Blackheath & Thornburgh College

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Review Procedure
Blackheath & Thornburgh Executive Management and the Board will review the policy as required. The review schedule is directed in response to organisational and/or legislative changes and requirements. The review will be undertaken in consultation with employees and other relevant parties. All relevant persons will be made aware of changes made because of the review.

This policy will be reviewed if:

- There are changes in the workplace that may affect the policy;
- The policy is not effective;
- There are legislative changes that affect the policy; or
- There is a breach of this policy.

This policy is reviewed at least biennially.

Document Number:	HR38_01a
Topic:	Student Attendance
Approval Authority:	Principal
Document Owner	Blackheath & Thornburgh College
Last Approval Date:	August 2026
Review Date:	August 2028
Audience:	All employees, students and parents/guardians
Related Policies	
Document Web Links:	https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2020C00142 https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/act-2006-039
Notes:	

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to address the attendance of students.

Scope
The College expects students to attend College every day unless there is a reasonable excuse. Research has shown strong evidence confirming the link between school achievement and attendance. Whilst the College acknowledges that at times absences are unavoidable due to ill health, enforced school disciplinary absences or the like; some absences are not. It is the avoidable days that we aim to reduce. The short-term effects of high absences that can be observed within the school environment may include lower academic outcomes, social difficulties and possible disengagement.

At the College we acknowledge that the primary responsibility for a student's attendance rests with the parents however we believe that our College can have a positive influence on student attendance. This influence can be achieved by promoting the value of College attendance and supporting students and families to deal with barriers to College attendance where possible.

The College's Attendance Policy aims to ensure our average attendance data is 95% or higher. We aim to focus on College-wide processes to positively encourage attendance and then provide support to those families who are falling below College expectations.

College community beliefs about the importance of student attendance
It is important that students, staff and parents have a shared understanding of the importance of attending College. The College:

- Is committed to promoting the key messages of Everyday Counts
- Believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day
- Monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance
- Believes truancy can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- Believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community

Responsibilities

College Responsibilities:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents about the College's Attendance Policy including through the College's website and newsletters
- Monitor and identify student absences
- Follow up absences quickly and address absence issues with parents through correspondence via the School Management System, email, letters, phone calls and meetings
- Provide exemptions from compulsory schooling when approved by the Principal
- Provide students with schoolwork when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time

Student Responsibilities:

- Attend the College each day unless there is an acceptable reason for an absence
- Make every day count in their learning
- Report to the office if arriving to school after 8:20am and provide a reason on the sign in sheet
- Never leave College grounds during school hours without permission from parents and the College
- Ensure all work missed due to an absence is completed

Parent Responsibilities:

- Ensure that their child attends the College every day for the program in which they are enrolled
- Ensure that their child arrives on time each day
- Contact the College prior to any planned absence or on the day of the absence either via the Portal, by phone or email. Where this is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absences prior to 10.00am on the day of absence, or within two (2) days of the student returning to the College. This should take the form of a medical certificate for absences due to illness for five (5) or more consecutive days as a satisfactory explanation of the absence
- Parents are encouraged to provide a medical certificate in circumstances where their child's attendance may continue to be affected by the illness or injury
- Contact Administration if student absences are for an extended period and request schoolwork
- Contact Administration if a student is refusing to attend the College. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their children's attendance or participation
- Advise the College of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure College records are accurate

Attendance Codes
Below is a list of attendance codes used by the College:

- M - Medical Reasons
- U - Unexplained Absence
- J - Parent Advised Leave
- E - Absence Explained But Unjustified
- L - Late
- S - Sick Bay/Health Centre
- F - External Suspension
- G - Internal Suspension
- I - Onsite School Based Activity
- N - Offsite School Based Activity/Learning
- Q - Offsite Excursion/Camp
- V - Offsite School Based VET
- H - Learning from Home
- K - Authorised Leave
- Z - Not Considered A School Day For Student

Absences – Satisfactory or unsatisfactory reasons
Guidelines for determining whether excuses for student absences are considered reasonable excuses is pursuant to s176(1) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)* ('the Act'). Under the Act, each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age must ensure that the child is enrolled and attends school on every school day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled unless the parent has a reasonable excuse. Pursuant to s239(1) of the Act a parent of a young person in the compulsory participation phase must ensure the young person is participating full-time in an eligible option, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

A student who is participating in one of the following activities must be recorded as not physically present at the College site but will not be recorded as absent for the purpose of report cards or College attendance data:

- **College activity** – A student is participating in an authorised activity for College purposes
- **Excursion** – A student is participating in an excursion which occurs outside the College grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the College. Excursions include part-day, full-day or multi-day class visits to venues outside the College, and school camps
- **Natural Disaster** – A student is unable to attend the College due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster
- **Sport** – Representative – A student is representing the College, district, region, state or country at a sporting event approved by the College. For non-representative sport, see below
- **Work experience** – A student is participating in authorised work experience/placement

The following circumstances will be considered absences for which a reasonable excuse has been given:

1. **Illness** – If a student is genuinely too ill to attend the College, a parent should provide the College with an explanation for the absence, in line with the College's agreed processes for notifying of student absence. This may take the form of a written explanation note/email containing the student's name, date(s) of absence(s) and reason for absence(s), a verbal explanation through either a phone call or visit to the College, or a medical certificate (required when Year 11 and 12 students miss an exam **OR** if a student is absent five (5) or more

consecutive days). If the absence is more than ten (10) consecutive school days, an exemption is required

2. **Infectious or contagious disease** – A student is absent from the College if the student is subject to a direction or order given about an infectious or contagious disease or condition, such as COVID-19

3. **Medical or dental treatments or procedures** – If a student is absent to attend a medical or dental appointment during College hours. Parents are encouraged to make these appointments out of College hours if possible

4. **Holiday** – Holidays during terms are actively discouraged. Parents are encouraged to plan holidays during gazetted College holiday periods and student free days. If the absence is more than ten (10) consecutive school days, an exemption is required

5. **Religious or cultural observance** - A student is absent to participate in a special religious or cultural observance. These absences should be documented through the provision of a written or verbal explanation from the parent

6. **Sport** – Non-representative – The Principal will use his professional judgement to determine if it is reasonable for a student to be absent from the College to participate in a sporting event where they are not representing their school, district, region, state or nation, taking into consideration the type of event and the organising sporting body

7. **Suspension** – Suspension is a reasonable excuse for absence and the following applies:

    a. If a student is suspended for five (5) days or less, a Deputy Principal will take reasonable steps to ensure the student is given schoolwork to complete during the suspension

    b. If a student is suspended for six (6) to twenty (20) days, a Deputy Principal will arrange for the student's access to an educational program that allows the student to continue with their educational program during the suspension

    c. If a student is suspended with a recommendation for exclusion, the Principal will arrange for the student's access to an educational program that allows the student to continue with their educational program during the suspension

8. **Law of the Commonwealth** – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from the College if a Law of the Commonwealth allows a child to carry on an activity other than attending school

9. **Funeral** – Attendance at a funeral or to attend to sorry business or sorry meetings may be considered as a reasonable excuse for absence. Parents are encouraged to ensure their child misses as little school as possible. There may also be circumstances where a child is kept out of the College due to grief of a close family member. In such circumstances, the College will work with families to encourage them to have the child attend College to maintain a sense of normalcy. These situations will be handled with respect and sensitivity and the best interests of the child will be paramount

10. **Legal** – A student is absent from the College where the student is required to attend court or fulfil other legal requirements

The following circumstances will be considered absences for which there is **NOT** a reasonable excuse given:

1. **Unexplained absence** – When no explanation for a student absence has been offered to the College by the parent

2. **Leisure activities** – Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives, or fishing, is not considered a reasonable excuse for an absence from the College

3. **Any other reason for absence** – The Principal will use their professional judgement in determining whether other reasons given by the parent are reasonable explanations for a student's absence. If the reason given is not a reasonable excuse, the Principal should document the decision and direct the Attendance Officer to record the absence

Parent Reporting and monitoring attendance
At the College, reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of community and College staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- Through the School Management System (Sentral) Parent Portal
- Phone the Administration office on 07 4787 5100
- Send a note with your child on the day he/she returns to the Administration office
- Dedicated absence email: reception@btc.qld.edu.au or jbrown@btc.qld.edu.au
- Advise the Administration office in person