



Attendance Years 7-9

Related Policies

Attendance – Year 7 to Year 9 Classes
Teacher Role Description and Responsibilities

Rationale/Purpose

Merici College encourages all students to attend all school days and events when they are able, but recognises that attendance is a parental responsibility. As such, it works with parents to support regular attendance.

It is required that Junior students attend from 8:45am – 3:25pm. Students are required to attend all scheduled lessons during the school day.

The College has a responsibility to assist parents with the regular attendance of their daughters and to assist parents with their compliance to the national legislation regarding students attending school until age 17.

Definitions

Short Term Absence

Up to 1 week

Examples of a 'reasonable excuse' might include, but not be limited to:

- 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 school
- participation in territory, interstate, national, or international sporting event or equivalent

Long Term Absence

Longer than one week but less than five weeks

Examples of a 'reasonable excuse' might include those listed above for Short Term Absence reasons and

- family holidays or extended visits overseas
- sanctioned extended absence in relation to children of travelling families

Extended Absence

More than five school weeks

Examples of a 'reasonable excuse' might include those listed for Short Term and Long Term Absence with the exception that they are for a longer period of time.

Policy

This policy is applicable to junior students in Years 7 to Year 9. Any absence during the day must be explained in writing from the student's legal guardian or parent. Phone notification of full day absences is not acceptable evidence of absence and must be followed up with either a note or email. Student Services notifies any parents who have elected to use an SMS service if their daughter is marked absent from Pastoral Care. Parents can reply to the SMS to confirm their daughter's absence, which will suffice as acceptable evidence of absence and requires no further action.

Acceptable evidence of Short Term Absence

- Email (student.services@merici.act.edu.au)
- Replies to school SMS

These forms of communication must come from the student's legal guardian.

Acceptable evidence of Long Term Absence

- Completion of Notification of Indented Long Term Absence form at least two weeks prior to leave.

These forms of communication must come from the student's legal guardian.

Acceptable evidence of Extended Absence

- Completion of Exemption Certificate

These forms of communication must come from the student's legal guardian.

The following is adapted from the Catholic Education Attendance Policy:

Under Section 11 of the Education Act, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child who lives in the ACT, is of compulsory school age and is enrolled at a school attends:

- *the school on every day, and during the times on every day, when school is open for attendance, and*
- *every activity of the school (including attendances at an approved educational course) that the school requires the child to attend.*

Parents must have a reasonable excuse for not complying with the compulsory attendance requirement in the Act. If parents do not have a reasonable excuse, they are liable under the Act and may be fined.

Further information regarding student attendance requirements and Exemption Certificates are available from the ACT Directorate for Education and Training website: http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z

Please note:

For periods of more than five school weeks, approval for absences from school is made by the Principal, and students who **live in NSW and attend a Catholic School in the ACT** are required to send an application for leave greater than 5 school weeks to the Catholic Education Office to:

Dominic Braybon

Procedures

The attendance roll is a legal document and is completed by the Pastoral Care Teacher, never by a student.

As the roll is a legal document which may be subpoenaed and used in evidence in court teachers recognize the importance of accuracy in its completion.

The following guidelines are issued to staff:

1. The roll is marked electronically by the Pastoral Care Teacher
2. A late slip will be presented by a student who arrives late.
3. Phoned excuses will be inserted by Student Services after a call to school explaining absence.
4. When a student brings an absence note, the Pastoral Care Teachers place it in the Pastoral Care folder and it will be entered by Student Services. The Pastoral Care Teacher should make a note that they have sighted the explanation next to the students name in the electronic roll.
5. It is the responsibility of Pastoral Care Teachers to actively follow up absence notes and make follow up calls to parents when students have been away if notes are not produced within five days of the student returning to school.

Non-Attendance

Students are legally obliged to attend school until the age of 17. The Education Act mandates that Principals must refer parents and children to support services when school procedures encouraging attendance are not successful.

Where a student is not regularly attending, every effort is made by the Pastoral Support Team to identify the reasons for this and re-establish a pattern of regular attendance. This will happen in the first instance through the Pastoral Care Teacher and the House Coordinator. The Head of Junior School, the Deputy Principal Development and the Principal may become involved as appropriate. Under the ACT Education Act, the Principal may require a student and her parents to meet with the Non-Government Schools Section, ACT DET authorised person if a student is not regularly attending without a valid reason.

The Pastoral Care Teacher will contact parents of students who fail to attend school for three subsequent school days. If the Pastoral Care Teacher is concerned or the absence is a repeating pattern, the Pastoral Care Teacher should inform the House Coordinator.

The House Coordinator will meet with the student and support the student in normalizing her attendance. This may include involving the Head of Junior School, the Defence Transition Mentor or CatholicCare staff to work with the student to support them in attending school. The House Coordinator will also make contact with the parents and explain to them the parents' responsibility for student attendance. If this intervention shows a continuation of the unsatisfactory attendance pattern, the House Coordinator will inform the Head of Junior School and Deputy Principal Development.

The Deputy Principal Development will write to the parent of the student whose attendance is of concern and request a meeting to outline the seriousness of the circumstances and explain possible subsequent actions. The Deputy Principal will write to the parent/s formalizing the position of the College following this meeting and notify the Non-Government Schools Office. If this intervention fails to normalize the student's attendance, the Principal will be informed.

The Principal will contact the Catholic Education to discuss the individual needs of a student whose attendance is of concern and has shown no improvement despite intervention, and negotiate the involvement of an appropriate authorised person through the Non-Government Schools Section, ACT DET.

Should there be no further compliance, ACT DET may commence legal proceedings to attempt to gain compliance.

The School is able to withdraw a student enrolment if they miss 20 consecutive days in a school term and all reasonable attempts have been made by the College to effect change on the part of the student.

Pre-Arranged Absences

In the event of a pre-arranged absence, students are required to meet with the Head of Junior School to negotiate work arrangements for their absence. Students should make every effort to complete and submit assessment prior to their departure. If this is not practicable, students can negotiate later submission dates prior to departure. If all assessment can't be completed due to absence, estimates for tasks can be made, in keeping with the College Assessment Policy.

Notification of pre-arranged absence must be forwarded to Student Services to enable scheduling of the expected absence. No further written communication is required.

Communication of Policy

The Attendance Policy (without the staff procedures) will be communicated to students, parents and staff each semester in keeping with CE requirements. Attendance procedures will be conveyed to new staff and to relief teachers at the commencement of employment.

References

BSSS – Policy and Procedures Manual (see 'Attendance for Senior Classes'),
http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/194821/01_PandPManual_2012_Amended_01-2012.pdf

ACT Education ACT Section 11, www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/ea1990104/

Forms

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

Implementation Date: September 2007

Policy last Updated: July 2017

Merici Contact Officer: Deputy Principal Development
