

# Student Attendance Policy and Procedures

Mater Christi College, Belgrave is a Catholic College established by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the order of St Benedict in 1963. The College operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, is a Company Limited by guarantee and owned by Good Samaritan Education. Mater Christi College is a proud leader in contemporary education and strives to educate young women to be Informed, Compassionate and Creative.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students at Mater Christi College attend school regularly as consistent attendance is a predictor of learning success and overall wellbeing.

## Statement of Policy

### 1. Definitions

- 1.1. **Compulsory School Age** – the age range during which a child is legally required to enrol in and attend school. In Victoria this is typically from 6 to 17 years old.
- 1.2. **Attendance** – the presence of a student on site at school during the official school hours on days when the school is open for instruction.
- 1.3. **Absences** - A situation where a student is not present at school for part or all of official school hours on a day when the school is open for instruction. Absences can be categorised as approved or unapproved, depending on the reason provided. The College follows the DET guidelines for reasonable absences which can be found at [Attendance and missing school | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/attendance-and-missing-school)
  - 1.3.1. **Approved absence** – an absence that has been accepted, typically for reasons such as illness, unavoidable medical appointments, family emergencies, religious or cultural observances or reasonable school related activities
  - 1.3.2. **Unapproved absence** - an absence that is not accepted as a valid reason for missing school, including absences without a reasonable excuse.
- 1.4. **Reasonable excuse** – A justification for a student's absence that is accepted by the school, based on criteria set out in legislation and school policy.
- 1.5. **Student Wellbeing Team** – a group of staff led by the *Deputy Principal – Staff and Students* and including College Psychologists and Nurses, responsible for supporting student welfare, including addressing concerns related to attendance.
- 1.6. **Truancy** – Deliberate unauthorised absence from school by a student without a valid reason or without the consent of a parent/carer.

### 2. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- 2.1. **Parents/carers** are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school every day during compulsory school age unless there is a valid reason for absence.
- 2.2. **Parents/carers** must inform the school by the specified time providing a reason for the absence and when requested, should provide supporting documentation.
- 2.3. **Parents/carers** are expected to cooperate with the school in addressing attendance issues, including participating in meetings or implementing agreed upon strategies to improve attendance.

### 3. Student Responsibilities

- 3.1. **Students** are expected to attend school every day, for the full day, during official school hours unless there is a valid reason for absence.
- 3.2. **Students** are expected to attend all timetabled classes unless an exemption is provided. Such exemptions can only be provided by the Principal, Deputy Principal Staff and Students, or the Deputy Principal Learning.
- 3.3. **Students** are expected arrive to school and class on time, ready to participate in learning.
- 3.4. It is the responsibility of Senior School students to understand the attendance requirements of the VCE, set by the *Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority*.
- 3.5. Any student facing challenges that impact their ability to attend school regularly, should seek support from their Home Group Mentor and Year Learning Leader.

### 4. College Responsibilities

- 4.1. **Mater Christi College** is responsible for recording and monitoring student attendance each day. This includes Year Learning teams identifying patterns of absenteeism and intervening early when issues arise.
- 4.2. **Mater Christi College** will communicate with parents/carers regarding student absences and follow up on unapproved absences to determine the reasons and provide support of required.
- 4.3. Mater Christi College **teaching staff** are responsible for recording student attendance accurately and in a timely manner in accordance with the *Duty of Care Policy* and their professional obligations.
- 4.4. **Mater Christi College** will, when required, report chronic and persistent absences to the *Department of Families Fairness and Housing*.

### 5. Related policies and legislative framework

- 5.1. **Education and Training Reform Act 2006** (This Act requires that all children of compulsory school age (6 to 17 years old) must be enrolled in and attend school. It outlines the responsibilities of parents, schools, and the Victorian Government in ensuring that children attend school regularly.)
- 5.2. **Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017** (This specifies what constitutes a valid reason for absence, the procedures for recording and reporting attendance, and the roles and responsibilities of school principals in managing attendance.)
- 5.3. **Ministerial Order 1359** (Schools are required to take attendance into consideration as part of their duty to create a safe and supportive environment for students)
- 5.4. **Children Youth and Families Act 2005** (This Act allows for interventions where a child's regular attendance is compromised and contributes to wider concerns regarding wellbeing).
- 5.5. **MCC Duty of Care Policy**
- 5.6. **MCC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**
- 5.7. **MCC School Refusal Process**

## Attendance Procedures

### 1. Reporting an absence

- 1.1. Use My MCC (PAM) **Parent Notified Absence** by 9.00am on day of absence.
- 1.2. Telephone **9757 0980** by 9.00am on the day of absence.
- 1.3. If your child has a communicable illness, you must also call the **MCC Health Centre** on 9757 0831.
- 1.4. Provide a medical certificate to **Main Reception** or email to [absences@materchristi.edu.au](mailto:absences@materchristi.edu.au) as requested.

### 2. Recording attendance

- 2.1. Teachers should record student attendance/absence on SIMON within the first 15 minutes of class.
- 2.2. Attendance is recorded as "Class Attendance" and "Overall School Attendance".

3. **Parent notified approved absences** (*please note this will impact class attendance percentage and overall school attendance percentage*)
  - 3.1. Illness (with medical certificate).
  - 3.2. Dental, medical or allied health appointments (that cannot be made outside of school time).
  - 3.3. Bereavement.
  - 3.4. Legal activity, such as court appearances.
  - 3.5. Driver's license test.
  - 3.6. School approved holiday (approval is at the discretion of the principal).
  - 3.7. Religious or cultural observance.
  - 3.8. Family violence.
  - 3.9. Care giving – where the student is a primary care giver.
  - 3.10. Natural disasters, including extreme weather events (*please note school closure will not impact attendance percentages*).
4. **School Activities** (*please note these absences will impact class attendance percentage but not school attendance percentage*)
  - 4.1. Excursions, co-curricular events etc.
  - 4.2. Off-campus educational activities (SBATS, Structured Workplace Learning, Work Experience, TAFE)
  - 4.3. Approved Remote Learning
  - 4.4. Student suspension
5. **Unapproved absences** (*please note these absences will impact class attendance percentage and school attendance percentage*)
  - 5.1. Absence with no explanation or contact with the College.
    - 5.1.1. Within three to five days of an unapproved absence the Home Group Mentor will contact the parents/carers of the student to check in.
    - 5.1.2. After 5 days with no contact, the YLL will attempt to connect with the Parents/carers. If parents/carers are non-communicative the DPSS will assume responsibility.
    - 5.1.3. Ongoing unapproved absences will be followed up by email/registered mail.
    - 5.1.4. Parents/carers will be called to a parent-school conference.
    - 5.1.5. If contact is unable to be made the DPSS will contact Victoria Police and make a report to DFFH.
    - 5.1.6. Where a persistent reluctance to attend school has been identified the College will move to the MCC School Refusal Process.
  - 5.2. Leisure activities such as shopping, birthdays, visiting friends and relatives, concerts, beauty appointments etc.
6. **Approved late arrivals**
  - 6.1. Charter Bus delay
  - 6.2. Public transport delays or cancellation
  - 6.3. Road closure
7. **Unapproved late arrivals**
  - 7.1. Unexplained late arrivals.
  - 7.2. Arrival after a study period.
  - 7.3. Unreasonable and persistent lateness will impact class and overall school attendance percentages and may trigger remedies as per the *Learning and Wellbeing Code of Conduct*.
8. **Approved early finish**
  - 8.1. Year 12 study period in Period 5.
  - 8.2. Medical appointment with a note
9. **Unapproved early finish** *will be considered truancy and trigger a parent/carer-school conference.*
10. **Governance**

| Document Details |                        |
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