

# DOMINIC COLLEGE

*A Catholic School in the Salesian Tradition*



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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Date               | 3 May 2018                 |
| Version No         | 3                          |
| Responsible Person | Andrew Pritchard           |
| Approved By        |                            |
| Review Date        | 1 April 2020               |
| Related Documents  | PC Policies and Procedures |

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## 1. Rationale

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The Non Government Schools Registration Board (NGSRB) Guidelines (Standard 9) require Dominic College to have attendance procedures that comply with relevant laws, are detailed in written documents in a clear and concise manner, and comply with all relevant Ministerial Instructions relating to evidence of the identity of students and their parents/guardians.

The College is also required to provide, for the purposes of re-registration with the NGSRB, its procedures for monitoring and recording student attendance and following up on extended absences and unexplained absences of any duration.

The College may also be required to provide its attendance records.

It is a legal requirement in Tasmania for every child between the ages of five and seventeen to attend school on a full time basis. Schools are also required to maintain an accurate record of student attendance.

In addition, Dominic College is required to be aware of the legal obligations regarding enrolment and attendance, as stipulated in Education Act 2016 and Education Regulations 2017.

Dominic College supports this legislation, and believes that students need to attend school every school day in order to fulfil their potential and achieve excellence.

The Dominic College Attendance Policy aims to ensure students, parents/carers are clear on the importance of regular attendance. It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Dominic College:

1. believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day;
2. believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community;
3. believes truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices;
4. monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance.

## 2. Responsibilities

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### School responsibilities:

1. Safe and supportive learning environment
2. Clear communication of expected dates of attendance
3. Notify parent/carer of student absence
4. Develop support structures to enable students to re-engage with their schooling

### Student responsibilities:

1. Punctual, regular school attendance
2. Commitment to learning

### **Parent responsibilities:**

1. Ensure the child attends school and that it is seen as a priority
2. Notify school promptly of student absence by 8.00 am
3. Ensure a safe and reliable mode of transport to and from school
4. Provide the school with the appropriate documentation regarding absences

## **3. Strategies**

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At Dominic College we promote 100% attendance by:

1. providing a comprehensive, vibrant and engaging curriculum;
2. providing a wide ranging co-curricular program;
3. providing individual pastoral care with a focus on student-well-being;
4. providing an on-site counselling service;
5. celebrating regular student attendance;
6. providing an extensive range of bus services to and from school;
7. keeping routinely updated records and informing parents of student absences;
8. using our attendance data to inform policy-development and decision-making about student absenteeism.

## **4. Responses to absences**

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When a student is absent without explanation Dominic College will take the following action:

1. Office Staff contact with parent/guardian before 9:30am via SMS.
2. If there has been no contact to the school, admin will attempt to make contact via phone call after 12:00pm.
3. Class/Pastoral Teacher will contact parent/guardian after three consecutive days absence.
4. Explanation will be requested via letter of unexplained absences.
5. Request a Medical Certificate if a student is absent for 3 days or more.
6. If a Medical Certificate cannot be presented a Statutory Declaration from the legal guardians will be requested.

## **5. When a pattern of absence is identified**

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Dominic College considers a pattern of absence to be seven or more day's absence without an authorized reason (see Section 8), or in the case of illness, seven or more days without medical certificates.

When a pattern of absence is identified Dominic College will take the following action:

1. House Coordinator/Pastoral Care Coordinator K-6 will contact the family and request a meeting.
2. An attendance plan will be created.
3. Formal letter will be sent home to parents requesting an explanation for absences. This letter will be added to the student's file.
4. A meeting is requested with the Pastoral Care Coordinator 7-10/K-6.
5. Counselling may be requested.
6. Letter documenting the meeting is sent to the parents by the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

At Dominic College the consequences of continued unexplained or unauthorised absences may include one or more of the following:

1. A family meeting with Director of Pastoral Care and a subsequent letter is sent to the family documenting the outcomes of the meeting
2. A meeting with the Principal to review the student's enrolment
3. Withdrawal from College activities
4. Inability to meet course requirements
5. The family may be invited to attend a compulsory conciliation conference.

## **6. Referral to the Education Registrar for Compulsory Conciliation Conferences (CCC)**

After the College has followed its internal systems and procedures for unexplained absences, and there is continued unexplained absences by the student, the matter may be referred to the Education Registrar under the guidelines in Ministerial Order No 6 relating to School Student Absences.

Matters to be referred to the Education Registrar and best suited for CCC are outlined in the Guidelines for Schools, including issues where non-attendance relates to:

- children in primary school, particularly the early years
- an incident at or related to college
- a dispute between the parent/guardian and the college, or the student and the college
- an allegation of bullying, harassment or inappropriate social behaviour
- difficulties with transport
- a disability or illness (including anxiety) suffered by the child or the parent/guardian
- insufficient skills or understanding on the part of the parent to successfully get the child to college
- difficulty with transition points, or
- difficulty engaging a parent to determine the cause of non-attendance.

## **Urgent Referrals to the Education Registrar for Compulsory Conciliation Conferences (CCC)**

Urgent referrals to the Education Registrar for CCC should be considered where:

- an incident has occurred at college which is unlikely to be resolved by the passage of time and needs to be resolved quickly in order to expedite the student's return to the College
- a student with otherwise excellent attendance suddenly ceases attending college with no reasonable excuse, or
- a parent/guardian indicates at a very early stage that the student will not be returned to the College unless a particular matter is resolved and the College needs the assistance of a third party to resolve the matter.

## **Referrals to the Education Registrar**

Referrals to the Education Registrar must include, where such information exists:

- The referral form as approved by the Registrar, signed by the Principal and including confirmation from the Administrative Authority to proceed
- a copy of the college student's attendance records, certified by principal
- copies of all correspondence sent to parents/guardians regarding non-attendance
- a copy of the college student's enrolment form, that includes the parent/guardian contact details
- a copy of any policy of the Administrative Authority as it relates to school student attendance and the managing of absences of college students not authorised by Part 3 of the Act
- summary of phone or verbal conversations held with parents/guardians regarding non-attendance
- correspondence from parents/guardians including medical certificates
- copy of all other information regarding the non-attendance of college student including meeting notes, action plans etc
- summary of actions including support/intervention provided to date to engage with the school student (including all relevant information from teaching and support staff, i.e. college social workers/psychologists), and
- such other information as determined by the Registrar.

## **7. Truancy**

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Truancy occurs when a student chooses not to attend school without parental consent.

At Dominic College, reports of truancy are taken seriously. Parents and carers should report any suspected truancy by contacting the College by phone. 62746000

## **8. Reasons a student can be authorised to be absent include:**

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Reasons a student can be authorised to be absent include:

- sickness/incapacity
- medical, legal or related appointments
- natural disaster or extreme weather preventing your child from safely attending their enrolled school
- terminal illness of an immediate family member
- cultural observance, if the parent notifies the school in advance
- bereavement of a person your child had a close, significant or family relationship with
- having witnessed or been subjected to family violence
- being a participant or official at a recognised State, National or International event participation in a recognised learning experience
- an application for home education being received by the Education Registrar and provisional registration being granted.

## 9. Prolonged Student Absences

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Prolonged absences are generally a matter of:

- illness/health
- attendance at interstate competitions
- extraordinary circumstances

Students are not encouraged to be absent without good reason. Long absences and/or inconsistent attendance may result in the student failing to meet specific course requirements and consequently affect their overall academic progress and development.

## 10. Prolonged Illness

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Prolonged illness is an absence of more than a week. In times of prolonged illness, such as ongoing hospitalisation, recovery and rehabilitation from injury or surgery, or a chronic medical condition preventing attendance for a period of time, teachers will provide academic support, appropriate to the student's needs at the time. This will be assessed on a case by case basis and case managed by appointed pastoral care staff with varying levels of support according to needs.

Students have a responsibility to request and complete any missed work and/or assessments once they have returned to school. Parents can request work from teachers to be completed at home by contacting the class teacher in the K-6 years and House Coordinator in the 7-10 years.

***Process for requesting work:***

Years K-6:



Years 7-10:



It is the parent's responsibility to provide a medical certificate to explain student absences from school for **3 days** or more – 3 consecutive days or within one teaching week.

## 11. Attendance at interstate competitions/extraordinary circumstances

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In the event of a student seeking permission to be absent for a prolonged period of time:

It shall be the parent's obligation to:

- Obtain permission by applying in writing to the Deputy Principal ahead of time so that the necessary circumstances are outlined and courtesies are attended to.

Please note that students may be advised not to take leave during particular times of the year, depending upon the specific request, for example, Year 10 exams.

It shall be the student's obligation to:

1. Inform the Pastoral/Class and Subject teachers of the nature and times of absence;
2. Obtain work from teachers of all subjects so that the study patterns are not interrupted;
3. Make sure that all written work necessary to meet the requirements of courses is submitted for assessment on return.

## 12. Taking a Holiday in Term Time

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The College does not support the practice of parents and/or guardians scheduling holidays during term time. The taking of a holiday during term time goes against our belief that every day at school counts to ensuring sound academic progress.

Student progress is assessed over a year-long period, necessitating a balance of work requirements and meeting certain criteria in each unit undertaken. The taking of a holiday during term time can significantly hinder student progress and achievement in that school year.

Schools have a legal responsibility to maintain accurate records of student attendance. The College does not consider the taking of a holiday during term time a legitimate explanation of absence from school.

| Reason                      | Contact                                                                          |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prolonged illness           | Inform/request work from Class teacher (Yrs K-6) or House Coordinator (Yrs 7-10) |
| Interstate Competitions     | Request permission from Deputy Principal                                         |
| Extraordinary Circumstances | Request permission from Deputy Principal                                         |

Developed: 2018

Review Date: 2020