

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCESSES

2016-2018

PURPOSE

The School Education Act 1999 requires children of compulsory age to attend school. It is recognised that for successful achievement and progress at school, it is essential that a student maintains regular attendance. According to the Act it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their children attend school (Sections 23 and 38). The College, however, has a responsibility to engage students in a meaningful learning program, has a responsibility to work with students and parents where attendance is of concern and has a responsibility to maintain accurate attendance records.

All related attendance information can be found at:

<S:\AdminShared\Teaching Staff\Student Services\Attendance>

THE SCHOOL DAY

The school is open for instruction between 8.40am and 3.00pm from Monday to Friday during the school term. These dates change annually and are available on the Department of Education website. Parents will be advised of any closures that fall within the term dates.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

Attending school is compulsory from the beginning of the year in which the child reaches the age of 6 years and 6 months; and until:

- a) the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months;
 - b) the child satisfies the minimum requirements for graduation from secondary school established under the *Curriculum Council Act 1997*; or
 - c) the child reaches the age of 18,
- whichever happens first.

ATTENDANCE PROCESS

- Each day students are required to attend Homeroom at the commencement of the morning siren.
- The Homeroom teacher enters attendance on the Rollmarker system.
- All teachers (period 1-5) enter attendance in Rollmarker throughout the day for each lesson. *This should be done at the beginning of the lesson as this information is used to track student whereabouts.*
- Each morning at approximately 10:45am an automated text message is sent to parents and guardians for any student recorded as absent.
- Any student arriving late must sign in at Student Central and will be provided with a late note for class.
- Students will only be provided late notes when they arrive at school. If they are late to a class after that, they are the responsibility of the class teacher to whom they are reporting. *A student should not be sent to Student Central for a late note if they are late to class.*
- Students leaving the grounds for appointments must report to Student Central to obtain a leave pass and report to Student Central again if they return to the College following their appointment.
- Permission to leave the grounds must be sought from either the Principal, Associate Principals or Student Services Manager and consent obtained by a parent or guardian.

ABSENCES

It is a requirement that a parent or guardian advise the school administration of the reason for any absence, be it for part of a day, a whole day or multiple days within three days of the absence occurring. Where possible, the absence should be advised in advance. The College Principal will then determine if the reason is valid. A valid reason for absence means illness, bereavement or unavoidable circumstance.

Absences may be communicated to the College administration either in person or by a phone call, SMS, email or a signed note.

- **Reasonable cause**

A parent or guardian is expected to provide a reasonable cause for any absence. An absence with a reasonable cause may relate to such things as illness or injury, bereavement or family upheaval. Illness also includes issues related to mental, social and emotional health. In case of prolonged illness parents should contact the college. For students who are away regularly (or for a long period) with illness, a medical certificate may be required.

- **Other Reasons**

A student may also be absent for a range of reasons, in negotiation with the College, such as: specialised sport training, training or alternative courses.

- **Unacceptable reasons**

Where a parent or guardian cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence, or chooses not to explain an absence, the absence is recorded as “unauthorised.” Examples of unacceptable reasons include shopping and birthdays. A student who leaves the College grounds or does not attend class without permission is considered truant (T).

- **No Reason Given**

Until the status of an absence is known, students absent without reason will be marked as “U” – unexplained absence.

LATE ARRIVALS

Students are required to attend school for the whole school day. Students who arrive late are required to sign in at Student Central. They will then be issued with a late note to be admitted to class. As for other absences, the parents of students arriving late must provide a reason for their child being late. The absence will then be recorded as explained in “ABSENCES” above. Medical or dental cards are an acceptable form of notification.

Overview:

- ❖ Student Central staff will monitor late comers
- ❖ Repeat offenders will be referred to the Student Services team for follow up.

LEAVING DURING THE DAY

If a student needs to leave school during the day their parent or guardian must advise the school of the reason for the absence. The student will then be given a leave pass and the school officer then enters these details into Rollmarker. As for other absences, the Principal has responsibility for determining the validity of the reason for the absence.

Except under extenuating circumstances, students will not be given permission to leave the College during the day to get lunch.

FOLLOWING UP ATTENDANCE CONCERNS AND STUDENTS AT RISK

It is the responsibility of all teachers to monitor the attendance of each class and to follow up on those students who are late or who do not attend class.

Each Homeroom teacher will have identified students who are on Individual Attendance Plans (IAPs). They will have the responsibility of monitoring student progress and encouraging them to attend to meet assigned attendance targets. This also includes regular communication with parents.

If a student is marked absent, but claims to have been present, the Homeroom teacher has the responsibility of following up to confirm this. This may include asking the student to confirm information with their class teacher.

Unexplained absences (“U’s”) should be followed up by the Homeroom teacher with the student and their parent or guardian so that the reason for the absence can be recorded.

College attendance letters are sent out at regular intervals to assist with communication to parents.

It is highly recommended that homeroom teachers develop positive and effective relationships with students and parents/guardians. A phone call to enquire about an absence is a positive response to a student’s absence, as it demonstrates a genuine interest and care in the student’s wellbeing and education, as well as promoting accountability amongst our community.

An approach to attendance which relies upon mailed letters as the only means of communication can appear as impersonal, is often slow and can be ineffective in changing patterns of behaviour.

Process for Students at Risk

Student attendance is divided into four (4) categories:

Regular	90% or above
Indicated at risk	80-89%
Moderately at risk	60-79%
Severely at risk	59% or less

- It is the responsibility of all staff to follow up on students who’s attendance falls below regular attendance.
- Where a student falls below, or has shown past patterns of non-attendance below 80%, an Individual Attendance Plan (IAP) is established and attendance targets identified.
- Homeroom teachers will be allocated these students at risk and are required to monitor attendance, contact home and encourage students to attend more frequently.
- Those students whose attendance remains below 80%, or whose attendance pattern has suddenly changes which places them at risk, will be referred to the Student Services Manager or Associate principal for follow up.
- Student Services will monitor attendance, determine a list of students at risk because of their absences and will respond accordingly. It will be the responsibility of the Student Services Manager to initiate an Individual Attendance Plan (IAP), which outlines the strategies in place to support the student to improve their attendance. Homeroom teachers will then be responsible for monitoring the plan and communicating with the student and parents/guardians.

- Follow up may include in depth case conferencing, parent interviews, extensive planning, intervention strategies, referral to other agencies.
- Those students whose attendance remains poor will be invited to participate in an attendance panel process and their progress mapped through the Department's portal system.
- Referrals will be made to retention and participation for severely at risk students, although it remains the school's responsibility to follow up these students.
- Where an alternative program is put in place, students will either be placed on a Section 24 (Year 10 or below), a Notice of Arrangements or exemption sought, depending upon the age of the student or the nature of the alternative arrangement.

TRUANCY

Truancy is illegal. Students who habitually truant may be referred to the Department of Education's Retention and Participation Officer. Repeat offenders and their parents may be required to attend a formal meeting and/or referred to appear before an Attendance Advisory Panel. Parents of those who continue to offend may be liable to fines and other action. Concern has regularly been expressed that much crime, especially that of breaking and entering, is committed by juveniles who are truanting from school.

The Student Services team will determine strategies to discourage truancy and avoidable lateness, such as detentions or after school catch up sessions negotiated with the student's parents (see the [Eaton Community College Behaviour Management Policy 2016](#)).

REWARD PROGRAMS

Reward programs designed to recognise and promote good attendance are in place. For more information about these see the [Eaton Community College Behaviour Management Policy 2016](#).

Overview: Roles for Attendance

Students

- Attend regularly.
- Be on time to class.
- Report to Student Central if you are late or leaving school.

Parents/Guardians

- Encourage students to attend and engage in schooling.
- Provide explanations for absences.
- Work with the school to maintain regular attendance of children in their care.

Teachers

- Encourage students to attend and engage in schooling.
- Record attendance.
- Follow up absences with students in their classes.
- Work with parents/guardians to maintain regular attendance of students.

Homeroom Teachers

- Monitor student attendance (Homeroom Groups).

- Monitor and follow up absences.
- Monitor and support at risk students on IAP's.
- Communicate with parents/guardians regularly about student absences.

Student Services

- Monitor late arrivals, truancy and overall attendance.
- Work with students, parents, guardians and teachers to resolve issues.
- Target specific students at risk and initiate Individual Attendance Plans (IAPs).
- Undertake formal review of attendance .
- Communicate with parents/guardians regularly about student absences.
- Conduct formal meetings when required.
- Co-ordinate attendance panels and referrals to Participation.
- Manage and support Student Services Team in implementing the Attendance policy and procedures.

Lesson Attendance Code Descriptions

CODE	DESCRIPTION	*TYPE	Status	NOTES
/	Present	Present	Resolved	The student is recorded as being present at school. This is the default when daily records are created.
E	Educational Activity	Present	Resolved	The student is involved in an educational program offsite.
Q	Not required to attend	Present	Resolved	Only for Year 11 and 12 students who are on study/exam leave.
W	Withdrawn	Present	Resolved	The student is present at school but is withdrawn from classroom activities.
M	Medical or Sick Bay	Present	Resolved	The student is present at school but is in the medical or sick bay.
L	Late	Late	Resolved	The student is late but the degree of lateness is insufficient to be recorded as a half day absence.
R	Reasonable Cause	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school; an explanation has been received which the principal considers to be reasonable.
Z	Suspended	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school.
C	Cultural Absence	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. The principal has authorised this absence because of cultural or religious significance to the family.
N	Notified as Sick	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. The principal has authorised this absence due to confirmation of the student's ill health by the parent/caregiver.
V	Vacation	Authorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. The principal has approved this absence only through negotiations with the parent.
K	Unauthorised Vacation	Unauthorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded with an Unauthorised absence; the reason for the student absence is not approved by the principal.
X	Unacceptable Reason	Unauthorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school; the principal does not consider that the reason supplied for the absence is acceptable.
U	Absence – cause not yet established	Unauthorised Absence	Unresolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. No reason has yet been established for this absence.
T	Truant	Unauthorised Absence	Resolved	The student is recorded as absent from school. Investigation has revealed that the student has truanted.
Y	Not Required to Attend	Not required to attend	Resolved	The student is not required to attend due to enforced school closure. The Y code can be applied to the whole school or a cohort of students (AM or PM). Schools can use this code for critical events, natural disasters or amending programs for kindergarten students.