



Attendance Policy

1 Rationale

St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students which enhances their holistic educational needs. Research shows that regular attendance is integral to successful academic, employment and social outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that students, staff and parents have the same understanding of the importance of regular student attendance.

Gregory Terrace is committed to promoting the key messages of the "Every Day Counts" campaign which promotes the following:

- All children should be enrolled at school and attend school every day
- Schools should monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance
- Truancy and chronic absenteeism can place a student in an unsafe situation and impact on their future
- employability and life choices
- Attendance at school is the responsibility of the student and his parents.

The College Attendance Policy aims to provide students with the ability to achieve to the best of their ability and to create a clear, inclusive and simple attendance policy that promotes high expectations of student attendance.

2 Application

Parent responsibilities:

- Ensure that their child attends the College on every school day for the program in which they are enrolled.
- Provide a satisfactory explanation of all absences, that is, any time during which a student is not attending or participating in their educational programs.
- Contact the College prior to any planned absences. Where it is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absence prior to 9am to the absentee line on the day of absence.
- In the case of planned absences during the term or exam period parents are to seek permission from the Principal.
- If the extended absence is approved by the Principal, parents need to contact their son's House Dean to organise school work for the period of absence.
- If the extended absence is medically based then parents are expected to contact their son's House Dean to organise school work for the period of absence.
- If a student is refusing to attend school parents should contact the House Dean to initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child's attendance or participation in educational programs.
- Provide a note if their child is required to leave the College early.
- Provide a written note explaining any lateness.
- Advise the College of any changes to address or phone numbers to ensure the College records are accurate - Up to date data is essential in an emergency.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students must attend school each day.
- They must be on time and have all the necessary equipment.
- Never leave the College during school hours without permission from parents and the school and without signing out at Student Services.
- Report to Student Services if arriving at school after morning tutor group.
- Ensure all missed school work is completed.

School Responsibilities:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers regarding the Attendance Policy and procedures and making this publicly available.
- Monitor student attendance daily through roll marking procedures.
- Notify parents of any unexplained absences, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence.
- Notify the Dean of Students when concerned that the explanation for student absence is unsatisfactory.
- Discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance has become a problem.
- Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.
- Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

3 Procedures for School Attendance

Attendance:

- If students are absent from the College at any time, parents should advise the College by 9am and provide a satisfactory explanation for the absence. They can do this by completing both points below:
 1. Phoning the Absentee line on 3214 5244, prior to 9am.
 2. Writing a note in the student's diary to the House Tutor on his return to the College.

Terrace will maintain attendance records and monitor the attendance of enrolled students through the implementation of the following procedures:

- Students are expected to be at school by 8.25am and to go to Tutor Group in adequate time. Student attendance is taken for the first time in Tutor Groups and a daily absentee report is distributed to all teachers.
- Students continually late to Tutor Group are to be referred to House Deans.
- Class rolls will be marked by staff at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers will only mark students as being in attendance if they are physically present in the classroom. Any discrepancies in attendance will be referred to the student's House Dean.

Truancy

- Students found to be truant from class/es will be managed in accordance with the Student Support Procedures. House Deans will communicate with parents and if necessary set up a meeting with parents, student and the Dean of Students. The behaviour will be noted on the student's file and any time missed will be required to be made up. This time could be done by participating in community service or in reviewing the school work that was missed as a result of the truancy.

Chronic absenteeism

- Terrace identifies chronic absenteeism as students who are absent from school for more than 10% of the time a student is expected to be present at the College.
- The issue of chronic absenteeism is complex and covers a range of behaviours, including school refusal. It is important for the College to investigate the patterns and underlying causes of non-attendance so that appropriate strategies that address the specific type of absenteeism can be implemented. There is no quick or simple solution, nor a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing absenteeism. However, the College believes that a good partnership with parents can assist in reducing chronic absenteeism.
- Initially, chronic absenteeism will be managed by House Deans, counsellors and the Dean of Students. Together they will communicate with all necessary stakeholders to ensure that they are well informed. In particular, House Deans, counsellors and the Dean of Students will liaise with parents to assist with developing the appropriate strategies to ensure their son presents at school on a regular basis. The following strategies may be employed to support parents and students:
 - Issuing fact sheets
 - Developing home based behaviour contracts
 - Use of restorative processes

It is important to note that, while the College will assist with tackling chronic absenteeism, the responsibility of getting students to school lies with his parents, not the College.

4 Queensland Legislation Regarding Truancy Laws

- The current position is that a young person must be earning or learning until the age of 17.
- The legislation includes:
 - Making it compulsory for a young person to stay at school until they complete Year 10 or turn 16 years of age, whichever comes first, and in addition,
 - Participating in education and training for:
 - A further two years
 - Until they gain a Senior Certificate, or
 - Until they gain a Certificate III Vocational qualification, or
 - Until they have turned 17 years of age
- Exemptions include young people who enter full-time work after they have completed Year 10 or who have turned 16 years of age.

Responsible Officer		Dean of Students
Review		Annually
Approval	Version	Approval Date
College Principal	1.0	May 2017