



# Attendance and Lateness Policy

## Purpose



It is the intention of Catholic Regional College Caroline Springs Attendance to provide clear guidelines regarding school attendance to ensure all students meet the requirements of compulsory education in the state of Victoria. The Attendance Policy is a shared commitment between the College, parents/carers and the student to monitor and maintain regular school attendance.

## Policy Statement



At Catholic Regional College Caroline Springs we believe continued and ongoing access to educational experiences provides the best possible pathway for students' future. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment and expect students to engage in the community of our College through continued attendance. Regular attendance at school is not only a legal responsibility, it is also a known positive factor in the holistic wellbeing of a child through engagement in academic and social opportunities and learning emotional regulation through the development of relationships. We aim to work in partnership with students and their families to ensure attendance needs are met and where attendance is not possible it is communicated with and recorded by the College. In the circumstance of extended absences it is the College's responsibility to engage with the student, parents/ carers and when necessary, external agencies, to ensure there is a return to school plan for the child and their family.

## Scripture



O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. Psalms 95:1-95:3

## Attendance



All registered schools in Victoria must ensure their system for recording student attendance meets legal requirements. Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school and the school must record the reason (if any) given by the parent/carer. The school must advise parents/carers promptly of unexplained absences. Attendance rates can have an impact on students academically, socially and emotionally.

## **Legal Responsibilities**



Due to the Colleges legal responsibilities we are required to record student attendance in every class and record, in writing, the reason given for each absence. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge schools' duty of care for all students
- assist calculation of the school's funding
- enable schools to report on student attendance annually
- meet DECD & VCAA requirements.

## **Monitoring attendance**



With a current population of 881 students at Catholic Regional College Caroline Springs homeroom teachers and subject teachers who see their students regularly are the best persons to be able to identify any initial problems with attendance. In addition to the legal obligation to be accurate with attendance rolls, from a pastoral point of view there are important reasons to monitor student attendance.

## **Role of the homeroom teacher**



It is the responsibility of the homeroom teacher to monitor attendance of students in their homeroom. If students have been absent for two consecutive days without notification, homeroom teachers should contact parent/carers by the third day. The purpose of this phone call is to determine reasons for the absence, remind parents to contact the school when a child is absent and of the importance of attendance if a teacher has any concerns. Notification of reason for absence are to be passed on to Reception. If attendance drops below 90% a letter should be emailed/posted home. A template can be accessed on SEQTA homepage. Homeroom teachers should continue to monitor attendance and also notify the Year Level Leader, YLL, when attendance rate is below 80% and 70%.

## **Role of the subject teacher**



It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to record attendance in each class. If there are concerns about attendance, subject teachers should discuss attendance with the homeroom teacher or YLL. If a student is absent for an assessment, parents/carers should be notified and the student will be required to attend an assessment re-sit (refer to Assessment Re-sit Procedure).

## Checking attendance rates



Attendance can be checked on SEQTA in the following ways:

- Attendance summary (to view overall attendance rate)
- Class attendance percentages (for individual subject attendance)
- Period history (best used to monitor specific days and periods)

## Main Reasons for Absenteeism



- Student *cannot attend* due to illness, or family reasons
- Student *will not attend* to avoid bullying, unsafe conditions, harassment or embarrassment
- Student *does not attend* because they do not see value in it, or for other reasons are enabled to stay home
- Family holiday during term. Parents should notify the YLL of any holiday taken during the school term. Teachers who receive this information should forward it to the Head of Student Wellbeing. A formal letter will be sent from the YLL or HSW through the Deputy Principals outlining the importance of attendance.

## Reporting and Attendance letters



Attendance letters are to be sent when attendance drops below 90%, 80% and 70%.

Attendance < 90%

- Homeroom teacher notifies YLL that attendance < 90%
- HRT sends letter of concern to parent/carer using template on SEQTA
- Letter recorded in student notes
- Follow up with phone call to parent/carer, if no prior contact has been made

Attendance < 80%

- Homeroom teacher notifies YLL that attendance < 80%
- YLL sends letter to parent/carer through HSW and recorded on SEQTA
- YLL to follow up with parent/carer, if no prior contact has been made

Attendance < 70%

- Homeroom teacher to continue to monitor attendance and notify YLL that attendance <70%
- HSW to send letter and record on SEQTA

- HSW to arrange meeting with parent/carer, DPW, psychologist/counsellor and YLL
- School refusal guidelines to be followed
- YLL to monitor attendance following meeting

#### Not attending

- Return to school plan to be developed by school psychologist/counsellor or external provider
- DPW to notify CEM
- Plan to be evaluated as needed.

## School Refusal



School refusal is a very common and challenging mental health problem for schools. Only a third to half of adolescents who school refuse will ultimately return to school. Those students who do not return to school suffer serious disadvantage related to employment, relationships and social functioning in adult life. Identification of low attendance is important to be able to support families to address the issues associated with school refusal. The following chart outlines the procedure for instances of school refusal.

## School procedure for attendance less than 70%

**Student identified as having <70% attendance** will be discussed in SWAG. If identified as school refusal, information should be gathered through identified contact person.

**Information gathered** through contact with family, teacher feedback and data (NAPLAN, ACER, assessments etc). Meeting scheduled (parents/carers, YLL, DPW, Psychologist)

**Meeting held** to discuss concerns. Attendance plan developed; official attendance letter and information provided; referrals drafted

**Plan distributed** to relevant staff by YLL  
Attendance monitored by YLL and HRT  
DPW to contact CEM

**Referrals made** (if applicable)  
School psychologist to follow up with family and external referrals

### If attendance improves

- Plan evaluated and updated
- Continue monitoring (YLC and HRT)
- School engaged with student, family, external provider

### If attendance is stable:

- Meeting follow up as per initial plan

### If attendance declines:

- Meeting ASAP to re-evaluate plan
- Meeting to include DP, YLC, Psychologist, Parents, Student,

### Identify and action the following where appropriate:

- Discuss alternate setting, Distance Education
- Funding application
- Psychiatric referral
- Child FIRST referral
- Follow up contact with CEO

## Lateness Procedures



### Arrival time

It is important that students arrive at school no later than 8:40am This allows five minutes for them to go to their locker, unpack their bag and prepare the necessary equipment for the first two lessons and Homeroom, which begins at 8:45am

- **On time to school, but late for Homeroom**

If a student arrives at homeroom after 8:45am they will be asked by their Homeroom teacher (HRT) to go to Reception and sign in using the electronic ID card scanner in the foyer. The scanner will issue them with a receipt, which must be shown to the HRT.

- **Late to school**

If a student enters the school gate after 8:45am they will be directed to Reception by the staff member on morning supervision duty. The student will sign in using the scanner and then show the receipt to their HRT.

### Monitoring lateness

It is the responsibility of the HRT to closely monitor and be aware of students who are arriving late to Homeroom. It is advisable that the HRT keep a record (electronic or hard copy) to monitor students and counsel students who are late and to proactively work with the students to avoid consequences.

## Consequences



- **Wednesday Lunch Recall**

If a student is late to homeroom three times, without a valid explanation, or communication on the same day from a parent, the HRT will issue a Wednesday Lunch Recall (Refer to Recall and Points Guidelines).

### Failure to attend a Lunch Recall

The supervising teacher will take a roll and inform the HRT if a student on the list did not attend. The HRT will follow up with a conversation the next day or a phone call home. If there is a valid reason, the student will repeat the Recall the following week. If there is no valid reason, then the student will automatically be issued a Thursday After School Recall by the YLL.

- **Thursday After School Recall**

If a student is late to homeroom a fourth time, without a valid explanation, or communication on the same day from a parent, then the HRT will notify the YLL who will issue a Thursday After School Recall (Refer to Recall and Points Guidelines).

### Failure to attend a Thursday After School Late Recall

The supervising teacher will inform the HRT, the YLL and the HSW.. The HRT will contact parents for an explanation. The HRT will inform the parents that the student will be expected to attend the following week. If parents are unsupportive or challenging of the process then the HRT will inform the HSW who will then undertake to resolve the matter.

- **Continued lateness**

If a student is late for a fifth time the HRT will contact parents to come in for a meeting as soon as possible with the HRT/YLL or HSW. The student will also be issued a further Thursday After School Recall.

A sixth time late, the student will be suspended internally and subsequent lateness will result in an external suspension. These will be issued and overseen by the HSW.

### **Recall points for lateness**



The number of late to Homerooms will reset at the beginning of each term.