



# Attendance and Absenteeism Policy and Procedure



*Sacred Heart School Attendance Policy aims to maximise participation in learning programs by all students. Regular attendance is integral to successful academic and social outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of regular student attendance.*

## **Rationale**

Each Catholic community, organisation and individual collaboratively engaged in the educational ministry of the Church in the Archdiocese of Brisbane is called to:

### **Teach**

*We promote faith in Jesus Christ, teaching and learning about Jesus, the gospel and the faith of the Catholic Christian community. Learning is lifelong, life-giving and engages the whole person.*

### **Challenge**

*Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we challenge those we educate to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities.*

### **Transform**

*We educate for a transformed world in communion, by nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership, and exercising a preferential option for the poor and the marginalised.*

## **Sacred Heart Vision/Mission**

To develop Spirit, Mind and Body in our Catholic Community. We will achieve this by:

- Living Catholic Faith, Values and traditions that acknowledge our heritage
- Delivering a holistic education that supports the development of the lifelong learner
- Developing positive and inclusive relationships based in Christian Values

The Vision Statements for Catholic Education and Sacred Heart underpin and guide the development and implementation of this policy.

## **Values**

Sacred Heart School encourages and supports students to achieve to the best of their ability through regular attendance at school.

## **Purpose**

To provide students with the opportunity 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.

At Sacred Heart School, we are committed to improving attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and supportive school environment through the School Wide Positive Behaviour System (SWPBS) and Kids Matter Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiative
- Ensuring consistent follow up of absences with parents/carers
- Working with students and families to reduce absenteeism

### **Policy Statement**

- Sacred Heart will monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance
- Foster and promote an understanding that attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community
- Improve absenteeism notifications
- Use attendance data to monitor and identify at risk students

### **Scope**

The parents/carers, students and teachers each have specific responsibilities to ensure regular attendance at school.

#### ***Parents/Carers Responsibilities:***

- That parents/carers actively support the school in ensuring their child/children attend school every day of each school term
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences, that is, any time during which a student is not attending or participating in their educational program. This can be done by phone or email prior to the start of school at 8:30am on the day of absence
- Sign the early/late attendance register in the Office if the student is arriving late or leaving early, explaining the reason for lateness/early departure
- Contact the school, or write a note in the student's diary for the class teacher prior to any planned absence
- Contact the class teacher if student absence is to be for an extended period of time (e.g. family reasons or illness) and request school work
- Contact the class teacher or a member of the Leadership Team if a student is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child's attendance or participation at school
- Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Up-to-date data is essential in an emergency

#### ***Student Responsibilities:***

- Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, students must attend school each day. They must be on time and have all necessary equipment
- Never leave school during school hours without their parents/carers who need to sign them out of the Office prior to departure
- Remind parents to report to the Office if arriving to school after 8:30am to explain their lateness by signing the late arrival register

### **School Responsibilities:**

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Attendance and Absenteeism Policy and Procedure (including the Policy and Procedures for *late arrival* and *early departure*) and make this publicly available through the school's website, newsletters and enrolment package
- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at the beginning and end of each day in *Pastoral Care time*
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence
- Discuss individual attendance with students of concern 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

## **Procedures - Reporting and Monitoring Attendance**

### **Attendance**

If students are absent from school at any time, parents/carers should advise the school by:

- Phoning the school absentee line, preferably before 8:30am
- Writing a note to their child's class teacher via the school diary
- Class rolls will be marked by staff at the beginning of each day at 9:00am. Teachers will only mark students as being in attendance if students are physically present in the classroom
- Class rolls will be marked by staff each day at 2:00pm

### **Lateness**

- Students who arrive late to school after 8:30am are required to report to the Office with their parent/carer, to sign the late arrival register explaining the reason for lateness
- Students will be issued with a *Late Pass* to present to the class teacher. The teacher will record lateness in *eMinerva* and send the late slip back to the office via the 'communication pouch'
- If a student is late for three or more consecutive days, contact will be made with student's parents
- Students who continually arrive late to school will be required to attend an interview with the Principal/Assistant Principal and their parents

### **Leaving School During the Day**

- Students are not permitted to leave school during school hours without their parents/carers signing the early departure register in the Office
- Appointments to doctors, dentists, illness or other urgent appointments should be the only reasons students leave early
- Office Secretary will mark the student absent on the class roll upon leaving

### **School Sport**

- Students are not to be taken home directly from school sport without being signed out by their parents/carers
- In the case of the guardian's delegate, a written note must be presented upon signing out
- All staff supervising students during interschool sport, will have a class list that has provision for parents/carers (or delegate where with written permission) to sign out the student
- Upon return to school, teachers send this class list to the office where rolls are updated

### **Responses to Absences**

- Absences for which a satisfactory reason has been provided are considered *explained absences*. A School Secretary will record absentee notifications from parents on the class rolls as "absent" prior to 10:00am
- An absence for which a satisfactory reason has not been provided is considered an *Unexplained Absence*

### **Procedures for Unexplained Absences:**

- Parents/carers with mobile phone numbers recorded in the school's database will be notified each day of an unexplained absence via text message. Parents are required to respond to these text messages by contacting the Office by phone. Parents/carers are asked to immediately contact the Office on the Absentee Line if they believe their child is in attendance
- When students are absent without explanation for 3 consecutive days, the Class teacher or Assistant Principal will phone parents/carers
- When students are absent without explanation for 3 or more days in any given fortnight, an *Absence Letter* will be mailed home, reminding parents/carers of their obligations to ensure their child attends school on every school day and the requirement for providing satisfactory explanations for all absences. Parents are asked to provide the reason for the unexplained absences, sign and return the *Absence Report* to the child's class teacher. Alternatively, they may phone the Office or speak with the class teacher
- Where there is a continuation of unexplained absences, or absences without satisfactory reasons, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Principal to address issues contributing to these absences and to discuss implementation of appropriate strategies and support mechanisms
- Where unsatisfactory attendance still continues, the Principal may commence processes associated with *Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation*

### **Attendance Procedures in the Absence of Class Teacher:**

- Supply teacher to be given a class list and to mark the roll according to procedure
- Phone absences through to the office staff at 9:15am and 2:15pm
- Office staff will enter absence data into eMinerva