

## Student Attendance Policy

Bayside Christian College ("College") is committed to providing the highest quality of Christian education to all children and a high student attendance is considered vital to the achievement of this mission. Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), it is a Parent's responsibility to ensure their children always attend school when the school is open.

This policy has been developed to inform Parents of their obligations to ensuring their child/ren attend school and support them receiving the maximum benefit of education and to meet legislative compliance.

### 1. Policy Statement

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 requires Parents of children of compulsory school age (6 to 17 years) to enrol their children at a registered school and to ensure attendance at all times when the school is open for instruction (or to register their children for home schooling). Parents must not without reasonable excuse fail to comply with this duty.

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides that the principal of, or a teacher at, a registered school at which a child of compulsory school age is enrolled may ask a Parent for an explanation of the reason for the absence of a student, and the principal must ensure that record in writing is made of the reason (if any) given by the Parent. Additionally, the principal must ensure that student attendance is recorded in an attendance register.

The Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requires that "a school has policies and procedures to monitor students' attendance and to follow up unexplained or unacceptable absences" and that "students' attendance is recorded systematically and that a school has adequate records to follow up absences."

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) indicates that all VCE units require 50 hours of class time and that a student needs to attend sufficient class time to complete work. Individual schools are required to set minimum class time and attendance rules. Where a student has completed work but there has been a substantial breach of attendance rules, the school may assign an N for one or more outcomes and thus the unit.

### 2. Application

This policy applies to Parents, students and staff at the College.

### 3. Definitions

Word/s	Definition
Reasonable Excuse	As it relates to the absence of students from school, is defined in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and includes: (1) illness, accident, an unforeseen event or an unavoidable cause; (2) a requirement to comply with another law; (3) absence from Victoria; (4) registration in a distance education program; (5) participation in education, training or employment; (6) suspension or expulsion; (7) child disobedience; and (8) attendance at, or observation of, a religious event or obligation as a result of a genuinely held belief of the child or Parent.

Word/s	Definition
Acceptable Absences	Instances of student absence from school for reasons deemed by the school to be acceptable. Such absences are not reported as days of absence on student semester reports and therefore do not negatively impact upon the attendance records of students. The list of acceptable absences may be reviewed from time-to-time but shall generally include - approved leave of absence; school excursion or camp; exchange student program; exit from the school; approved home study; in-school appointment; orientation; production rehearsal; approved mission; special enrolment; school sport; approved course of study; suspension; temporary home learning; and work or work experience.
Parent	For the purposes of this policy, should also be taken to refer to legal carers where applicable.

#### 4. Recording Attendance

The College must maintain a student attendance register.

The attendance register must record attendance:

- of students of compulsory age (6-17 years)
- at least twice per day.

In the case of school-related activities involving travel away from College premises (including camps, excursions, sporting events, etc.), attendance rolls are marked prior to departure, at planned intervals during the activity and again upon return.

Student attendance records must be retained for at least seven years after the end of the school year in which the last entry was made.

#### 5. Attendance Requirements

- The College requires students to attend a minimum of 95% of school days when the College is open.
- Should the student fall under the College's attendance threshold and no reasonable explanation has been provided, the Parent will receive a Student Attendance Note which the Parent must respond to within 21 days.
- Students are expected to arrive at school in time for the commencement of the school day (8.35am) and depart at the conclusion of the school day (3.35pm). The College does not provide supervision of students outside these school times.
- Students with special needs or circumstances, as deemed appropriate and acceptable by the principal, and with supporting written evidence, may be granted exemptions from the 95% attendance expectation. Exceptions need to be negotiated with the Head of Primary and/or Head of Secondary, in consultation with the Registrar and principal.
- The College shall follow up unexplained/non-validated absences, notify parents of unsatisfactory attendance, record details of unsatisfactory attendance in student files, and report full and part days of absence (other than Acceptable Absences) on semester reports.
- If a student is absent from school, Parents are expected to contact the school not later than 9.15 am on the day of absence. Medical certificates may also be required.
- Notes of explanation for student absences and other supporting information or evidence (e.g. medical certificates) shall be retained and filed securely in the College's student management system.
- Students who arrive late for school must report to reception where their arrival will be recorded and a late pass issued. Wherever possible, students arriving late should bring a written note of explanation from Parents.

- The College owes a duty of care to all students. Such duty of care does not diminish when students attain the age of 18 years. Therefore, Parental responsibilities as outlined in this policy continue for the duration of a student's enrolment at the College. The only exception shall be where a student aged 18 years or older is not a dependent of his/her Parents and is responsible for the enrolment contract and payment of tuition fees.
- Students shall only be permitted to leave the College premises during normal school hours where written consent of a Parent has been provided. Other than in cases of participation in approved school-related activities, students must report to reception prior to departure from College premises during normal school hours and again, where applicable, upon their return to school premises.
- Any student leaving the College premises during normal school hours may only do so in the company of his/her Parent or nominated emergency contact other than with express Parental written permission
- Parents and students are strongly encouraged to make appointments (for doctors, dentists, driving lessons and tests, etc.) outside of normal school hours.
- As a general rule, families are discouraged from organising holidays during the school term. However, it is accepted that circumstances may arise which require Parents to request leave for their children during the school term. Such leave request shall be in writing and set out details of reasons and proposed dates of absence.
- Ongoing tardiness and unapproved absences, either in part or whole days, will be dealt within the College's Student Engagement Policy.
- Where a student is absent for two or more consecutive school days due to a medical condition and there has been a visit to a doctor or hospital, a medical certificate must be provided as validation to the College. In cases not involving a visit to a doctor or hospital, a note of explanation from a Parent must be provided.

## 6. VCE and VCE/VM Students

- Where a VCE student is absent from 10% or more of classes for one or more units of study during a semester, excluding instances of Acceptable Absences, such student may be awarded an N for such unit/s of study at the discretion of the Head of Secondary and Deputy Principal having regard to all circumstances, including reasons provided for validated absences.
- Where a VCE or VCE/VM student will be, or proposes to be, absent from school for any reason on a day that an assessment task is due to be submitted or undertaken, or for any reason wishes to seek permission to submit or undertake an assessment task at a time other than as scheduled:
  - For VCE students - an Alternative SAC Request Form must be completed and submitted to the subject teacher at least three days prior to the scheduled date.
  - For VCE/VM students - an Alternative Task Request Form must be completed and submitted to the subject teacher at least three days prior to the scheduled date.
- Where a VCE or VCE/VM student is absent from school without prior notice on a day that an assessment task is due to be submitted or undertaken, a note to their VCE Coordinator or VCE/VM Coordinator from a Parent detailing the reason for the absence must be provided as validation upon the student's return to school. The student will need to promptly complete:
  - For VCE students: an Alternative SAC Request Form in order that possible alternative arrangements can be considered.
  - For VCE/VM students: an Alternative Task Request Form in order that possible alternative arrangements can be considered.
- Further to items above, each request for alternative assessment task arrangements shall be considered on its merits, having regard to a range of factors. Approval of such request and alternative arrangements shall be at the discretion of the subject teacher in consultation with the VCE Coordinator. Requests for leave during the school term should be made on the understanding that such absence may compromise satisfactory course completion.

## 7. Reporting and monitoring attendance

Absence with justifiable reason occurs when it is deemed in the best interest of the health, learning or wellbeing of the student, or the school, for a student not to attend. Student representation in extracurricular activities, during school time, requires approval from the Principal. The following is a list of examples of absence with reasonable circumstance:

- Illness certified by a medical professional
- Medical appointment that cannot be made outside of school hours
- Specialised instruction (e.g. training or learning in a subject or activity separate to school curriculum)
- Approved significant family event
- Bereavement.

Absence with unjustifiable reason includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Non-medical appointments
- Social activities, such as haircuts, shopping, etc.
- Completing unfinished assignments or school work
- Celebrating birthdays
- Part-time employment
- Daily errands or leisure activities

## 8. Parent Notification of Absence

- Parents are notified and can monitor their child's attendance via the student management system.
- Parents will be sent a message if their child does not sign in or there is no explanation provided to the College by 9.15am on the day.

## 9. Related Documents

Enrolment Agreement

Student Behaviour Management Policy

Privacy Policy

## 10. Relevant Legislation

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

**Approver** College Leadership

**Authoriser** College Executive