

Absenteeism & Punctuality Policy

Rationale:

- Absenteeism 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.
- There are certain circumstances in which absence is required to maintain health of the school community (refer to exclusions policy – to be written)
- 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:
 - having gaps in their learning
 - feeling insecure in the school environment
 - being socially isolated

Aims:

- Children are to attend school on all school days unless they:
 - there is a medical incidence or condition precluding full attendance
 - have exceptional circumstances e.g. family leave, additional support or medical needs.
- Children are to arrive at school on time. Students who arrive late regularly will be followed up.
- When following up on regular lateness or non-attendance the school will seek first to develop a understanding of reasons for late arrival or non-attendance and work to reduce these incidents if judged as detrimental to student’s learning.

Implementation:

- Information about the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality will be featured in the newsletter.
- Staff will be briefed and provided with an absence protocol flow chart.
- Information about late arrival and school attendance will be gained from administrative staff and teachers
- Teachers will seek information about reasons related to frequent late arrival or non-attendance from parents/ caregivers and solutions sought to reduce these absences if appropriate
- Parents/caregivers are expected to provide reasons for lateness or non-attendance to class teachers or the school by means communicated by the Principal
- The teacher will mark the attendance role twice daily.
- Absences without 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 with 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.

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 three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in February 2015