

Policy

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Student Attendance

Purpose

The Vision of the Cairns Catholic Education Community is to offer every student in every school a world class education enriched by their Lived Encounter with the Catholic faith.

This policy document aligns with this vision. Its purpose is to document responsibilities around student attendance and the procedures that must be followed to meet this responsibility, in order to assist Catholic school and office communities to:

- be responsible in decision-making
- support students in maximising the wellbeing and learning benefits to be gained from high school attendance; and
- avoid activities which are inconsistent with the Vision Statement and ethos of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Cairns.

This policy document is to be used in conjunction with the supporting documents and guidelines that have been produced for both school and office implementation.

Policy

Catholic Education Services – Diocese of Cairns recognises that every day of attendance in school contributes towards a student’s learning and that higher rates of school attendance enhance student wellbeing and learning outcomes.

Rationale

Schools have a responsibility to record student attendance and respond to instances of irregular attendance. Attendance improvement can be developed within the supportive environment of a dynamic, Christ-centred community that exists within Catholic Education Services – Diocese of Cairns (CES) Schools. It is important for schools to investigate the patterns and underlying causes of non-attendance so that appropriate support strategies addressing the specific type of absenteeism can be implemented.

Schools, and by virtue of their employment, teachers, are legally required to monitor and record attendance of students in their care on a daily basis, whether absent or present in class, on excursion or at a school based activity. Legal guardians of children have a legal obligation, as set out in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, to ensure a child is enrolled at and attends school. While parents and care givers should be reminded of their legal obligations under the Education (General Provisions) Act, the wellbeing of the student should be central. It is widely recognised that attendance problems are best managed by early identification and intervention.

Class rolls, whether electronic or paper based, can be required as evidence in court and assist in establishing that a school has met their common law duty of care to students. Attendance records are required as part of a school's Workplace Health and Safety requirements and can be a critical factor in identifying serious student protection concerns. In addition, student attendance records are used for student reporting, fee allocation and government reporting.

It is expected that Catholic Education Services – Diocese of Cairns entities will become familiar and comply with the policy and associated supporting documents.

MANDATORY PROCEDURES

Principals, or their delegates, are to ensure the following procedures are followed:

1. Student attendance and absence information must be marked in the CES School and Student Administration system (eMinerva) for all students regardless of visa conditions. This includes late arrivals and early departures.
2. Attendance marking is to be undertaken at least twice daily, at the start of each day and prior to the beginning of an afternoon session.
3. The school timetable must be set up and maintained in the CES School and Student Administration system, in order for accurate attendance marking to proceed.
4. Class attendance is to be marked by assigned officers only (staff members approved by the principal).
5. Attendance must be verified daily for all students including those absent or present in class, on excursion, alternate learning activity or at a school based activity. Unexplained absences must be followed up on a regular basis and irregular attendances to be regularly followed up with legal guardians.
6. Relevant school procedures are to be developed locally and communicated to all staff, including relief staff. They should outline local processes for attendance marking and monitoring, provide strategies for encouraging good attendance and establish structures that support school staff in addressing issues of student non-attendance.
7. A local Student Attendance Procedure is to be published, based on relevant school procedures/guidelines and the Student Attendance Policy.

Consequences

- Information around attendance and absence provided to parents/carers, staff and students
- Professional learning to enhance capability of school and office staff who deal with attendance issues
- Portraying positive messages around school attendance
- Engaging students in taking ownership of attendance strategies

Reflection

Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. *Proverbs 3:13-14*

See also (Related Policies, Guidelines and Resources)

Catholic Education Services, Diocese of Cairns would like to acknowledge Brisbane Catholic Education for permission to adapt their policy and procedures.

Directive – Notification Protocol for Unexplained Student Absences (CES portal)
Managing Student Absences Procedure – Primary, Secondary, P-12 (CES Staff Portal)
Student Attendance Procedure Template – Primary (CES Staff Portal)
Student Attendance Procedure Template – Secondary, P-12 (CES Staff Portal)
Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation (CES Staff Portal)
Flexible Arrangements for School Students (CES Staff Portal)
Letter 1 Attendance Concerns Template (CES Staff Portal)
Letter 2 Compulsory Schooling Obligation Failure to Attend Template (CES Staff Portal)
Return to School Plan Template (CES Staff Portal)
FNQNES Referral Form (CES Staff Portal)
Briefing Note – Cancellation of Enrolment (CES Staff Portal)