

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Revised on: December 2023

Review Date: December 2024

POLICY STATEMENT

The community of St Margaret Mary's College is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our students. Research suggests that regular attendance is vital for academic success and contributes to positive long term employment and social outcomes. It is vital that all staff, students and parents fully understand the importance of school attendance. School readiness includes punctuality, having correct uniform and adequate nutrition for the day and bringing equipment required for learning.

PREAMBLE

Schools have a duty of care and a legal obligation to monitor student attendance at school. The following regulations and guidelines apply to both state and non-state schools in Queensland. The regulations are from Chapter 9 of the Education (General Provisions) Act, 2006:

Section 176 – Obligation of each parent:

- 1) Each parent of a child of compulsory school age must:
 - a) Ensure the child is enrolled with a State school or a non-State school;
 - b) Ensure the child attends the State school or non-State school, on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled; unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.
- 2) Section 178 of this Act, guides schools to seek the assistance of government departments and agencies (Eg. Child Protection Investigation Unit, Department of Child Safety), to assist in ensuring parents meet their obligations regarding student attendance at school.

RATIONALE

The rationale of this document is to provide all stakeholders (staff, parents/carers and students), with a clear, inclusive and simple attendance policy and set of procedures that promote the highest expectations of student attendance. Early identification of students whose attendance is not regular is vital in minimising student absences and the College will take reasonable steps to follow up on unexplained absences in a timely manner. On occasions when a student may be missing from an educational program, parents will provide a satisfactory reason for the absence as soon as possible after the period of absence.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Responsibilities:

- Students must attend school every day. They must be punctual to school and class and bring their required equipment for learning.
- Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours without permission from parents/carers and a member of the College Leadership Team. Once permission has been granted, students must be signed out from the Student Support Services Office.



- Students who arrive after 8.40am, must sign in at the Student Support Services Office. Arrivals after 9:00am must be accompanied with notification from parents/carers explaining the lateness
- Students must have notification from their parent / guardian of an Early Departure. Bus Passes or written consent must be shown to their classroom teacher when seeking permission to leave early from a lesson. No students, with Bus Pass or written approval should be leaving class before 2:50pm.
- Following a period of absence, students must ensure all missed work is completed. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to catch up on missed work and not that of teachers. Online resources may be available, but these are by no means "online learning" or a substitute for school attendance.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities:

- Parents/carers will ensure that their child will attend school on time, on every school day for the educational program in which they are enrolled.
- Parents/carers will make every effort to minimise disruption to their child's school day so their child has the best opportunity to learn.
- Parents/carers will ensure that their child is provided with necessary resources to ensure that students can and do attend school each day.
- Parents/carers will provide a satisfactory explanation of all absences – planned or otherwise. This includes for any days of excursions or school events. Parents/carers are asked to contact the College via one of the following methods to notify of lateness or absence: phone 4726 4900, log via Compass, or email via absence@smmc.catholic.edu.au.
- Parents/carers will also contact the College prior to any planned absences and permission for extended periods of absence or absence during exam or heavy assessment periods, is granted by the Principal, only after completion of an Absent from School Notification Form regarding the details of the student absence. Any assessment items due during a planned absence must be submitted on or before the due date.
- Parents / carers of students who drive independently to school are still required to contact the College regarding lateness to school. Parents / carers will also be contacted by the College to seek permission regarding early departure.
- If a student is refusing to come to school the parent/carers will contact the Assistant Principal Pastoral or the Pastoral Leader.

School Responsibilities:

- The College will provide a quality learning experience in a safe and supportive environment.
- The school will monitor and track students' attendance patterns at school and in individual lessons and keep families informed of concerning trends.
- The school has a legal responsibility to notify the Catholic Education Office, Department of Child Safety or the Child Protection Unit of the Queensland Police should they have evidence to support that one or both parents/carers are not fulfilling their legal obligation to ensure that their child attends school each day as per the legislative requirement.
- The school will discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and assistance to parents/carers and students when attendance is becoming a problem.



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- Students absent due to extenuating circumstances such as long periods of illness and bereavement of close family members will be able to access work via their Google Classroom
- The Pastoral Care Group Teacher and class teachers will keep an accurate records on attendance using the roll marking system. If they become aware of an absence via a parent note or phone call, they are asked to record a cover note on the database explaining the reason for the absence. Subject Teachers who identify a pattern of absence/lateness to their classes are asked to notify the Pastoral Care Group Teacher and the Pastoral Middle Leader.
- When a student is absent or late without explanation for 3 days or a pattern of absence/lateness has been identified, the Pastoral Leader will facilitate a phone call to discuss attendance and lateness issues with the family and student.
- Continued patterns of absence/lateness will be referred to the Assistant Principal – Pastoral and Deputy Principal Learning and Teaching, who will meet with the family and student to discuss the absence/lateness issues. A note will be recorded on the student's file.
- If further improvements are not made in relation to absence, the College may take a decision to alert authorities or to follow the procedures set out in the Townsville Catholic Education Office's Absenteeism Procedures.

CONSEQUENCES

- Chronic absenteeism (more than 10% absenteeism) is a complex issue and will be managed by a team of support staff, which is likely to include Classroom Teachers, Pastoral Middle Leaders, Guidance Counsellor or Indigenous Education Middle Leader (if applicable) and members of the College Leadership Team. The Pastoral Care Team will liaise with parents/carers to develop appropriate strategies to ensure that students attend school every day.
- Students who are found to be truant from class will be managed on an individual basis according to the College's Behaviour Policy. Any time missed will be required to be made up. This time could be used to participate in community service or by reviewing school work that was missed as a result of the absence.

INFORMATION REGARDING STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Parents considering withdrawing their child during term time should consider the following points:

1. The Queensland Government's education policy states that "parents of children of compulsory school age have a legal obligation to ensure that their children are enrolled in school and attend for every day of the educational program in which they are enrolled. Parents of students in the post compulsory phase have a legal obligation to ensure that these students participate full-time in an eligible option" (<http://education.qld.gov.au>)
2. Extended absence is considered detrimental to a student's academic progress. Students miss valuable learning experiences including preparation for assessment and examinations.
3. The College actively discourages families from withdrawing students for the purpose of a family holiday. It is expected that parents/carers make vacation arrangements during the fourteen weeks scheduled for school holidays.



4. Teachers at the St Margaret Mary's College are not required to provide work for students who are absent due to a family holiday. It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on any work missed, and a parent/carer to monitor their progress when they return from any absence. Online course materials via school generated Google sites may be available. However, these are not a substitute for attendance as this is where key learning and teaching occurs.

5. If the period of absence coincides with examinations, parent/carers should be aware that the College's Assessment Policy clearly states that the College is under no obligation to provide alternative arrangements for students who miss an examination for any purpose other than illness or bereavement. Prior notice of examination dates and times are provided in the College calendar and examination timetable. Year 10-12 students who do not have special provisions for a missed exam may result in having NA recorded for that unit of work which may impact on their QCE or ATAR. Any assignments must be handed in on or prior to the due date for planned absences.

6. Before making the decision to take a family holiday during term time, parents/carers are asked to read the Assessment Policy and Student Attendance Policy carefully.

7. Parents who still wish to withdraw students for more than two days' duration are required to complete the attached form. The form needs to be submitted to the Principal at least one month prior to the intended absence.



STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Notification Form Name of student(s):

Student Name

Year Level & Class (ie 7.1)

Reasons for absence

- Medical Grounds (attach a Medical certificate for Year 11 &12)
- Bereavement
- Family Wedding (attach invitation)
- Representative Sport (attach documentation)
- Other: Please provide details and documentation

Dates student(s) will not be attending school:

Please tick:

I have read and I am aware of the content of the College "Attendance Policy" and the "[Assessment Policy](#)".

I am aware teachers will not be required to provide work for students who are absent for family holidays.

Signed:
(Parent/Carer)

Date:

Principal Signature: Date:.....

St Margaret Mary's College Office Use only:	
Processed by:	
Emailed relevant teachers and PML <input type="checkbox"/>	Entered Compass <input type="checkbox"/>
Entered Daily Notices <input type="checkbox"/>	Notified Deputy Principal (Yr 11 & 12 students) <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments/action required:	