



JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

Education in a young person's life is extremely important in terms of health and well-being, peer relationships and future career options. The *Education Act* in Tasmania requires that children of school age are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Education Department. It is a legal requirement in Tasmania for every child between the ages of five (5) and seventeen (17) to attend school on a full-time basis unless otherwise exempted. Schools are required to maintain an accurate record of student attendance.

John Paul II Catholic School supports the legislation and believes that students need to attend school every day in order to fulfil their potential and achieve excellence.

The Principal and staff have a duty of care towards students attending the School at any given time. The Principal, as part of his/her day-to-day management of the School, has a responsibility to follow up unexplained absences of students enrolled at the School. The Principal, Deputy Principal and class teachers will monitor continued and unexplained absences of students.

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in their learning, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.

The John Paul II Catholic School *Attendance Policy* aims to ensure students and parents/guardians have a clear understanding of the importance of regular attendance. It is important that students, staff and parents/guardians have a shared understanding of the Importance of attending school.

At John Paul II Catholic School, we:

- Believe all students should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day.
- Believe attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.
- Believe non-attendance or truancy can place students in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.
- Monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance.

PURPOSE

To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that students are required to attend school and do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

RESPONSIBILITIES

School Responsibilities

- A safe and supportive learning environment.
- Clear communication of expected dates of attendance.
- Notify parent/guardian of student absence.
- Develop support structures to enable students to re-engage with their schooling, as applicable.

Student Responsibilities

- Punctual, regular school attendance.
- Commitment to learning.

Parent Responsibilities

- Ensure the child attends school and that it is seen as a priority.
- Notify school promptly of student absence.
- Ensure a safe and reliable mode of transport to and from school.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
2. While illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.
3. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
4. Parents have a further responsibility to provide notification via Compass or a telephone call informing the School about the absence.
5. The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
6. All student absences are recorded daily by teachers and are aggregated on our database.
7. Daily telephone calls are placed by the School Office Staff to ascertain the status of absent students identified as Orange in the school student management system, Compass.
8. The Principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. The Principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, using the John Paul II Attendance Traffic Light procedures (see below).
9. Student attendance and absence data will appear on student midyear end of year reports.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSE TO STUDENT ABSENCES

1. Parents/guardians are requested to notify via Compass or telephone the School Office prior to 9.00 am to inform of their child/children's absence and the reason for the absence. Alternatively, parents may inform the class teacher/s of the absence.
2. Office staff will contact parents/guardians by each day to ascertain the whereabouts of any child who has not been advised as absent by parents/guardians.
3. Parents/guardians are requested to inform the Principal in advance and in writing of any anticipated extended absences from school, e.g. for health, family or holiday reasons.
4. A request can be made for a Medical Certificate. This is at the discretion of the Principal and Deputy Principal.

TRUANCY

Truancy occurs when a student chooses not to attend school without parental consent. At John Paul II Catholic School, reports of truancy are taken seriously. Parents/guardians should report any suspected truancy by contacting the School by phone.

PROLONGED STUDENT ABSENCES

Prolonged student absences are generally a matter of:

- Illness/health
- Attendance at intra-state and inter-state competitions
- Family holidays during school terms

Students are not encouraged to be absent without good reason. Long absences and or inconsistent attendance may result in the student failing to meet specific curriculum requirements and consequently affect their overall academic progress and development.

In times of prolonged absences and upon request from the parent/guardian, teachers will provide academic support, appropriate to the student's needs at the time. It should be noted that teachers can provide some basic work, but nothing will replace the experience of attending school in a regular fashion.

Attendance at Intra-State or Inter-State Competitions

In the event of a student seeking permission to be absent for a prolonged period of time for such competitions, it is the parent/guardian's obligation to obtain permission by applying in writing to the Principal ahead of time so appropriate staff may be informed.

Family Holidays in Term Time

There may be occasions when there is an exceptional travel opportunity or cause for travel for the student and family for certain reasons. It is the parent/guardian's obligation to inform the Principal in writing regarding the intended holiday, giving details of the dates in which the student will be absent from school.

JOHN PAUL II ATTENDANCE TRAFFIC LIGHT PROCEDURES

The John Paul II student management system has detailed attendance data for each student. Students are identified in three ways, dependent on their attendance:

Blue: Attendance from 100%-86%

Orange: Attendance from 85%-70%

Red: Attendance below 70%

Blue

Students identified as blue are dealt with as per the policy above.

Orange

Students identified as orange require additional management, including:

- Parent contact on all absences, irrespective of parent notification.
- A letter sent at the end of each term, highlighting the current attendance rate of the child and reinforcing regular attendance (Principal discretion required).
- Additional Compass notifications to be made, as per the attendance chronicle template.

Red

Students with attendance rated as red require extensive management, including:

- A case manager for each student and family. This is a member of the School leadership team.
- An attendance plan to be constructed in consultation with the family and student.
- Compulsory Conciliation Conference application to be lodged with the Office of the Education Registrar if attendance does not improve in line with the attendance plan. Please see the document *Referral for a Compulsory Conciliation Conference Guidelines for Catholic Schools* for more information.

ASPIRATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

The school attendance goal for John Paul II Catholic School is **95% attendance**. The most recent reliable annual data sees annual school attendance at 89%. The Principal is responsible for providing an update against the school goal to the John Paul II School Board at each Board meeting.

EVALUATION

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed as part of the School's three-year review cycle.

Implemented: July 2021

Amended: July 2024

Review Date: July 2027