

# Student Attendance Policy

## RATIONALE

Emmanuel College recognises the importance of regular attendance for all school-aged children in their educational and social development. Students who attend school regularly have better health and employment outcomes, and higher income levels across their lifespan. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age to actively participate and engage in their learning and educational potential and to maximise their life opportunities.

## SCOPE

This policy relates to students, staff, and parents/guardians in regards to student attendance.

## DEFINITION

**Student attendance:** learning is dependent on students being at school, therefore schools in the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, will ensure students attend and engage in school activities, in accordance with gazetted (Victorian Department of Education) requirements for particular year levels.

**Attendance register:** an attendance register in either print or electronic form for the attendance of all students at the school for each calendar year. Emmanuel College registers student attendance electronically on SIMON and using Passtab.

**Term dates:** schools must adhere to the [gazetted term dates](#) provided by the Victorian Department of Education.

**Student free days:** student free days are days where students do not attend school and are generally designated for professional development activities, planning, or report writing.

**School closure days:** schools are also closed for designated periods, for school vacation, emergency situations and for [gazetted public holidays](#). A school closure day is a day upon which, in general, students and staff are not required to attend school, although some members may be required to engage in closure activities. Closure days would normally have an element of emergency or exceptional circumstances associated with them.

**Independent learning days:** from time to time the College may declare an independent learning day, where students will not attend school but will be required to complete work at home. Work will be provided by teaching staff for all timetabled classes. Student attendance will be marked as school acknowledged absence not impacting on their overall attendance percentage.

**Public holidays:** a [holiday](#) is a day where neither staff or students are expected to attend school or engage in school related activities. A holiday is a state-wide gazetted public holiday which falls during term time, or a day taken in conjunction with a locally gazetted custom or practice.

**Term four dismissals:** the end of the school year is staggered according to year level and as directed by Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB). The finish date for Years 7 to 10 is not more than two weeks before the gazetted end date, and Year 11 not before the last Friday in November. Year 12 finish in line with the VCE examination period. The finish dates are published annually in the College calendar.

**Communication to the school community:** parents/guardians and the broader school community will be advised well in advance of closure days, along with term dates and scheduling arrangements for student free days through the College calendar, newsletter, and Principal's start of semester letters.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Emmanuel College acknowledges its responsibility as a registered school under the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#) to maintain a student attendance register recording student attendance at least twice daily and recording any given or apparent reason for student absences.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. In accordance with government regulation, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged between six and 17 years unless an exemption has been granted.
2. Parents/guardians must enrol a child of compulsory school age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.
3. Students are expected to attend Emmanuel College during normal school hours (8.55 am to 3.25 pm) every day of each school term unless there is an approved exemption, the student is registered for virtual learning, or has dual enrolment at another educational institution and has only partial enrolment with the College.
4. Students are considered to be in attendance at school if they are involved in an off-site curriculum program or activity organised by the College.
5. The College will communicate these expectations to parents/guardians on enrolment and through regular updates such as the school newsletter.

## **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

- Homeroom/house mentor group teachers will record student attendance between 8.55 am and 9.05 am each morning on the homeroom roll in SIMON. Students who are late for homeroom/house mentor group will need to register their attendance through the College Office.
- Classroom teachers will record attendance in their class roll on SIMON, including those days when the class may be off-site. Students late for class will need to register their attendance at school at the College Office before proceeding to class, and this will be registered on the class roll.
- Daily attendance is monitored using the student management platform SIMON, and a tally of days absent and late arrivals is included on the student's semester reports and live attendance data is accessible to parents/guardians through the Parent Access Module (PAM).
- Parents/guardians are expected to provide an explanation for students who are absent. This can be in writing, emailed to the College Office, online notification tool in PAM, Skoolzine App, or by telephone. Where verbal communication occurs, administration staff will note the reason for absence on the absence notification. This notification must be provided by 10.30 am on the day the student is absent. Parents/guardians will be reminded of this process in the College newsletter and letters to parents.
- If a student is absent and no communication has been received from the parent/guardian, a text message (SMS) will be sent by the administration staff as per the College's Student Attendance Flowchart – Appendix A.
- Long term and/or unexplained absences will be followed up as outlined in the Student Attendance Flowchart. If no explanation is provided and concerns about student safety are raised, the College Office will notify the Assistant Principal – Students for follow up, including notifying the Police if needed.
- All records of contact and attempted contact with families regarding student absences will be recorded on the student profile in Student Notes on SIMON.
- If there is a need for a student to leave the College during school hours, a written request must be received from the student's parents/guardians at the College Office. A student granted permission to leave the grounds will be issued with a pass and the note from the parents/guardians will be filed. Students must depart from the school via the College Office, showing the administration staff the pass, sign out on the Passtab attendance register, and report to the Office on their return.
- Students who attend courses which are provided by an external provider, eg South West TAFE, will have a student absence recorded in SIMON for the release times of these classes as communicated by the provider. Attendance of external courses will be recorded by the provider and a nominated representative of the College will monitor attendance in conjunction with the provider through regular correspondence.

- If the occasion arises which necessitates family holidays being taken during school time, parents/ guardians are expected to notify the College Office six weeks prior to the date of absence. The College discourages holidays during term time. Families with students at VCE level should avoid taking students on holidays out of school time.
- Students are expected to contact their teachers regarding assessment tasks when absent from school and where necessary catch-up assessment tasks will be determined by the College. Any assessment missed by a student in Year 7-11 due to holidays will be noted as an Unapproved Family Holiday, on the belief that school term holidays are allocated for this time.

### Attendance Improvement Strategies

- Attendance improvement strategies will be implemented for any student who has been absent more than 20% of a school term, or in situations where school refusal is a factor in attendance.
- Attendance strategies include, identifying reasons for disengagement, collaborating with parents/ guardians, developing attendance improvement plans, providing intervention and wellbeing support, and where appropriate, referral to external support agencies.
- A support group may be established if the Principal or nominated representative believes the individual student and/or family require this support.
- The College will refer to Department of Education and Training (DET) [attendance guidelines](#) and Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) processes as support resources.
- The Principal or nominated representative will contact Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) in accordance with CECV procedures if the school strategies are not assisting in improving attendance of an individual student as outlined in the Student Attendance Flowchart.

### POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed.

### RELATED DOCUMENTS/LINKS

Appendix A – Student Attendance Flowchart

Guidelines for Staff – Student Absences (holidays during school term)

Absence Procedures (Medical or Family Holiday) Parents and Student Information

College Office student attendance and absence procedures (stored in Office shared drive)

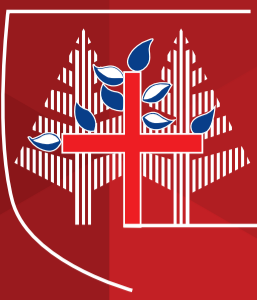
Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) – [Definitions and procedures relating to allocating student free days and school closure days](#)

Department of Education and Training guidelines – [Attendance](#) and [Attendance and Missing School](#)

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) – [School Attendance](#)

### REVIEW HISTORY

Version	Date released	Next review	Author	Approved
1.0	August 2021	August 2023	Principal's Assistant	College Leadership Team
2.0	November 2023	November 2025	Principal's Assistant	Advisory Council



## STUDENT ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART

### UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

- Student is absent without parental permission.
- Note absence notifications can be made through PAM, Skoolzine App and the College Office phone or email.

- Parent to be contacted on day of unexplained absence through registered SMS, notifying parents of student absence and request to contact school. Homeroom and Period 1 Roll determines SMS notification at 10.30am.
- Parent reply is recorded on SIMON absences.
- If No explanation given, and concerns about students safety is raised, office to notify Assistant Principal - Students to follow up (police notification).

### 3 DAYS UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

- Student is absent without reason for three consecutive days and no written parental notification has been received which identifies reasons for absence.
- Note: All Parent Notified Absences will appear in roll marking for day and in attendance report on Student's Profile.

- Homeroom/house mentor teacher to contact parents (phone/email) asking for written explanation.
- Record parent explanation on SIMON Notes, and any evidence for absence, eg medical certificate, holiday etc.

### OVERALL ATTENDANCE <80% (CHECK-START OF WEEK 6 OF TERM)

- Use Student Dashboard to determine overall school attendance and run a class attendance report to look for patterns in behaviour.
- If attendance has fallen below 80% this should trigger an attendance email through SIMON, explaining how absences impact learning and our school attendance policy.

- Homeroom/house mentor teacher generates 80% Attendance letter through student profile in SIMON, this emails a letter to parents to indicate a letter is in PAM to be checked.
- Letter will also automatically generate in student profile for record keeping.

### OVERALL ATTENDANCE < 60%

- Check Student Dashboard to confirm overall attendance is less than 60% and run a class attendance report to look for patterns.
- If attendance is less than 60%, check Notes on SIMON for PLP/ chronic medical, etc.
- Arrange parent meeting with Year Level Coordinator or Head of House to discuss attendance, inform Director of School.

- Homeroom/house mentor teacher and Year Level Coordinator or Head of House to arrange a meeting with parent and student at school.
- Parent informed that school attendance is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 17 years, unless an exemption has been granted.
- Consider interventions: Wellbeing Team Referral, PLP, reduced timetable/load, student mentor, Child First referral may be considered.
- Record Notes/PLP on student profile in SIMON.

### OVERALL ATTENDANCE < 40%

- Check Student Dashboard to confirm overall attendance is less than 40%.
- If attendance is less than 40%, check Notes on SIMON for PLP for chronic medical etc or recent interventions, eg reduced load, part time enrolment.
- Notify Year Level Coordinator or Head of House of attendance rate who will then work with Director of School and Assistant Principal - Students to discuss with parents.

- Year Level Coordinator or Head of House to arrange a meeting with parent to outline responsibilities of attendance. This is to be held at school.
- Review interventions and change PLP if required.
- Explore dual enrolment, eg Virtual Learning.
- Refer to Wellbeing for a Child First referral if required and CEB attendance advice, eg attendance officer report.
- Record all interventions on student profile in SIMON.

### OVERALL ATTENDANCE < 30%

- Check Student Dashboard to confirm overall attendance is less than 30%.
- If attendance is less than 30% check Notes on SIMON for PLP for chronic medical etc or recent interventions, eg reduced load, part-time enrolment.
- Notify Director of School of attendance rate who will then work with Assistant Principal - Students to discuss with parents.

- Child First or Child Protection report to be considered.
- Parent meeting to be arranged with Assistant Principal - Students and Director of School to discuss alternate learning options or negotiated transfer.
- CEB to be notified regarding attendance and attendance officer notification.