



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy No. 16

Amended: March 2015
To be reviewed: 2017

"Aims to provide a solid foundation for academic excellence and spiritual growth towards authentic Christian Living."

Scope

These procedures are in place for all students at Kerang Christian College.

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Kerang Christian College take seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Rationale

Statutory expectations require that schools record attendance at least twice per day. In addition, teachers are required to have a record of student attendance for the classes that they teach.

There may be various reasons for poor attendance – including student health and well-being, family disruption, extended family holidays, school refusal, or poor motivation on behalf of the student. Most concerns about the rate of attendance will require a pastoral focus.

Generally speaking, school attendance is compulsory in Victoria. However, there are specific attendance expectations for VCE students, which need to be monitored and managed carefully.

Specific Attendance Requirements

VCE Students.

The VCE Guidelines (published by VCAA) expressly invite schools to set their own attendance requirements for the VCE.

Section 10.1 VCE Attendance: "All VCE units require 50 hours of class time. A student needs to attend sufficient class time to complete work. The school sets minimum class time and attendance rules. If a student has completed work but there has been a substantial breach of attendance rules and the school therefore wishes to assign an N to the unit, the school must assign an N for one or more outcomes and thus the unit."

At Kerang Christian College we communicate the following expectations in our "VCE Student Policy Handbook" (a document which is given to all VCE students):

"(Section) 4.3. VCE Attendance Policy ... Students are expected to attend all time-tabled classes, excursions, School and Year Level Assemblies, including Chapel services, and be punctual at all times. The College policy is a minimum class attendance of 90% (unless acceptable explanations are provided) for each unit of study during a semester"

VCE Staff and Students should be familiar with Section 4.3 of the VCE Student Policy Handbook.

VCE staff are required to keep a roll for every VCE class. (See VCE Staff Policy Handbook)

Implementation

- Class Rolls are kept in the school office.
- The classroom teacher will mark the attendance roll in the morning home group class and at the commencement of Period 5.
- Class Rolls will be returned to school office immediately after the roll is marked.
- Reasons for absences may be offered verbally by phone or personally to the school office on the day the child is away.
- Parents are required to notify the school before 9:30am.
- Students that are late to school should attend the school office for a late pass.
- Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of co-operation regarding student attendance will result in a meeting being organised with the principal.

Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the principal to the Department of Human Services.

- Student absences are recorded on student's twice yearly reports.
- Students leaving the school early should report to the school office. Primary students should be signed out by a Parent/Guardian. Secondary students may sign themselves out if a note or phone call is provided by a Parent/Guardian.

Acceptable reasons for student absences are:

- Sickness
- Danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease.
- Temporary or permanent infirmity.
- Unavoidable and sufficient cause, e.g. - bereavement within the family or of a close friend; or - family trauma.
- Attending a school organised activity, e.g. excursion, camp, work experience, Cultural event.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absences are:

- Truancy.
- Shopping expeditions with or without caregiver.
- Haircuts.
- Helping at home or at parent / caregivers place of work.
- Part-time or casual work (including travel to and from such work).
- Appointments which could be made out of school hours (including driving lessons / tests.
- Excessive time for appointments which are avoidable.
- Holidays

Parent / Caregivers Responsibilities Regarding Student Absences

It is the Parent/Caregivers responsibility to ensure that their children are enrolled in and attend a school every day, unless there are acceptable reasons for absence. Parent/Caregivers are asked to notify the school of any absence before 9:30am on the day of the absence.

Short-term absences - 1 or 2 days

Parent/Caregivers are asked to provide a written note, detailing the reason for absence, on the day of return to school.

Long-term absences - 3 or more days

Parent/caregivers are asked to contact the school before the absence, if possible, or on the third day at the latest to explain the absence. In addition, a written note, stating the reason for the absence needs to be provided on the day of return to school. If the reason is sickness, caregivers are expected to provide a Doctor's Certificate (for 3 days or more).

Very long-term absences

Parent/caregivers are asked to discuss with the Principal the implications of long-term absences from the school, before firm plans are made. When students are unavoidably absent for a long period of time, where possible the school will provide details of work for students to go on with, if requested to do so.

Please note that the College and parents/guardians need to be familiar with the attendance requirements as detailed in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

Late Pass Procedure

1. Students arriving after 8:50am must go to the Student Reception at the Administration Office for a Late Pass. Office staff will print a Late Pass which will include the student name, Home Group, arrival time and date.
2. Class teachers should not admit students late to class, without enquiring as to the reason for lateness. If a student has just arrived at school, the Late Pass should be sighted by the teacher as evidence that the student has signed in.
3. The student is to present the copy of the Late Pass to the Home Group teacher during the morning or afternoon Home Group period.
4. Persistently late students will be referred to the Head of School and have such other consequences applied as are deemed appropriate by the Principal.

Examples of acceptable reasons for lateness are:

- Accident on way to school.
- Transport breakdown on way to school.
- Transport or College bus late.
- Other unavoidable and sufficient reasons.

Parents/Caregivers are asked to provide a written note, preferably in the College Diary. If no note is written on the day of lateness, then a note must be shown to the teacher on the next day.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for lateness are:

- Truancy.
- Sleeping in.
- Just late (no reason given).
- Haircut.
- Shopping.
- Appointments which could have been made out of school hours (including driving lesson/test).
- Other avoidable and insufficient reasons.

College Action for Unacceptable Reasons

- Referral to the Head of Primary for Primary School students.
- Detention for second and third offences for Secondary School students.
- Referral to Head of School/ Principal for third and subsequent offence for more serious consequences.

NOTE: Lateness on compassionate grounds, e.g. family trauma, will be followed up by the Pastoral Care Team for the sake of the welfare of students. In these cases detention will not be given.

Marking Rolls Procedures

It is important to realise that rolls are a legal documents. They can be used in evidence in a court of law and if incorrectly filled in can bring evidence into question. They are a legal record of a student's attendance at school for the compulsory years of schooling. They also provide important information concerning VCE students. Rolls show the attendance of students in a school and are used for determination funding of per capita grants. For all these reasons they need to be marked accurately.

1. Attendance Rolls must be marked twice daily during morning and then at the commencement of Period 5.
2. Students not present at Home Group should have an "Ab" placed in the appropriate column. The office staff will update this document if a student arrives late.
3. Insist that all absences are followed up with an absence note. They can include notes from home, or a written note following a phone call. This information must be communicated to the office staff so the attendance can be recorded accurately into the school attendance system.
4. Long term and/or habitual absences as well as welfare concerns re absences should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of School. This is also particularly important for VCE regulations.
5. **STUDENTS SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO MARK A ROLL**

6. All Prep to Year 12 rolls should be returned to the roll storage areas after each recording.
7. Rolls will be checked regularly by Heads of Schools, Administration Staff for Government requirement data collection and maintenance purposes.

Procedures For Following Up Unexplained Student Absences & Monitoring Attendance Issues

Teachers input absentees from their roll during the morning home group class. The front office process all incoming calls and attendance emails. At approximately 9:30am once all absentees notifications and reasons for absentees have been processed the office staff contact parents of students with unexplained absentees. Messages are left on answering machines/message bank where there is no answer asking parents to return our call.

Absence reports are emailed to all staff at intervals throughout the day. Times for these reports are 9:10am, 10:40am and 1:40pm.

During the course of the day, if students names are not on the absentee list and the student is not present in any class, the teacher concerned notifies the office immediately to advise of the student absence. The office staff will communicate this to either the Head of School or Principal if the student's location is unknown.

Staff are also required to notify the office staff if a student appears on the absentee report but is present in their class to ensure the report remains accurate and up to date throughout the day.

Procedures to Identify Students with Poor Attendance Records

- The school attendance of every student is recorded in Home Group at the start of the day and again at the commencement of Period 5. The reason for any absence recorded must subsequently be substantiated, and recorded on the attendance system at the office using of a set of approved absence codes.
- Home Group teachers are required to notify the appropriate Head of School on the third day of any absence, unless the College received prior notification. (Note that, in most cases, unexplained absences are followed up with parent contact on the day of the absence.)

Once identified, any ongoing concerns about the regular attendance of a student will trigger a series of steps.

In the Primary School the classroom teacher will work closely with the family and the Head of Primary School to address any concerns.

In the Secondary School concerns about attendance will trigger the "Procedures for Managing Concerns about Student Progress". For VCE students his trigger will be activated before the attendance rate falls to 90%. The Head of Senior School needs to be aware of any situation where this is occurring.

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Related Policies

VCE Student Policy Handbook
VCE Staff Policy Handbook