons why 'It's Cool to be at School' and why 'It's Fine to be on Time'. On a weekly basis, the charts will be referred to so children are constantly reminded of the benefits of regular attendance and punctuality.
- The teacher will mark the attendance role twice daily.

- Absences without legitimate explanations from parents will be followed up initially by the class teacher. Teachers will contact the parents either by telephone or by arranging a meeting time to discuss regular attendance and punctuality.
- Parents who are unable to be contacted by phone or who do not attend a meeting organised by the teacher will be followed up with a phone call by the Principal. If contact by phone is unsuccessful the Principal will mail a letter requesting an interview.
- Absences without legitimate explanations of 10 days or more within the term will result in the teacher contacting the parent. The risk of the child falling behind with curriculum programs or skills development will be discussed and strategies for helping the child catch up in these areas will be highlighted.
- A letter generated by CASES 21 (and managed by the office staff) will be sent home to parents of children who have been absent and who have not provided written or verbal explanations for the absences.
- An “It’s Fine to be on Time” generic letter will be sent home to parents of children who arrive late more than once each week. The letter will explain the importance of punctuality, good work habits and accountability. Parents of children who are consistently late to school will be contacted by the classroom teacher to discuss punctuality. Likewise parents who are unable to be contacted by phone or who do not attend a meeting organised by the teacher will be followed up by the Principal. A letter from administration requesting an interview will be mailed to parents.
- In the event that a child has been absent from school for 5 or more consecutive days e.g. due to family activities or travel, teachers will acknowledge and clarify this reason in the School Attendance section of written semester reports.

Evaluation:

Annual absenteeism records will be compared e.g. Year levels and individual children who have had high rates of absenteeism. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s four-year review cycle.

Ratified by School Council in July 2014