



ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Objective

To promote regular attendance by students to maximise their potential as learners and human beings. Esslemont College, in partnership with parents, will promote the regular attendance of students.

Policy

To provide guidelines for responsibilities of the school in relation to attendance. These guidelines will be adhered to in accordance with legislative requirements related to attendance and student welfare. Esslemont College will monitor student attendance to provide for the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of the students in its care.

While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

The Principal will keep a register (Intuition), in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the School.

Esslemont College will provide a safe and supportive environment by:

- Having in place policies and procedures that provide for student welfare; and
- Maintaining a student enrolment and attendance register (Intuition)

Parents/ Carers are responsible for:

- enrolling their children of compulsory school age in school.
- ensuring that their children attend school regularly.
- explaining the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven days to the school.
- taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.
- promptly explaining absences or partial absences by:
 - 9 am on the day of absence by email - admin@esslemont.com.au or telephone the school office on 02 9030 0433.
 - informing the school office in addition to the class teachers of the reason for absence.
 - obtaining a Medical Certificate for illness lasting 3 days or more for submission to the school.

Justified Reasons for Student Absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease.
- having an unavoidable medical appointment.
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday.
- exceptional or urgent family circumstances e.g. attending a funeral.
- published public transport delays or traffic accidents.

Unjustified Reasons for Student Absences may include:

- sleeping in.
- running late.
- missing the train or bus.
- could not get ready in time.

PLEASE NOTE: If for or any reason a child needs to be absent during the course of the school day parents MUST collect them from the School Office so they can be formally signed out of the school grounds.

All children are expected to participate in all aspects of the curriculum including festivals, camps, and excursions, plays and other whole school events during the school year.

Extended Leave

Parents/guardians must make requests for extended leave in writing and addressed to the Principal, with reasons for leave such as Family (bereavement, weddings), educational, cultural/religious events and other special family circumstances, using the Extended Leave form available on the website or from the office (Appendix 1).

Only one extended leave of absence will be approved each calendar year.

Reasons Extended Leave will not be granted:

- Approval will not be granted in the period twenty days prior to the Commonwealth and State government census dates in February and August.
- Approval will not be granted if the absence impacts on whole school events such as festivals, concerts, and picnics.

Students attending lessons outside school during school hours

Involvement in private lessons, such as ballet and music classes, conducted outside the school during school hours may not be conducive to the effective operation of the school or to the education of the student concerned.

Students' involvement in extra-curricular activities will usually be limited to outside school hours.

Where attendance at a private lesson during school hours is of exceptional importance such as sitting examinations, the Principal may use discretion in justifying the absence. This provision must not be used on a regular basis.

If parents withdraw their children from school for private lessons, an unjustified absence may be recorded.

The responsibilities of school staff:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the School community.
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance through the School's electronic attendance system (Intuition).
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.
- providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- liaising with the Principal regarding unsatisfactory attendance processes being followed.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:

- attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students retained for a period of 7 years after the last entry was made.
- unexplained student absences are followed up.
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.
- the Principal is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.
- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements.
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies including communication with parents/caregivers are implemented.
- the Principal or their delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two days of an unexplained absence occurring.

The Principal may grant:

- sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness.
- an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student at Esslemont College.

- part-day exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student.
- the Principal may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence. The parent should be advised that the explanation has not been accepted and a reason for the decision provided.
- the Principal may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness are frequent or prolonged.
- the Principal may grant extended leave in accordance with the Legislation. "Extended Leave" means absence aside from illness or accident (e.g., movie role, overseas travel) up to 100 days in 12 months as per the Minister's delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act.

Where the Principal has ongoing concerns, consent to contact the doctor will be sought from the parents. If the request is denied, or if the Principal is still not happy with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as 'unjustified'.

The Principal may delegate responsibility for the maintenance of attendance registers (rolls) to teachers and other school personnel.

In such cases, the Principal must ensure that these staff:

- know the procedures in this document before marking the attendance register and following up absences. Staff must understand how an absence should be noted on an attendance register using the Common Codes approved by the Minister.
- retain a record of written, electronic, and verbal explanations from parents. If teachers receive verbal explanations from parents, they should record, sign and date the explanation.
- are aware of their responsibility to alert the Principal or staff member responsible for monitoring attendance when a student's pattern of attendance is of concern, or if no explanation is received from the parent or carer.
- report chronic non-attendance and persistent lateness promptly to the Principal or nominee.

Supporting the regular attendance of students at school

- Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of students at school.
- The Principal and school staff, in consultation with students and their parents, will usually be able to resolve problems of non-attendance.
- While parents should be reminded of their legal obligations under the Education Act (1990) the welfare of the student must be the focus of this consultation.
- The most effective means of restoring and maintaining regular school attendance includes sound attendance monitoring practices and regular follow-up of unexplained absences by contacting parents promptly. Early telephone contact with parents will be one means of achieving this.

Unsatisfactory attendance intervention strategies

- The School encourages parents/guardians to understand their obligations to ensure their child attends school, and to not condone absences for unauthorised reasons such as birthdays, shopping, and other leisure activities.
- Students with persistently low attendance will be monitored and personalised strategies will be considered to increase their attendance and/or engage them in continuing education programs. For students requiring more intensive support, one-on-one meetings and alternative arrangements may be organised in consultation with parents/guardians.
- When frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the School will request medical certificates for the absences and will consult with parents/guardians regarding the health care needs of the student.

Resolution of attendance difficulties may require Esslemont College to implement a range of additional school-based strategies to improve unsatisfactory attendance and improve engagement in school and learning including:

- parent interviews.
- review the appropriateness of the student's educational programme including assessment.

- development of a school-based attendance improvement plan. This may include part-day, part-week attendance to ease a student back to school.
- referral to outside agencies, including support from the AIS.
- support from school-based personnel Implementation.

Unsatisfactory student attendance records will be transferred to student files.

PROCEDURES

Esslemont College will use 'Intuition', an online system which will ensure all requirements in relation to attendance are fulfilled. Intuition not only keeps attendance records but also manages:

- Student administration (enrolments etc)
- Finance.

Intuition will, in time, offer options for:

- School administration (staff absences, visitors, strategic planning).
- Communication.
- Scheduling.
- Wellbeing.
- Assessment and
- Insights.

Intuition ensures a high quality practice is used to keep the required records as outlined in this policy.

In the unlikely event that the Intuition system goes down, Esslemont College will move to its back up system for taking daily attendance. Class rolls are electronically stored on an alternate server and, if the need arises, these will be printed off for the class teacher to take the daily attendance. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the school day and a message sent by 9am to the office of any child absent to enable the school to follow up. The roll will contain the same information and attendance symbols as the electronic ones on Intuition - the school management system. Once the main system is up and running, the information will be transferred across.

Related Documents

- Enrolment Policy and Procedures
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Privacy Policy

Appendix 1

Esslemont College Notification of Extended Leave

Prior to completing the form, has the College Principal been advised?

Student Surname: _____

Student First Name: _____

Year level: _____ Class/Teacher: _____

Details of Extended Leave: _____

Last Day of School: _____ Return to School Date: _____

Total No. Days Absent: _____

Reason for Extended Leave: _____

I/we are fully aware of the implications of the requested leave of absence, including that:

- It is the responsibility of the student/family to ensure that they have maintained their study load whilst absent from regular classes. It is not the responsibility of staff members to provide additional 'catch up sessions' for students taking extended holidays.
- Extended Leave may result in lost opportunities for any student for in-class and co-curricular activities. The student's involvement in these activities cannot be guaranteed if essential preparation has not been undertaken or they are absent when activities are planned.
- Final results may be impacted upon, as a result of this absence.

Teacher's Name: _____ Teacher's Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's name: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____