

Sacred Heart College



Yarrowonga PC 30.0 Student Non-Attendance Policy And Procedure

Ratified by Leadership	October 2019
Responsibility for currency	Principal
Year for next major review	2021
Record of revisions	

RATIONALE

Student non-attendance is the absence from College of a school aged student, without the consent of parents/guardians, during College hours. Common reasons for student non-attendance include boredom, embarrassment and frustration at poor performance, fear of bullying or harassment, drug dependency, family stress or conflict, homelessness and defiance of authority.

Student non-attendance can compound the problems of students who are already behind in class as a result of behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties. They gradually fall further behind in their studies and jeopardise their chances of completing their education.

This increases the risk of students dropping out of College, becoming involved in delinquency and criminal activity and ultimately, reducing their adult employment prospects.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have the right to feel safe and to be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

IMPLEMENTATION

In line with our legal obligations, Sacred Heart College has developed detailed policies and procedures to manage our obligations relating to Enrolment and Attendance of Students.

This policy has been developed specifically to manage issues relating to student non-attendance.

Sacred Heart College is committed to the management of regular College attendance and providing a safe and positive learning environment which promotes engagement and participation.

It is our policy that:

- All unauthorized absences from College are unacceptable.
- High expectations of attendance will be made known to all students;
- Processes for unexplained student absences are implemented to reduce absenteeism and ensure the safety of students;
- Student-Non-Attendance prevention strategies are developed and implemented with the College community considering the needs of students, and
- Early intervention strategies and family support programs will be provided.

Management of Non-Attendance – Immediate

College absenteeism is monitored by Learning Advisors closely to identify students who are failing to attend school as required.

To avoid suspicion, parents/guardians are required to contact the College prior to College commencement time to explain their child's absence, late arrival or request for early leave.

All teachers are required to mark the roll within 10 minutes of the commencement of class. Any student absences are recorded by the class teacher.

The College administration department reviews absentee notifications to identify any students that are absent where no notification of absence has been received from a parent/guardian.

Where a student is absent without explanation and cannot be located by 9.30am, parents/guardians are forwarded a text message to their mobile phones in the following terms:

SHC records indicate that your child..... is absent from College without explanation. Please contact us as a matter of urgency.

If the student's parents/guardian do not contact the College within one hour of sending the text message, attempts will be made by administration to call the parents/guardians to confirm the location of the student.

Management of Non-Attendance – Parental Notifications

Where parents repeatedly fail to notify the College of legitimate absences, the college will write a letter to parents requesting that they comply with the College's notification procedure.

In cases of serious non-compliance, the College may request that the parents/guardians attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss the importance of parental notifications in ensuring the safety of all students.

All students found to be consistently failing to attend school as required, will be subject to the consequences as outlined in the Discipline – Student Policy.

Where absences are recurrent the College will investigate the student's absences having regard to factors such as the day of the week, the class, subject or year level and particular social group which may affect their attendance.

Parents/guardians will be contacted to discuss issues which may be related to student's non-attendance. Where appropriate, the College will work with the parents/guardians and the student to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

Sacred Heart College adopts a number of prevention strategies based on the Victorian Government's Every Day Counts Program. We adopt the strategies that are appropriate to the College's environment.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff are expected to:

- Communicate and promote the College's attendance expectations regarding the importance of attending College every day and arriving on time by
- Talking to students about why it is important to be at school and discuss the College's attendance policy.
- Talking positively about regular attendance.
- Contact parents in their LA to follow up student absence to.
- That accurate records of student attendance are maintained and concerns raised with the Year Level Leader or Wellbeing Leader.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training
- A whole College approach to encourage regular attendance
- Implement strategies to address specific needs of each individual student, according to their reasons for non-attendance.
- Development of positive relationships within the College through the LA system and the development of social and emotional skills, mentoring and anti-bullying strategies
- Establishing positive home-College relationships to assist parents/guardians to support their child's attendance at College.
- Effective communication procedures.
- Effective record keeping procedures and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Related Policies:

Attendance Policy

Enrolment Policy

Student Duty of Care Policy

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed at least every three years.

Initially Ratified: 2019

Next Review to be Completed by: 2022