



Northside
Christian College

Attendance and Roll Marking Policy

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Scope

These procedures are in place for all students at Northside Christian College.

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an effective full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Northside Christian College takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of its students. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes a student's ability to develop friendship groups within the College.

Rationale

Statutory expectations require all schools to record student attendance twice per day in Primary Schools and in every class in Secondary Schools.

There may be various reasons for poor attendance – including student health and wellbeing, family disruption, extended family holidays, school refusal, or poor motivation on behalf of the student. Most concerns about the rate of attendance will require a pastoral focus.

Generally speaking, school attendance is compulsory in Victoria. However, there are specific attendance expectations for VCE students, which need to be monitored and managed carefully.

Attendance Regulations

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) notes that children of compulsory school age (six years and up to the age of seventeen years) who are residents in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition or correspondence education through the Virtual School Victoria or another online provider. In exceptional circumstances, an exemption from school attendance may be granted.

Specific Attendance Requirements

VCE Students.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) *VCE Administrative Handbook* expressly invite schools to set their own attendance requirements for the VCE.

“All VCE units involve at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction. A student needs to demonstrate sufficient class attendance to fulfil the time and work requirements of the unit. The school sets minimum class time and attendance rules. If a student has completed work but there has been a substantial breach of the school's attendance policy, the school may be unable to authenticate the student's work completed across the outcome. Where the school chooses to assign an N result for the unit, because the work cannot be authenticated, the school must assign an N for the outcome or outcomes that cannot be authenticated” (VCAA, 2023, p. 87).

At Northside Christian College we communicate the following expectations in the ‘VCE Student Policy Handbook’ (a document which is given to all VCE students):

“Students are expected to be punctual and attend all time-tabled classes, excursions, College and Year Level Assemblies and Chapel services. The College policy is a minimum required class attendance of 90% (unless acceptable explanations are provided) for each unit of study during a semester. All subject teachers will mark a class roll during each lesson.”

VCE Staff and Students at Northside Christian College should be familiar with Section 4.3 of the VCE Student Policy Handbook.

VCE Staff are required to keep a roll for every VCE class. (See VCE Staff Policy Handbook)

Implementation

- The attendance rolls are marked digitally: Primary School during Home Group in the morning and immediately after lunch by the Class Teacher, Secondary School in Home Group and at the commencement of each period throughout the day. The rolls are marked on a digital device (web enabled) using the College Administration software (SEQTA).
- Reasons for absences must be in writing to attendance@ncc.vic.edu.au or a handwritten note.
- Parents and carers are required to notify the College before 9:30am about any attendance matters.
- Students that are late to school are required to sign in at the College Office.
- Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of co-operation regarding student attendance will result in a meeting being organised with the sub-school Director of Learning.
- Parents and carers are expected to contact the College in writing if their child is absent and are required to give a reason for the absence. This information is entered into the College Administration software (SEQTA) by the College Administration Staff.
- If a student is absent for 3 days in a row, their Home Group teacher will notify the Reception team by email. The student's parents or carer will be contacted by phone by the Reception team to ascertain when the student will return to the College and to offer pastoral care.
- Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Deputy Principal to the to the Student Attendance Officer (DET Regional Director).(See Appendix 3 and 4)
- Students leaving the College early should report to the College Office. Primary and Secondary School students should be signed out by a Parent/Carer.
- Parents / Carers are required to give prior notice in writing regarding early departures, where possible. All students are required to be collected from the Office by a Parent/Carer.
- Students are requested not to communicate with their Parents/Carers except via the College Office. Mobile phones are not to be used to contact Parents/Carers directly, either by SMS, social media or phone call.

Acceptable reasons for student absences:

- Sickness.
- Danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease.
- Temporary or permanent infirmity.
- Unavoidable and sufficient cause, e.g. bereavement within the family or of a close friend, or family trauma.
- Attending a specialist appointment, VET Course, approved Private Study at home.
- Attending a College organised activity which is considered an approved absence, e.g. excursion, camp, work experience or Cultural event.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absences:

- Truancy.
- Shopping expeditions with or without caregiver.
- Haircuts.
- Helping at home or at Parent / Carer's place of work.
- Part-time or casual work (including travel to and from such work).
- Appointments which could be made out of school hours (including driving lessons / tests).
- Excessive time for appointments which are avoidable.
- Finishing homework.
- Late nights.
- Birthdays.
- Holidays.

Parent/Carer's Responsibilities Regarding Student Absences

It is the Parent/Carer's responsibility to ensure that their children are enrolled in and attend a school every day, unless there are acceptable reasons for absence. Parents/Carers are asked to notify the College in writing of any absence before 9:30am on the day of the absence.

Short-term absences - 1 or 2 days

Parents/Carers are asked to provide a written note (email is acceptable), detailing the reason for absence, by the day of return to the College. Parents/Carers may notify the College in advance of the absence and the reason for the absence if this is possible.

Long-term absences - 3 or more days

Parents/Carers are asked to contact the College before the absence, if possible, or on the third day at the latest to explain the absence. In addition, a written note, stating the reason for the absence needs to be provided on the day of return to the College. If the reason is sickness, caregivers are expected to provide a Doctor's Certificate (for 3 days or more).

VCE students are advised to seek a doctor's Certificate for any absence from the College. Please refer to the VCE Student Policy Handbook for additional information.

Very long-term absences

Parents/Carers are asked to discuss with the Principal the implications of long-term absences from the College, before firm plans are made. When students are unavoidably absent for a long period of time, where possible the College will provide details of work for students to go on with, if requested to do so.

Please note that the College and Parents/Carers need to be familiar with the attendance requirements as detailed in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Late Procedure

1. Students arriving to Home Group after 8:40am will be documented as arriving 'late'.
2. All students arriving after 8:55am must go to Reception in the College Office to have their attendance recorded. A Receptionist will record in SEQTA the student's arrival time and the reason the student arrived late.

3. Class Teachers should not admit students late to class, without enquiring as to the reason for lateness. Student attendance can be verified on the College Administration software (SEQTA).
4. Persistently late students will be referred to the sub-school Director of Learning and have such other consequences applied as are deemed appropriate by the Deputy Principal.

Examples of acceptable reasons for lateness

- Accident on way to the College.
- Transport breakdown on way to the College.
- Transport or College bus late.
- Other unavoidable and sufficient reasons.

Parents/Carers are asked to provide a written note. If no note is written on the day of lateness, then a note must be shown to the Home Group Teacher on the next day.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for lateness

- Truancy.
- Sleeping in.
- Just late (no reason given).
- Haircut.
- Shopping.
- Appointments which could have been made out of school hours (including driving lesson / test).
- Other avoidable and insufficient reasons.

The Home Group teacher will monitor any patterns of unacceptable late arrivals.

College Action for Unacceptable Reasons

- Referral to the sub-school Director of Learning.
- Restorative Interview with the sub-school Director of Learning for second and third offences.
- Referral to Deputy Principal or Principal for subsequent offence for more serious consequences.

NOTE: Lateness on compassionate grounds, e.g. family trauma, will be followed up by the Welfare Team for the sake of the welfare of students. In these cases, additional consequences will not be given.

Early Departure

VCE students are permitted to leave the College grounds to go to Bundoora Square during lunchtime if their Parents/Carers give written permission at the beginning of the College year. These students must sign out before leaving via the Senior School office. They must sign back in at the College Office before the end of lunch when they return. VET students are required to sign-out at the Reception office.

If students need to leave the College early or leave in the middle of the school day, e.g. to attend a medical appointment or for family reasons, they must attend the College Office before leaving to sign out and provide a written note. All students must have their

Parent/Carer with them when they do this. The student's Parents/Carers must come to the Office to collect the student and sign them out. If students return before the end of the school day they must sign back in at the College Office before attending class.

Camps and Excursions

In the case of an excursion which requires students to meet offsite without attending the College first, the Teacher in Charge provides the College Office Administration Staff with a list of students expected to attend the excursion the day before the excursion occurs. The Teacher in Charge then takes the roll on the day of the excursion and either emails or calls the College Office to confirm or make any alterations to the list of proposed attendees. This information is then entered manually onto the College Administration software (SEQTA) by Administration Staff. When this is not possible, the Teacher in Charge will do this remotely.

To meet Duty of Care responsibilities, the college attendance records should indicate whether the student was physically present in a classroom, or absent. If the student is attending a College-approved activity, this will be indicated with an event, excusing the student from class. In the latter situation, the Teacher in Charge of the activity should record attendance and ensure Parents/Carers are notified of any absences in the same manner as for regular absences from school.

CRTs

Casual Relief Teachers (CRT) are met by the CRT Co-ordinator in the morning before the College day starts and are shown how to mark the roll. If the CRT has a digital device, they are given a password so that they can mark the roll electronically. If they do not have a digital device, they are given a hard copy of the roll for their class and asked to mark it at the usual times, returning it to the College Office Administration Staff at the beginning of periods 1 and 6 so that the information can be entered manually into the College Administration software (SEQTA).

Paper Rolls

In the case where electronic roll marking is not possible, up to date paper copies of the roll will be available from the College Office. These should be marked at the same time and by the same staff as electronic rolls and returned to the College Reception Office.

Marking Rolls Procedures

It is important to realise that rolls are a legal document. They can be used in evidence in a court of law and if incorrectly filled in can bring evidence into question. They are a legal record of a student's attendance at school for the compulsory years of schooling. They also provide important information concerning VCE students. Rolls show the attendance of students in a school and are used for determination funding of per capita grants. For all these reasons they need to be marked accurately.

1. Attendance Rolls must be marked twice daily for Primary School classes and at the commencement of each period, including morning Home Group, for Secondary School classes.
2. Students not present at the commencement of Home Group should be marked as absent. The Administration Staff will update this entry if a student arrives late.
3. Insist that all absences are followed up with a note in writing from the Parent/Carer. This information must be communicated to the Office Administration Staff so the attendance can be recorded accurately into the College attendance system.
4. Long term and/or habitual absences as well as welfare concerns regarding absences should be brought to the attention of the appropriate sub-school Director of Learning. This is also particularly important for VCE students.
5. **STUDENTS SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO MARK A ROLL.**

6. All Prep to Year 12 rolls should be completed at the start of the period for Emergency Management Procedures and compliance with attendance recording regulations. Late arrivals should be updated during the period when students arrived.
7. Rolls will be checked regularly by sub-school Directors of Learning and Administration Staff for Government requirement data collection and maintenance purposes.

Procedures for Following Up Unexplained Student Absences & Monitoring Attendance Issues

Teachers input absentees from their roll during the morning Home Group. The Administration Staff process all incoming calls and attendance emails. At approximately 10:15am, once all absentees' notifications and reasons for absentees have been processed, the Administration Staff contact Parents/Carers of students with unexplained absentees. Attendance alerts are primarily communicated via SMS.

Absence reports are emailed by the Reception Team to the Executive Team upon request.

During the course of the day, if there are any concerns about the accuracy of the daily attendance records, Staff are advised to contact the College Office for clarification. The Administration Staff will communicate this to either the sub-school Director of Learning or Principal if the student's location is unknown.

Procedures to Identify Students with Poor Attendance Records

- The school attendance of every student is recorded in Home Group at the start of the day. The reason for any absence recorded must subsequently be substantiated, and recorded on the attendance system at the College Office using a set of approved absence codes.
- Home Group Teachers are required to notify Reception and the appropriate sub-school Director of Learning on the third day of any absence, unless the College received prior notification. (Note that, in most cases, unexplained absences are followed up with Parents/Carers via email contact on the day of the absence).

Once identified, any ongoing concerns about the regular attendance of a student will trigger a series of steps.

In the Primary School, the Classroom Teacher will work closely with the family and the Director of Learning - Primary School to address any concerns.

In the Secondary School, concerns about attendance will trigger the 'Procedures for Managing Concerns about Student Progress'. For VCE students this trigger will be activated before the attendance rate falls to 90%. The VCE Learning Coordinator needs to be aware of any situation where this is occurring.

Monitoring Attendance of Students Participating in Courses Provided by Another Senior Secondary Course Provider

The attendance of students at curriculum programs outside school premises needs to be recorded by the provider and reported back and recorded by the school. The Director of Senior School Learning will manage absences in conjunction with the provider.

Attendance from external providers is emailed back to the College via the sub-school Director of Learning and the attendance email address at: attendance@ncc.vic.edu.au.

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal will determine if the explanation provided for an absence is reasonable for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Principal should use their discretion in making this decision.

The Principal or their nominee must record:

- Student attendance twice per day in Primary Schools and in every class in Secondary Schools for every student enrolled at the College.
- The reason given for an absence and whether this is reasonable in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.
- An absence as unexplained if no explanation has been given and change the attendance record once an explanation is provided or established.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the necessary arrangements are made for their son / daughter to arrive at the College at the required time each day during school term time.
- Ensuring that their son / daughter attends school every day the College is open for instruction – including, but not limited to, attendance at excursions, carnivals, retreats, and camps planned by the College, as they are part of the educational program and attendance is compulsory.
- Responding to Absence & Lateness email messages (which they receive if their son / daughter has been marked absent or has arrived late without Parent/ Carer explanation) by replying via email message with an explanation, including their child's name, year, date of absence and reason for the absence or lateness.
- Making medical and dental appointments outside school hours (where possible).
- Advising the relevant Home Group Teacher if their child is expected to be absent for more than three days and detailing the reason for this absence (such as illness or other circumstances).
- Providing a Medical Certificate (with details of the nature of the illness) for their child should s/he suffer from an acute illness that necessitates extended leave from the College.
- Advising the relevant Home Group Teacher in writing of their (Parents/Carers) absence from home for more than a few days and providing the name, address and phone numbers of someone to act for them during their absence.
- Putting in writing requests to the Principal for planned extended absences of 5 or more days during term time (for example, an overseas holiday).

Home Group Teachers are responsible for:

- Being punctual in attending to their daily Homeroom duties.
- Accurately marking student attendance data in the College Administration software (SEQTA) and submitting it by 8:55am.
- Ensuring students do not mark the roll as this is a breach of the College's Duty of Care.
- Ensuring that the electronic roll marking system is correctly used, i.e. only students actually present in the room are to be recorded.
- Ensuring all students who arrive after 8.40am are directed to the College Office before going to class.

- Reporting to the sub-school Directors of Learning any student attendance concerns such as
 - Repeated absences
 - Unusual absences
 - Fraudulent notes.

Secondary School Subject Teachers are responsible for:

- Being punctual in attending to their scheduled class duties.
- Marking student attendance at the commencement of the lesson, recording data in the College Administration software (SEQTA).
- Reporting unexplained absences from the class by immediately contacting the College Office to investigate student whereabouts.
- Notifying the sub-school Director of Learning for any student who misses a lesson without an acceptable explanation.
- Providing the College Office with the names of students on excursions / incursions, then advising the Office of any absences on the day of the excursion/incursion.

Office Administration Staff are responsible for:

- Checking that all Home Group attendance rolls have been digitally submitted daily (by 9:00am).
- Collecting explanation / absentee notes written by Parents/Carers, if appropriate, for any absence from the College within 7 days of the student's return to the College (this is a legal requirement).
- Managing computer data entry including:
 - All daily explanations of student absences
 - All explanations of late student arrivals
 - All students who go home ill
 - All students who leave for appointments
 - All student sick bay attendance
 - Incursion and excursion attendance
 - Special event attendance;
- Following up on a Subject Teacher notification of a student's unexplained absence from a class by:
 - Confirming attendance in Home Group
 - Confirming attendance with previous Subject Teacher/s
 - Checking attendance with College Counsellor/s and other Support Staff
 - Alerting sub-school Directors of Learning of the unexplained absence. Sub-school Directors of Learning to commence a search of the site and inform Parents/Carers of ongoing unexplained absence.
- Recording absence type in the College Administration software (SEQTA) on receipt of a Parent/Carer explanation according to the Attendance Register Codes.
- Contacting a Parent/Carer on the third day to ascertain a reason for the absence; if a student is absent from school for 3 consecutive days and the Parent/Carer has made no attempt to contact the College. This rule also applies for 3 unexplained

non-sequential absences. The outcome of this phone call is to be communicated to the College Office.

All students are responsible for:

- Ensuring their attendance is recorded in Home Group class.
- Signing in at the College Office, if they arrive after 8:40am.
- Attending every timetabled class, including Study Periods.
- Providing an explanation of lateness if their Parent/Carer has not provided a written explanation to the College Office.
- Providing a signed permission note from a Parent/Carer to leave the College grounds during school hours. The note must be approved and signed by the Home Group Teacher and the sub-school Director of Learning. Students must show the approved note to their Subject Teacher prior to the exit time. Students must then sign out at the College Office.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

Related Policies

VCE Student Policy Handbook

VCE Staff Policy Handbook

Relevant Legislation

Community Services Act 1970 (Vic.)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007

Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013

References

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