

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Schools are an integral part of society that provides children with important and necessary skills for life. The Australian Government recognises the vital role schools play in the development of the person and have therefore made a legal requirement on attendance.

Under the Education Act 1994, children who are 5 years of age on or before the 1st January are required to attend a registered school on a full-time basis, unless officially exempt, excused or approved for home education.

At Our Lady of Lourdes School we believe that:

- regular attendance has a considerable impact on students' academic and social performance,
- a regular pattern of attendance at school helps to develop valuable life skills, such as commitment to family, work, social and sporting responsibilities,
- by making sure that students are at school for the required time, the school and parents are indicating a commitment to lifelong education,
- while there are, on occasions, special circumstances and family commitments which require students to be absent from school for a number of days, these occasions should be kept to a minimum,
- by adhering to this attendance policy, home-school communication is further strengthened.

Aims

- To encourage all students and parents to see the need for consistent attendance at school.
- To encourage all students and parents to develop sound attendance patterns.
- To maximize learning opportunities by ensuring absenteeism of students is kept to a minimum.
- To put into place processes for managing absenteeism and truancy.

Responsibilities

It is a parental responsibility to:

- ensure children attend school on a daily basis during the school week
- ensure children are not kept at home, unless they are genuinely sick
- ensure children are not taken out of school unless it is really necessary
- inform the school of their child's absence.

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to:

- record student attendance/absentees twice daily in an official register
- seek reasons from parents/carers for unexplained child absence
- notify the school principal of unexplained regular absences and/or when a student is absent for three or more consecutive days.

It is the responsibility of the School Principal to:

- follow up regular and consecutive unexplained absences from the student's parents/carers
- notify the Catholic Education Office when a student's absenteeism is of concern
- inform parents/carers about the Policy.

Policy Procedure

- All full-time enrolled students are expected to attend all of each school day
- Class teachers will mark the attendance register at morning and afternoon each school day. Absence notes should be kept in the register
- If students are to be absent from school, parents must inform the class teacher by note, or by contacting the school by phone, before the start of the school day. Office staff will relay any messages re student absence and record the reason/s for the absence.
- On the return of the student the next day, if no notification of absence has been given, the class teacher will send home a Student Absence Notification Form. *Appendix 1*
- No response to the letter will result in a phone call to the parent/carer by the Principal or Principal's nominee.
- The parent/carer is to inform the Principal and/or class teacher if a student is to be absent for longer than two consecutive days.
- If a student is away for three consecutive days without notification from the parent/carer, then the Principal or Principal's nominee will attempt to make contact with the parent/carer to establish the reason for the child's absence.
- Attendance records will form part of each child's half-year and end-of-year progress reports to parents.
- Class teachers are to bring to the attention of the Principal any student/s whose attendance is irregular, has unexplained absences, or whose absences appear unwarranted.
- Where there is a problem of absenteeism, the Principal will contact the parents/carers by letter to gain an explanation and will take further action as needed. *Appendix 2, 3 or 4.*
 - Appendix 2 – Up to 5 consecutive days 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised'*
 - Appendix 3 – 10 days in one school term 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised'*
 - Appendix 4 – 20 days in one school term 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised'*
- In the case of 20 absent days in one school term, or a pattern of absenteeism that is of concern, the Principal will initiate a case management approach with the parent/carer to support the student to return to regular attendance.
- School procedure/chart outlining the follow-up of absenteeism is attached. *Appendix 5.*
- With the introduction of the policy all families will be provided with a copy.
- New families to the school will be provided with a copy of the Policy at the time of their child/ren's enrolment.
- This Policy will be reviewed by staff at the beginning of each year so that all are familiar with it.

Policy Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's policy review cycle.