St Patrick's College
LAUNCESTON

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

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VERSION NUMBER:	**2.3**	**APPROVED BY:**	**Leadership Team**
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RESPONSIBLE/ BREACHES REPORTABLE TO:	**Deputy Principal Wellbeing & Leadership**	**SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE:**	**September 2029**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the expectations and obligations for all parents/guardians of students and all independent students enrolled at St Patrick's College, supporting consistent attendance at school as directed by the CET Attendance Policy, 2025.

St Patrick's College, and by virtue of their employment, our teachers are legally required to monitor and record the attendance of students in their care daily, whether absent or present in class, on an excursion or at a school-based activity.

Class rolls, whether electronic or paper-based, can be required as evidence in court and assist in establishing that a school has met its common law duty of care to students. Attendance records are required as part of a school's Workplace Health and Safety requirements and can be critical in identifying serious student protection concerns. In addition, student attendance records are used for student reporting, fee allocation, and government reporting.

PROTOCOL STATEMENT

Students are required to attend all classes during the school term, and repeated non-attendance may affect their ability to fulfil course requirements and their overall learning outcomes.

At St Patrick's College, it is a requirement that students attend Tutor/Home Group, pastoral care programs, Retreats, Reflection Days, sporting carnivals, College camps and other College activities.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS & REGULATIONS UNDER THE *EDUCATION ACT 2016*

Under the *Education Act 2016*, the parent/guardian of a child (aged 5 to 18) must ensure the child is enrolled and attends each school day. Where a student is unable to attend school, parents/guardians or independent students must advise the school.

Authorised absences are those authorised under the *Education Act 2016*, specifically sections 19 and 36, and the circumstances set out in *Ministerial Instruction No 4 Students excused from Daily Attendance at School (2017)*.
Reasons for a student to be marked Authorised absent include:

- Sickness/incapacity.
- Medical, legal or related appointments.
- Natural disasters or extreme weather preventing a child from safely attending their enrolled school.
- Terminal illness of an immediate family member.
- Bereavement of a person the child had a close, significant, or family relationship with.
- Having witnessed or been subjected to family violence.
- Being a participant or official at a recognised state, national or international event.
- Participation in a recognised learning experience.
- An application for home education being received by the Education Registrar and provisional registration being granted.

Unauthorised absences are those absences that do not meet the set of circumstances deemed for a student to be excused from daily attendance at school under the *Education Act 2016*. The College, under the authority of the *Education Act 2016*, may investigate any unauthorised absences.

Additionally, under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*, a child is considered at risk if "the child is under 16 years of age and does not, without lawful excuse, attend school regularly."
This requires a report to Strong Families Safe Kids by the College.

The Federal Government requires schools to report on the attendance of students receiving Centrelink allowances (Austudy, ABSTUDY, AIC and PES etc). This involves reporting students with five or more unexplained absences for a term. Ongoing payment is dependent on satisfactory attendance.

NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT ABSENCES

SHORT TERM/DAILY ABSENCES

If a student is absent, the parent/guardian is required to contact the College by phone (6341 9988), email (absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au) or the Schoolbox App prior to 9:30am on the day of absence. The College will SMS parent/guardians after 10:00am if there has been an unexplained absence a reply is expected as soon as possible thereafter, not exceeding two days, as it will then be considered an unauthorised absence.

MULTIPLE DAYS ABSENT

In the event of *Authorised absences over five (5) days in a Term,* the College will work with families to provide appropriate ongoing education and support. In this instance, Principals may require evidence to be provided which can include:

1 Medical Certificate/s

If a student is absent for medical reasons for a period of five days or longer, then they will be required to provide a medical certificate if requested by the Principal/Pastoral Care Team. When a student experiences

ill health, injury or a family emergency, College staff will work with the family to provide appropriate ongoing education and support.

2 Statutory Declaration from parents/guardians

3 Documentation confirming participation in student's sporting, cultural or academic event
The College recognises that students participate in non-College activities and events that are of considerable educational and personal value to them, such as playing representative sports at national or international level or participating in cultural experiences. A parent/guardian must seek permission from the Principal by emailing (principal@stpatricks.tas.edu.au). The Principal will consider the request at their discretion and notify the parent/guardian of authorisation.

(The Principal will not formally approve any unauthorised absences. Please note that under the *Education Act 2016*, family holidays constitute an unauthorised absence. Unexplained, unauthorised, or concerning patterns of absence will be followed up by the Pastoral Care Team).

The following communications (coordinated by PA - DP Wellbeing &Leadership) will be implemented by the College to manage multiple days absences within a term.

5 days absence in a term	Communication (letter) from Tutor Teacher Pastoral Care note
10 days absence in a term	Communication(letter) from House Head Pastoral Care note
15 days absence in a term	Communication from Director of Pastoral Care Parent communication arranged (DoPC/HH) Student Engagement Teacher* notified Pastoral Care note
20 days absence in a term	Communication(letter) from Head of School Parent Meeting arranged - SPC Attendance Action Plan initiated. Student Engagement Teacher engaged SWSS provided as an option Pastoral Care note
25 days absence in a term	Communication(letter) from Deputy Principal Parent Meeting arranged (DP) Continuation of Student Engagement Teacher Engagement SWSS provided as an option Recommendation to the Education Registrar Pastoral Care note
30+	Termination of enrolment considered

*Student Engagement Teacher's role is to support pastoral leaders with individual students through collaborative planning to improve student attendance.

Furthermore, in the event of

- *more than five (5) consecutive days,* or an
- *unexplained pattern of absence*, or
- *ten (10) days of absence in a school year*, the College will:

(a) send parents/guardians/independent students a letter notifying them of the number of days absent and providing information on the impact on the student's learning.
(b) work with parents/guardians/independent students to increase the student's attendance to maximise the student's opportunity to catch up with the schoolwork missed.
(c) where the parents/guardians/independent students have provided an acceptable reason for the absence, Principals may use their discretion in relation to sending this letter.

In the event of *more than twenty (20) days in a school year*, the College will:

(a) send the parents/guardians/independent student a letter notifying them of the number of days absent and providing them information on the impact on the students learning.
(b) request for a formal meeting to discuss the impact on the students learning and may include discussion on whether part time attendance may support the student to participate in school and in an approved learning program.

REFERRAL TO COMPULSORY CONCILIATION CONFERENCE

If the student's attendance does not improve, the Principal or Authorised Delegate will refer the matter to the Education Registrar in accordance with the *Catholic Education Tasmania Referral for a Compulsory Conciliation Conference (Guidelines for Catholic Schools)* and *Ministerial Instructions No 6 Relating to School Student Absences*.

ENROLMENT TERMINATION

The student's enrolment in the College may be terminated if attendance does not return to an acceptable level under the *Response to Unacceptable Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure*.

Should a student be absent from school for a period longer than one (1) school term the College will be unable to hold the enrolment place and this will be communicated to:

(a) the parent/guardian or independent student in writing; and
(b) the Office of the Education Registrar (OER) via the Enrolment Cancellation Form.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE DURING SCHOOL DAY

LESSON ATTENDANCE

TUTOR

Teachers must record student attendance in Schoolbox for every Tutor group period.

- If Tutor attendance is being recorded on a hard copy attendance sheet, teachers should designate a student as absent with an 'A'.
- Regardless of the method used (electronic or hard copy), Tutor attendance must be submitted between 8:50am and 9:05am each day.

TIMETABLED CLASSES

Teachers must record student attendance in Schoolbox for every lesson. If a student marked as present in an earlier lesson is identified as absent, the teacher must send an immediate email to middleschool.absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au or CP.absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au or seniorschool.absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au .

If a student attends class and leaves with permission, but does not return within 15 minutes an email is sent to middleschool.absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au or CP.absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au or seniorschool.absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au . This will initiate a search if they are still not accounted for. The responsibility belongs to the Head of School, which they may delegate to another member of leadership, if unavailable.

If a student is unaccounted for and is not located after 30 minutes (endeavouring to have a conversation with the staff member who last marked them present), the Head of School or their delegate (Director of Pastoral Care/House Head) will attempt to call the parent/guardian.

After 60 mins and the parent/guardian/s are unable to contact/locate the student, the Principal needs to be informed to determine if/when police notification should occur.

EXCURSIONS

When staff take students off-campus on excursions, camps, reflection days, retreats etc., they must provide the Front Office with a student attendance list with absences marked before departure.

This attendance list must also include the name and mobile number of participating staff for use in an emergency.

If a student goes missing on an excursion or actively runs away:

- Students should never be restrained unless their or others' safety is in immediate danger.
- Staff will follow the student from a safe distance and try to de-escalate the situation.
- The College will be called, and a member of leadership will be notified of the situation, where additional resources will be sent to the venue.

- The parents/guardians will be notified immediately. If the parent/guardians cannot contact/locate the student, the College (DP Wellbeing & Leadership or delegate) will remain in communication with the parents/guardians to determine if and when police notification should occur.

KNOWN ABSENCE

If staff are made aware of a student's absence (at any time), e.g. they are contacted directly by the student's parent/guardian, they must immediately email this information to absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au.

If a student has been held up or required to meet a staff member, and will be late or unaccounted for in their scheduled class, the staff member should immediately email the Front Office, student's Class Teacher or Tutor. They should notify them of their meeting and an expected return to class time.

SICK BAY PROCEDURE

If a student is feeling ill or unwell during class time, or sustains a minor injury, they should adhere to the following procedure:

- Approach the teacher and explain the symptoms to them.
- Obtain permission in the form of a note from the teacher allowing them to go to Sick Bay.
- Students are not to contact parents/guardians themselves.
- Students must first report to Sick Bay and allow staff to treat the illness or injury.
- Once staff have completed their evaluation, the staff member monitoring the Sick Bay will contact parent/guardians if the student needs to be collected, or once treated, students are to return to class.
- If it is recess or lunchtime and the student feels ill or unwell or sustains an injury, they must report to Sick Bay in the first instance. Students are not to contact their parents.

FRONT OFFICE

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES SUMMARY

Attendance Marking	Rolls must be marked during Tutor (by 9:05 am) and at the start of every scheduled lesson. Teachers will be contacted if their attendance is not completed. If rolls are frequently incomplete or inaccurate, this information will be passed to the College Leadership team. Incorrectly marked rolls will be corrected by the teacher responsible for the class.
Present Categories	Students who are: ● In class will be marked 'Present – In Class'. ● with SWSS (Student Wellbeing Support Services) will be marked as 'Present – In-School Appointment'. ● participating in activities (excursion, camps etc.) will be marked accordingly by the teacher responsible for the activity. These attendance categories must not be changed unless the student is present in class, and then the category should be changed to Explained Absence – Confirmed here (Teacher Code).
Absent Categories	Students who are: ● Not in class, and notification has not been received from a parent/ guardian, will be marked 'Absent – Unexplained'. ● Not in class, and notification has been received from a parent/guardian advising the student is unwell, will be marked 'Parent Notification Unwell'. Other absence reasons will be marked accordingly, e.g. 'Appointment', 'Personal/Family'. When marking the roll, if teachers have received written information from parent/guardian regarding a student's absence, they should forward the details to absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au to be entered. If parent/guardians inform the Front Office of the student's absence, including any future planned absences, the Front Office enters a Notified Absence. Students serving and Internal or External suspension will be marked as 'Absent – Explained Absence – Disciplinary' upon College Leadership instruction.

Unexplained Absence	An unexplained absence occurs when a student is not present, and their parent/guardian does not contact the College. An SMS message is sent to the primary contact by approximately 10.30 am each day. When teachers receive a written explanation of the student's absence from their parent/guardian, they must forward this information to the Front Office so that absence data can be updated absent@stpatricks.tas.edu.au
Late Arrivals	A student is considered to have arrived late after the 8.45 am bell. Tutor and Home Group teachers must mark the student's attendance as 'arriving late' in Tutor or Home Group. After the Tutor period, students arriving late must be signed in at Student Reception and given a late slip. This slip needs to be presented to the teacher when arriving at class. If students do not have a late slip, they must be sent to Student Reception to sign in. The late arrival information is entered by the Front Office staff. If Tutors observe a student has made a habit of arriving late or is late for three consecutive days, they will contact the student's parent/guardian.

STUDENT ABSENCE CLASSIFICATION AT ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE

Will be classified as the following:

- Notified – Unauthorised
- Notified – Authorised
- Unexplained absence

CONCLUSION

Support for this policy by College staff, students and parents/guardians is fundamental to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of students and the provision of an effective and holistic education program.

REFERENCES

St Patrick's College *Mission Statement*
CET Attendance Policy
CET Response to Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and Procedure
CET Student Duty of Care
CET Excursion Management

APPENDIX

Class Attendance for Students