



Student Attendance Policy

Policy Classification		
Policy Number: 15/2015	Date of Origin: 2008	By Whom & Position: Ms D Gillis Assistant Principal – Pastoral Care
Policy Audience: Public Domain	Review Date: November 2015 November 2016 June 2019 April 2020	Next Review Date: 2022
<p>Policy Approval: This policy was approved by the Board in 2020</p> <p>This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters contained herein.</p> <p>This policy is in accord with the Safeguarding Standards of Catholic Professional Standards Ltd which align with the National Principles of Child Safe Organizations.</p>		

1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 Attending school every day makes learning easier and helps students to build and maintain friendships. At Oakhill College, the provision of effective teaching and learning is fundamental to the pastoral and academic care of students. Regular attendance and punctuality to school are integral to the learning process and therefore, the overall development and well-being of students.

2.0 Guiding Principles

- 2.1 This policy has been developed to demonstrate the College's compliance with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training.
- 2.2 The law in NSW (Education Act 1990 / Amended 2009) states that a child is of compulsory school-age if the child is of, or above, the age of 6 years and below the minimum school leaving age. In January 2010 the NSW Government raised the mandatory school leaving age to 17 years. A child who completes Year 10 of secondary education but who is below the age of 17 years is of compulsory school age unless the child participates, on a full time basis, in approved education or training or if the child is in paid work or a combination of approved education or training and paid work. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that this occurs. Unsatisfactory school attendance may affect the awarding of both the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) and the Higher School Certificate (HSC).
- 2.3 Students at Oakhill College are therefore, required to attend school every day unless there is an acceptable reason for non-attendance. Some examples of acceptable reasons for absence are illness, injury and misadventure.

3.0 Policy

- 3.1 Student Attendance Data Collection:
Oakhill College, in line with STATS requirements and as part of the Australian Education Act 2013, will report student attendance rate data twice a year, in the first semester and second semester. Oakhill College will report the proportions of students attending the College for 90 per cent or more of the time. As outlined by STATS, enrolment and attendance data is collected by gender, indigeneity and Year Level for full-time students enrolled in Years 7 to 10.
- 3.2 Enrolment Procedures:
A register of enrolments that includes the following details will be maintained for each student at Oakhill College. At the time of enrolment proof of residency, age and identity; a birth certificate or passport; is shown to the Principal's delegate, the College Registrar.

The following information is recorded for each student in the Enrolment Register:

- 3.2.1 Name, age and address;
 - 3.2.2 The name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s);
 - 3.2.3 Date of enrolment and information on previous school enrolment for a student older than 6 years;
 - 3.2.4 Date of a student leaving the College and the student's destination;
 - 3.2.5 Data on absences where a student is absent 30 days in 100. In some cases, the Assistant Principal Pastoral Care (APPC) or Heads of School may access the mandatory reporters' section of 'Keep Them Safe' website to determine if a report is required;
 - 3.2.6 Oakhill College monitors electronically the daily attendance and absence of students by maintaining a daily register for each class of students in Sentral;
 - 3.2.7 Student absences from class or from the College are identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the staff member responsible. The common code approved by the Minister is used.
- 3.3 Withdrawal of Enrolment
In the case where a parent/guardian wishes to withdraw their child from Oakhill College, the parent/guardian is required to write a letter or email to the Principal indicating the following:

- a) that the student is leaving the College;
- b) the date when the student will finish at the College;
- c) the reason/s for leaving;
- d) the school where the student will be enrolled.

Once the letter is received by the Principal, the student must complete a Student Sign out Form (which is available electronically in Sentral. The Student Sign Out Form is to be completed before the student's last day at the College and returned to the College Registrar.

3.4 Absentee Line Procedure

If a student is absent from the College, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to contact the College by phone on the College Absence Line - 96340856 to notify of their child's absence from school on a particular day. After hearing the recorded message, the parent/guardian is to:

- a) state their name and the date;
- b) state their child's name;
- c) state their child's Year level and House;
- d) state the reason for their child's absence.

3.5 Administrative Support Staff attend to the College Absence Line. All calls to the College by parents/guardians, in relation to their child's absence are updated electronically.

3.6 Alert messages are sent by Student Services via text message to parents/guardians who have not contacted the College to inform them of their child's absence on a given day.

3.7 The Attendance Line is reviewed throughout the day for absences.

3.8 Parents/guardians are not to phone the Absence Line to advise of a student's late arrival.

3.9 Students arriving late to the College are to present to Student Services. The student's late arrival is electronically recorded, along with the time of arrival, as 'Unexplained Absence' (W). An SMS advising time of arrival is sent to the parent/guardian.

3.10 Late Arrival Procedure

A student who is late to the College is to report to Student Services on arrival with their ID card.

3.10.1 The student's ID card is tapped to give an electronic entry. In the case of no ID card, the student's name will be manually entered in the College data base.

3.10.2 The parent/guardian can respond to the SMS or enter reason/s electronically on the Parent Portal in the College data base. Failure of a student to have a note or explanation on the College data base will result in a follow-up by the tutor.

3.10.3 Students are expected to be punctual to school and classes. Students with an unreasonable pattern of lateness will be followed up by the Dean and/or Head of School through an Individual Attendance Monitoring Plan or parent/guardian interview.

3.11 Early Leave Procedure

Students who wish to leave the College early must report to their Dean or Head of School with a note explaining the reason for early leave. The Dean or Head of School signs and dates the note. The student then takes the note and signs out through Student Services office which will electronically enter the information on the College data base.

3.11.1 An email can be sent to Student Services, if a note has been forgotten or a late appointment has been made.

- 3.11.2 Students who are ill/injured or leave the Health Centre or Student Services throughout the day are recorded in the attendance register in the Health Centre or at Student Services.

3.12 Request for Student Special Leave

Students are required to be at the College to meet syllabus requirements for achievement of outcomes and to attempt assessment tasks with their class or cohort.

- 3.12.1 Parents/guardians requesting special leave from the College for their children should note that generally leave will not be granted to students; as this impacts significantly on the equitable assessment procedures at the College and disadvantages the student by missing work. Parents/guardians are made aware of this expectation at the time of interview for a place at the College.
- 3.12.2 All requests for special leave must be made, in writing, to the Principal well in advance of the leave date. The College has in place an Application for Extended Leave Form.
- 3.12.3 Family holidays should not be arranged during the College Term. Students have in excess of eleven weeks' vacation time in an academic year and this is when they are free to travel.
- 3.12.4 If special leave is granted by the Principal, the College may not be able to arrange any required alternate examinations or assessment tasks. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the Director of Student Learning of any subject where an assessment is affected. The student must also ask their teacher, preferably well in advance of any approved leave, for a list of work to be covered, during the absence.

3.13 Procedures for Absence

Parents/guardians should telephone the Absentee Line on 9634 0856 prior to 8:30am on the first morning of absence if their child is unable to attend the College due to illness.

- 3.13.1 A note of explanation should be placed electronically in the College data base, using the Parent Portal by the parent/guardian on the first day their child's returns to the College from an absence. For absences of three days or more a doctors' certificate should be provided to the College.
- 3.13.2 The Student Assessment Handbook outlines procedures for students who miss school assessment tasks through absence. It is a requirement that a doctor's certificate be provided when a student misses a formal assessment task through illness.
- 3.13.3 When truancy is suspected, a teacher will inform the relevant Dean immediately. The Dean will then contact the student's parent/guardian to ascertain the reason for the absence. If truancy is confirmed, the Dean will notify the Heads of School and the Assistant Principal – Pastoral Care. Mandatory reporting procedures apply within the College where absences are extended, or a student may be at risk.
- 3.13.4 The Dean notifies parents/guardians when a student has a poor record of school or class attendance. The response ranges from a phone call to parent/guardian, to a parent/guardian interview, to an Individual Attendance Monitoring Plan depending on the severity of the absence issue.

3.14 Oakhill College has procedures in place to:

- a) monitor the daily attendance/absence of students;
- b) identify absences from school and classes;
- c) follow up unexplained absences;
- d) notify parents/guardians regarding poor school and/or class attendance.

3.15 A register of daily attendance is kept electronically by the school. It monitors each student's:

- a) daily attendance in each class throughout the day;
 - b) partial absences;
 - c) reason and date of absence;
 - d) late arrival and early leave from the College.
- 3.16 The register of enrolments is retained by the College for a minimum period of five (5) years before archiving and the register of daily attendances is retained by the College for a minimum period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made [Please refer to the College Archiving Policy].
- 3.17 Management of Attendance Rolls
- 3.17.1 The College attendance records are formally recorded and maintained on a network database.
- 3.17.2 Tutor time is when the Tutor Teacher takes an electronic roll in the College data base using 'Attendance.' Names are called out and students respond accordingly.
- 3.17.3 Student absentee is evident for the Deans in the College data base.
- 3.17.4 In the situation where a student is absent and their parent/guardian has not contacted the College notifying the reason for their child's absence, an SMS is sent. After three days of no contact the tutor teacher contacts the parent/guardian by phone.
- 3.17.5 A record of explanation from a parent/guardian may be lodged in the College data base through the Parent Portal on their child's return to the College after an absence if not already explained.
- 3.17.6 If an absence is not rectified by a parent/guardian through the Parent Portal in the College data base after five days, the tutor teacher should contact the parent/guardian by phone.
- 3.17.7 Students who arrive at the College after 8.35am must report to Student Services and tap their ID card, an SMS is sent to the parent/guardian. The student will then go directly to their timetabled class. (See section on Late Arrival 3.10)
- 3.17.8 From the commencement of Term 1, Year 12 students who have a study period at the end of the day (Period 5) may leave at the start of lunchtime. The exception is Tuesday when students may go home at the start of Period 6. This information is entered in the College data base.
- 3.17.9 Parents/guardians of students with extended periods of absence or who are repeatedly late to the College or class should be notified of these attendance concerns and where appropriate be called for an interview with the Dean and/or Heads of School and/or Assistant Principal of Pastoral Care.
- 3.18 Responsibilities
- 3.18.1 Students:
- a) attend all school days as outlined in the College calendar;
 - b) be punctual to the College in the morning and to classes throughout the day;
 - c) bring notes to the College to explain late arrival;
 - d) sign in and out of Student Services when arriving late or leaving College early;
 - e) follow procedures outlined in the Student Assessment Handbook regarding illness and misadventure;
 - f) catch up any class work missed through absence;
 - g) carry their diary when out of class with teacher permission.
- 3.18.2 Classroom Teachers:
- a) take electronic class roll at the start of each lesson in the College data base;
 - b) notify relevant Dean when a student develops a pattern of absence from class;

- c) follow College relevant policies and procedures to manage students who are repeatedly late to class;
- d) make entries in the Student Diary when students have need to leave a classroom;
- e) provide work for students to complete at home as requested by parents or Deans, when students have extended absence from the College due to illness.

3.18.3 Specialist Teachers:

- a) teacher overseeing a specialised event e.g. sport, reflection days, retreat or excursion must enter electronically all students involved in the event;
- b) the teacher overseeing the event must send any amendments to Student Services who will enter these electronically.

3.18.4 Parents:

- a) ensure that their child/children attend the College every day;
- b) contact the Absentee Line and leave a detailed message regarding their child's absence (See section Absentee Line – 3.4) or
- c) explain student absences electronically in the Parent Portal of the College data base; or respond to the College issued SMS;
- d) write and sign a note for partial leave for appointments or lateness to the College;
- e) apply in writing to the Principal to request special leave for a day or longer using the appropriate forms found in the Parent Portal.

3.18.5 Tutor Teachers:

- a) be punctual to tutor time;
- b) electronically mark the roll in the College data base – each student's name is to be called out so that students can respond aloud;
- c) electronically record reasons for partial absences;
- d) follow-up absent students on their return;
- e) liaise with Deans to contact parents/guardians about student absences, after three days of absence;
- f) electronically record and maintain an accurate record of attendance for each student.

3.18.6 Deans:

- a) monitor and manage student attendance in the House;
- b) contact parents/guardians for unexplained absences, after three days;
- c) inform parents/guardians by letter and / or interview of any concerns regarding poor attendance;
- d) periodically check the College data base for attendance accuracy;
- e) provide support and assistance for tutor teachers in managing student attendance;
- f) alert counsellors when students establish a pattern of high or regular absence;

3.18.7 Student Services

- a) maintain accurate attendance records electronically in the College data base for absentee line,
- b) lateness and early leave;
- c) send SMS messages to parents/guardians of absent students by approximately 9:30am;
- d) archive the attendance records at the end of each year – to be retained for a minimum of 7 years.

3.18.8 Assistant Principal – Pastoral Care:

- a) to work with Deans and office staff to ensure effective systems for monitoring and maintaining records of student attendance.

3.18.9 Principal:

- a) process student requests for leave;
- b) grant Certificate of Exemption;
- c) make necessary investigations and follow reporting procedures for students failing to meet the minimum attendance standards as outlined by the Education Act.

3.19 Application for Leave

- 3.19.1 The College follows the legislation introduced in 2015 that, any family holiday taken during term time will be counted as absence and that a Certificate of Exemption no longer applies to family holidays/travel taken during term time.
- 3.19.2 An Application for Extended Leave is to be lodged by a parent/guardian directly to the Principal with all relative supporting documentation.
- 3.19.3 The Application for Extended Leave must be submitted to the Principal by the parent/guardian two weeks prior the requested leave period. If the reason for requesting leave is within the requirements of the Education Act, the Principal may grant the leave.
- 3.19.4 The College will record granted leave as 'L' in the College data base and a Certificate of Extended Leave will be issued and sent to the parents/guardians.
- 3.19.5 If the Principal does not grant leave the absence will be recorded as an 'A' in the College data base and the parents/guardians will be notified.
- 3.19.6 All leave documentation is kept on the student's file. In the case of Certificate of Extended Leave, the original must be kept by the parents/guardians.

3.20 Application for Exemption from Attendance at School

The College processes a parent's/guardian's Application for a Certificate of Exemption from Attendance in accordance with the guidelines under Section 25 of the Act from NSW Department of Education and Communities. The College requires an Application for a Certificate of Exemption for all non-holiday related requests for leave.

- 3.20.1 Reasons a Certificate of Exemption may be granted include:
 - a) exceptional domestic circumstances;
 - b) direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991;
 - c) participation in elite sport or employment in the entertainment industry;
 - d) College representation in sporting, cultural or educational event.
- 3.20.2 An Application for Exemption from School Attendance is to be lodged by a parent/guardian directly to the Principal with all relative supporting documentation.
- 3.20.3 The Application for Exemption from School Attendance must be submitted to the Principal by the parent/guardian two weeks prior the requested leave period. If the reason for requesting leave is within the requirements of the Education Act, the Principal may grant the leave.
- 3.20.4 When an Exemption is approved by the Principal or his delegate, a Certificate of Exemption will be issued and sent to the parent/guardian. The absence will be recorded as 'L' in the College data base.
- 3.20.5 If the Principal does not grant the exemption the absence will be recorded as an 'A' in the College data base and the parent/guardian will be notified.
- 3.20.6 A copy of all Leave/Exemption documentation is kept on the student's file. In the case of Certificate of Exemption, the original must be kept by the parent/guardian.

3.21 Exemption from Enrolment

The College Principal may grant exemptions to students, of compulsory school age, from the requirement to be enrolled in school, provided approval has been given to enter a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship before they have completed Year 10 under section 21B of the Education Act.

3.21.1 Such exemptions will only be granted to a student where:

- a) the Principal considers that the student is a suitable candidate to complete their education through an apprenticeship or traineeship;
- b) the Principal has sighted a full-time apprenticeship or traineeship contract signed by the employer and a summary training plan authorised by the Registered Training Organisation;
- c) an employer agrees to notify the Department of Education and Training, through the Principal, if the apprenticeship or traineeship is abandoned before the student turns 17.;
- d) if the student does not complete the apprenticeship or traineeship, they will not have completed Year 10 and are legally required to do so under another pathway; for example, by returning to school or seeking enrolment in TAFE NSW.

4.0 Evaluation and Review

This policy is to be reviewed every two years or from time to time in the event of any information that would demonstrate the need for a review or resulting from any legislative or organisational change that would warrant a review.

5.0 Explanatory Notes and Definitions

5.1 Summary of Procedures for Tracking Student Attendance at Oakhill College.

The programme currently utilised by the College is Sentral.

The College data base is 'backed up' often should the College experience a power failure or circumstances beyond its control.

6.0 Supporting Documents

Student Assessment Handbook– Illness/misadventure section;
Safe School Policy