



DOBCEL Attendance Policy and Procedures

Reviewed: November 2020

Ratified: December 2020

Next Review: 2024

Rationale

'The Catholic school should be able to offer young people the means to acquire the knowledge they need in order to find a place in a society which is strongly characterized by technical and scientific skill. But at the same time, it should be able, above all, to impart a solid Christian formation.' *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium'*

Schools in the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat are funded by governments to be open for four full terms, maximising learning opportunities for students. Research indicates strongly that school attendance matters for achievement and everyday counts.

Background

Regular attendance for all school-aged children is important in their educational and social development. Children who attend school regularly have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher income levels across their lifespan. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age to maximise their life opportunities. The school will communicate these expectations to parents on enrolment and through regular updates such as the school newsletter. Students are expected to attend school during normal school hours every day of each school term unless:

- There is an approved exemption
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only partial enrolment

Students are considered to be in attendance at school if they are involved in an offsite curriculum program or activity organised by the school.

Policy Statement

All Schools will maximise learning opportunities for students, by ensuring:

- Schools are open for approximately 40 weeks (up to 200 days) per year, as designated by the Victorian Minister of Education and DOBCEL.
- Staff are allocated appropriate vacation time, in accordance with applicable industrial awards, including gazetted public holidays.
- Staff are engaged in appropriate professional learning and planning.
- Student attendance rates are recorded and monitored

Principles

All students in all schools are entitled to an excellent education, allowing each student to reach his or her full potential so that he or she can succeed, achieve his or her aspirations, and contribute fully to his or her community, now and in the future.

The quality of a student's education should not be limited by where the student lives, the income of his or her family, the school he or she attends, or his or her personal circumstances.

The quality of education should not be limited by a school's location, particularly those schools in regional Australia (Australian Education Act 2013).

Procedures in Schools

- Homeroom and Classroom teachers will record attendance, and late arrivals, at the start of each scheduled lesson; including those days when the class may be off site.
- A student is present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction.
- Daily attendance is monitored using the learning management system, SIMON, and a tally of days absent and late arrivals is included on the student's semester reports. The reason for absence will be coded such as for being sick, medical appointment, school notified, funeral and holidays.
- Contact details of parents/guardians will be accurately maintained. Reminders to update contact numbers will be in school newsletters.
- Parents are expected to provide an explanation for students who are absent by 10am. This can be done in writing or by phone / text. In instances where the parent has not provided an explanation in writing administration staff will note in their diaries the phone / text conversation.
- If a child is absent and no communication has been received from the parent, a phone call will be made by the administration officer by 10am. If no contact is made with the parents then the administration officer will inform the principal.
- All records of contact and attempted contact with families regarding student absences will be recorded and the records kept
- Long term and / or consistent unexplained absences will be followed up by the principal and parents informed, in writing, if the principal deems that the parents have not met their obligations under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.
- The role description of the administration officer/s will state that they are responsible to follow-up on unexplained absences by 10am or as soon as practical and for maintaining a current register of parent/guardian contact details.
- Student attendance will be accurately recorded on the student report twice per year and unsatisfactory attendance at school or classes will be noted in student file.

Attendance Improvement Strategies

- Attendance improvement strategies will be implemented for any student who has been absent more than five days in a school term (without legitimate reasons), or in situations where school refusal is a factor in attendance. A support group may be established if the principal believes that the individual student and / or family require this support. The school will refer to Every Day Counts (DET) and use the CECV process outlined on CEVN/Curriculum and Student Support/Every Day Counts.
- The principal will contact CEB accordance with CECV procedures if the school strategies are not assisting in improving attendance of an individual student.

References

Catholic Church, Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, St Paul Publications, Homebush, NSW, 2002, 14, p. 17, p. 23.

Public Holidays Act 1993

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cwlth.) (ESOS Act).

Australian Education Act 2013

Related Policies and Procedures

DOBCEL Planning the School Year Policy and Procedures

DOBCEL Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Student Attendance: Every Day Counts, Department of Education and Training Victoria