

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **RATIONALE**

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School believes that regular attendance at school increases the opportunity for children to participate in the life of the community and to optimise students' learning. The Education Act requires that children of school age (six-fifteen years) resident are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Education Department.

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.

Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.

All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.

If Students are missing from school for more than 10 consecutive days (due to illness or holidays). Parents are required to apply to the Non State School Accreditation Board (NSSAB) for an exemption from compulsory schooling. These application forms are available from the school office and once filled in are to be returned to the school to be processed and forwarded to the NSSAB.

### **AIMS:**

This policy aims to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

#### **Agreed Practice:**

Rolls are marked twice daily and all absences noted. All absentee notes must be signed and dated by the teacher. At the end of each week rolls are collected, checked, signed and dated by the Assistant Principal and at the end of each Term all notes are collected and filed in the students file. At the end of each Year the rolls are collected by the school secretary and stored in the archives. These are then kept for the period prescribed by the Education Act. Parents are reminded by newsletter to contact the school by letter or phone on the absentee line (3820 1244) to advise of a child's absence. Phone messages and emails are passed onto the relevant teacher. Phone messages must be followed up with a written note on the child's return.

If concerned about a student's attendance history, a teacher will inform the Principal or Assistant Principals or Student Secretary who will endeavour to contact the parents by phone to discuss the child's absences. If absences continue, a letter is sent advising the parents of the legal requirement to attend school on a daily basis. A date is given by which time the parent needs to respond. If attendance remains a problem, a notification is sent to Brisbane Catholic Education Centre - Student Protection Officer to report the poor levels of attendance. A meeting will be set up to meet with the parent, staff and a member from Brisbane Catholic Education. BCE will then write to the parent setting a date by which the parent needs to respond. If no improvement in attendance is made, BCE and the School will notify the Non-State School's Office. If a student is absent without notification over an extended period of time, attempts will be made to contact the parent. The roll will be marked as absent until the student returns or until the school is notified that the child has enrolled at another school.

## Our Expectations

- Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note or return a completed absence form (See Form 1 below) to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.

## Our Commitment

- The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
- All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers.
- Brisbane Catholic Education Centre, Non-State Schools Accreditation Board, DEERW auditors as well as the Courts may seek student attendance records.

- The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. (See Form 2 below).
- The principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised.

Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Child Safety.

- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to Brisbane Catholic Education, Non-State Schools and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

#### Evaluation:

This policy will continue to be evaluated annually as part of the school's Strategic Renewal

**STUDENT ABSENCE FORM**

Student Name: ..... Class: .....

Date of Absence: .....

Reason for Absence: .....

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Form 2

**ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

ALEXANDRA HILLS QLD 4161

***STUDENT ABSENCES***

Date.....

Dear Parent / Guardian,

It has been brought to my attention that your child .....has been absent from school recently and has not yet provided a written note explaining the reason for the absence.

The date/s of the absence/s are: .....

It is an Education Department requirement that students provide a note from parents explaining all absences. Therefore, you are required to provide a note covering the above absence/s from school as soon as possible.

Staff Signature.....