Related Merici Policies

Assessment
Appeals – Senior Assessment
Absences
Absences - Senior Illness and Misadventure

Rationale/Purpose

- To clarify the expectations of attendance during senior years: Year 11 and 12.
- To provide consistency in decision-making around the classification of absences as explained and unexplained.
- To ensure that appropriate documentation is provided to meet BSSS requirements.

Definitions

Explained absence
Absences that appear on a student’s attendance record, but do not count towards a Void grade. Examples of a ‘reasonable excuse’ to explain a student’s absence might include:

- illness, including recovery from major illness, injury or medical condition
- medical or dental treatment
- bereavement
- religious or cultural observation
- attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings
- participation in sanctioned debates, eisteddfods, sports, musical or theatrical productions not directly arranged by the College
- participation in territory, interstate, national, or international sporting event or equivalent
- alternative lesson arranged by the College

Appropriate documentation

- Handwritten note detailing the reason for the absence signed by a parent/guardian for absences of three consecutive days or less. The Merici Absentee note is the preferred mode of communication.
- Medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist or other recognised professional treating the student for absences of more than three consecutive days.

Unexplained absence
Absences that appear on a student’s attendance record and count towards a Void grade. Examples of unacceptable excuses to explain a student’s absence might include:

- Deliberately avoiding a lesson
- Choosing to work on assessment
- Sleeping in
- Driving lessons
• Failure to notify the College before leaving the premises
• Family holidays or extended visits overseas without Principal approval
• Failing to provide documentation of an absence within 5 school days of the return to school

Void grade
A V grade is awarded when a student does not satisfy the assessment or attendance requirements of a unit. There is no point awarded for the Void unit and this can break a Major and have significant impact on a student’s package.

Policy
This policy outlines the responsibilities of students regarding student attendance in scheduled classes.

It is expected that students will attend all scheduled classes / contact time / structured learning activities for the units in which they are enrolled, unless there is due cause and adequate documentary evidence is provided. It is the student’s responsibility to provide this documentation in a timely manner. Any student whose attendance falls below 90% of scheduled classes / contact time / structured learning activities in a unit, without due cause and adequate documentary evidence, will be deemed to have voided the unit. The Principal has the right to exercise discretion in special circumstances, if satisfactory documentation is supplied.

Procedures

• A written note, from a parent/guardian must explain all explained absences within 5 school days of returning to College.
• A doctor’s certificate needs to be produced for absences exceeding 3 consecutive days.
• It will not be acceptable to bring in a note at the end of a semester with explanations going back to absences accrued through that semester unless they fall within the previous 5 school day period. In other words, these absences will remained as “unexplained” and accumulate towards a void.
• A summary of all absences will be sent home at the end of each fortnight. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the College of any apparent errors in the attendance record, which will require verification from the classroom teacher. Absences (apart from data errors) can only be cleared if they still fall within the 5 day explanation period, regardless of the timing of the receipt of the attendance record.
• Due to the impact on student learning, an interview with parents may be arranged if there appears to be an excessive number of ‘explained absences’ (10 absences).
• Excuses will not be accepted for absences during a school day where the student has already attended classes, if the student has not signed out at the Attendance Office detailing the reason why they have left the College. These absences will remained as “unexplained” and accumulate towards a void.
• Excuses will not be accepted if the student arrives late to the College and had not signed in late with the Attendance Office. These absences will remained as “unexplained” and accumulate towards a void.
• Evidence of appointments or a note from parents will be required to substantiate reasons for leaving the College when a student’s scheduled classes are on. Driving lessons are not to be made during a student’s scheduled classes and will remain as an unexplained absence.
• All students leaving the College due to illness must report to First Aid for signing out.
• A holiday scheduled during semester time is **not a valid reason** for being absent from class. Absences in such cases will contribute to unexplained absences and could lead to students receiving a ‘V’ grade.

• Applications for approved leave must be made in writing to the Principal, through the Senior School Coordinator, prior to the leave being taken. Approval will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

• The College will advise parents when a student appears to have voided a subject and an interview will be arranged to discuss the situation.

Failure to follow these procedures will add to the unexplained absences that may cause a ‘V’ grade to be awarded.

**References**

Board of Senior Secondary Studies: Policy and Procedures Manual 2012. Section 4.3.8 Attendance/Participation


**Forms**

Student absence form: [Absentee Note.pdf](#)

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Approved by: Merici Executive

Implementation Date: September 2007

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Merici Contact Officer: Assistant Principal - Curriculum