



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

St Patrick's College is a "community of faith, learning, respect and service". The College offers a range of comprehensive learning, pastoral, religious and co-curricular programs to provide a well rounded educational experience for its students. To maximise the benefits offered to students it is an expectation that students will attend all classes and scheduled College activities at all times.

### Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Under the *Education Act 2016*, the parent or guardian of a school-aged child must ensure the child attends school day. They are also required to provide formal notification of any student absence and the reason for this absence.

*Authorised absences* are those absences that meet the set of circumstances deemed for a student to be excused from daily attendance at school under the Education Act 2016.

*Unauthorised absences* are those absences that do not meet the set of circumstances deemed for a student to be excused from daily attendance at school under the Education Act 2016. The College, under the authority of the Education Act 2016, may investigate any *unauthorised absences*.

Information on the set of circumstances under which students may be excused from daily attendance can be located in the following documents:

- *Education Act 2016 (Sections 19 & 36)*
- *Ministerial Instruction No. 4 – Students Excused From Daily Attendance At School (2017)*
- *Education Regulations 2017 (Section 4)*

### Government Reporting Requirements for Unexplained Absences

Additionally, under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*, a child\* is considered at risk if they are not attending school. This requires a report to Child Protection by the College.

The Federal Government requires schools to report on the attendance of students receiving Centrelink allowances (Austudy, ABSTUDY, AIC and PES etc). This involves reporting students with five or more unexplained absences for a term. Ongoing payment is dependant on satisfactory attendance.

\*student under 17

## **Class Attendance**

Students are required to attend all classes during the school term and repeated non-attendance may affect their ability to fulfil course requirements and their overall learning outcomes.

## **Pastoral Care, Spiritual, Sporting, Cultural and Camps Programs**

At St Patrick's College it is a requirement that students attend Tutor and Home Group and Pastoral Care programs, Retreats, Reflection Days, Sporting Carnivals, College Camps and other College activities.

## **Notification of Student Absences**

### *Short Term Absences*

If a student is absent, the parent/caregiver is required to contact the College by phone (6341 9988), email ([absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au](mailto:absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au)) or website ([www.stpatricks.tas.edu.au/contact/](http://www.stpatricks.tas.edu.au/contact/)) prior to 9.30am on the day of absence. The College will SMS parent/caregivers after 10.00am if there has been an unexplained absence and a reply is expected as soon as possible thereafter, not exceeding two days, as it will then be considered an *unauthorised absence*. If a student is absent for medical reasons for a period of five days or longer, then they will be required to provide a medical certificate if requested by the Principal. Unexplained, unauthorised, or concerning patterns of absence will be followed up by the Tutor in the first instance and then by the House Head or Pastoral Coordinator as necessary.

### *Extraordinary & Long Term Absences*

The College recognises that students participate in non-College activities and events that are of considerable educational and personal value to them, such as playing representative sport at national or international level or participating in cultural experiences. Where a student is required to be absent from the College for these events for a period of 5 days or more, parent/caregivers must seek permission from the Principal by email ([principal@stpatricks.tas.edu.au](mailto:principal@stpatricks.tas.edu.au)) or in writing. The Principal will consider the request at their discretion and notify the parent/caregiver. The Principal will not formally approve any *unauthorised absences*. Please note that under the *Education Act 2016*, that family holidays constitute an *unauthorised absence*.

When a student experiences ill health, injury or family emergency, College staff will work with the family to provide appropriate ongoing education and support.

## **Unexplained and Unauthorised Absences**

If a student does not attend classes or scheduled College activities without a valid reason, there are expectations of restitution, consequences and accessing support to enable them to catch up and to participate fully in their education and College life.

Persistent unexplained and unauthorised absences are referred to the Head of School who, in consultation with the Tutor, House Head and Pastoral Coordinator,

initiates further formal contact with parents/caregivers as determined in the *Education Act 2016*.

Under the *Education Act 2016*, once all school-based intervention strategies regarding the student's truancy have been exhausted, the College will appoint an authorised person to investigate to absences and proceed to conference with the family as mediated by government representation.

### **Attendance Action Plan**

In instances where the patterns of attendance for a student suggest issues with truancy, the relevant staff member will make contact with home to discuss any issues that may be preventing the child's attendance at school. The official threshold at which point this contact will be made is when a student accrues 20 total days of non-attendance, including authorised and unauthorised absences. In instances where there is concern for the attendance of a student, contact may be made prior to the 20 day threshold. In the instances where patterns of non-attendance continue after parental/guardian contact, if required, the relevant staff will work with the family to produce a formal Attendance Action Plan to ensure regular attendance. This will require a meeting with personnel from the College, parents/guardian, the student, and personnel from the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office where appropriate. This is the final stage of school-based intervention strategies.

### **Students Who Arrive at the College Late**

Parents/caregivers of students who are late for personal reasons must provide an explanation in writing or contact the College to validate the late arrival, and the authorisation of such an absence is subject to the same parameters and follow-up outlined in the *Unexplained and Unauthorised* section above. Exceptions to this are late buses, as the College is notified of such occurrences.

Students who are late must sign in at Student Reception on the Main Campus (Middle School students) or Croagh Patrick Campus (Year 9 students) or the Senior Study Reception desk in the Edmund Rice Centre (Senior School students).

### **Conclusion**

Support for this policy by students and parents/caregivers is fundamental to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of students and the provision of an effective and holistic education program.

<b>Approved by:</b>	Principal / Board
<b>Issuing Group:</b>	Wellbeing / Leadership Team
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