



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## FEBRUARY 2017

### 1. **PURPOSE**

This attendance policy aims to clearly articulate the responsibilities of the parents/carers and the school staff in regard to optimising student attendance.

### 2. **POLICY STATEMENT**

Education in NSW is compulsory. All students from six years of age and under the minimum school leaving age of 17 are legally required to attend school. Regular attendance at schools is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

### 3. **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students, staff members and parents at St Patrick's.

### 4. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Our school, in partnership with the parents and carers, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, the school staff monitors part or whole day absences as part of their duty of care for the students' welfare.

### 5. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **i. Parents are responsible for:**

- a. Enrolling their children of compulsory school age in a government or registered non-government school or registering them with the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) for home schooling.
- b. Ensuring that their children attend school regularly.
- c. Explaining to the school the absences of their children promptly and within seven days.
- d. Taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

#### **ii. School staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:**

- a. Promoting a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- b. Maintaining accurate records of student attendance across the school day.
- c. Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.
- d. Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

#### **iii. The principal is responsible for ensuring that:**

- a. Students are enrolled consistent with the Diocesan Enrolment Policy.
- b. Attendance records are maintained in accordance with the Diocesan approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students.
- c. Staff accurately record student attendance.
- d. A system is established for signing out students who need to leave the school premises during school hours e.g. appointments.

- e. All attendance records, including details of transfers and exemptions, are accessible to the Director of Schools, the Assistant Director, or BOSTES.
- f. Documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.
- g. The Director of Schools or Assistant Director is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.
- h. Relevant school policies and procedures address attendance issues including truancy.
- i. Structures and procedures are established that support staff in addressing issues of student non-attendance.
- j. School staff are trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised.
- k. Staff induction and training remains a recurring priority.
- l. Staff, parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements.
- m. All cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented. School processes should define identification and response.
- n. All reasonable measures are taken to contact parents promptly concerning an unexplained absence. (See Appendix 1 for proforma letters).
- o. Where unexplained absences are recorded within seven days of the occurrence of the absence, the hard copy roll should reflect that absence.

#### iv. **Documentation**

- a. Teachers' electronic rolls must reflect the highest professional standards in complying with BOSTES requirements.
- b. Parents are required to complete a "late arrival" slip if their child arrives at school after 9.00am. The student takes the slip of paper to their class teacher, who uses the information on the slip to record in the roll the time of arrival and the attendance code.
- c. Parents are required to complete an "early dismissal" slip if they are collecting their child before 2.55pm. The slip is given directly to the child's teacher who uses the information on the slip to record in the roll the time of departure and the attendance code.
- d. At the beginning of each week, unexplained absences from the previous week will be followed up as follows: A transcript of any unexplained absences from the previous week will be sent home to parents. The parents are required to write the reason for the absence(s) onto the transcript and to return it to their child's teacher by Monday of the following week. If the reason given is considered to be reasonable, the teacher will amend the records to show that the child had leave of absence on that day/s.

#### v. **Following up on absences**

Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school-based strategies, including:

- a. Student and parent interviews.
- b. Reviewing the appropriateness of the student's educational program.
- c. Development of a school-based attendance improvement plan.
- d. Referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies.
- e. Support from school-based personnel.

### 6. **BUDGET**

The school will make provision each year in its annual budget for professional development opportunities for the staff in regard to this area.

### 7. **NEXT REVIEW DATE**

This policy will be reviewed in 2020 in consultation with relevant staff.

**8. DEFINITIONS**

- i. BOSTES: Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards.
- ii. Partial absence: An absence for part of the school day.

**9. LEGISLATIVE / PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES**

Attendance K-12 Policy, Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, 2012.

## APPENDIX 1: PROFORMA LETTER TO PARENTS AND CARERS

### Letter 1

Dear <Insert parent's name>,

I am writing to regarding <Insert student's name> attendance at school.

<Insert student's name> was absent from school on the following days: <insert days>

We are required to enter all absences onto an attendance register, showing the reason for those absences. The school has not received any contact from you regarding this matter. I ask you to contact your child's teacher as soon as possible to explain the reason for the absences.

Education in New South Wales is compulsory. All students from six years of age and under the minimum school leaving age of 17 are legally required to attend school. Furthermore, regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

(Principal)

### Letter 2

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding <Insert student's name> attendance at school.

<Insert student's name> was absent from school on the following days: <insert days>.

I have previously written to you about this matter, but I have not received a reason for your child's non-attendance. I will now contact the Assistant Director at the Catholic Schools Office to pass on my concern and to assist me in determining how to proceed with this matter.

Education in New South Wales is compulsory. All students from six years of age and under the minimum school leaving age of 17 are legally required to attend school. Furthermore, regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential.

If you wish to discuss <Insert student's name> attendance, please contact the school to arrange an appointment to meet with <insert name of teacher> as soon as possible.

Thank you for you cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

(Principal)