



STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE ST THOMAS MORE SCHOOL

In Victoria, education is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 16. When children are enrolled at St Thomas More School, it is expected they will attend school or school activities, every week day of each term. It is also expected that teachers will monitor this attendance by completing the roll twice a day. The roll is a legal document which must be maintained in an appropriate way in the event that it is needed for legal reasons at a later date.

PURPOSE

At St Thomas More School, the everyday administration of student attendance requires the school community's support through pastoral care, high quality teaching, community contact, organisational skills and a general vigilance toward students' educational and emotional well-being. Factors that facilitate effectiveness in student attendance include a supportive school environment, which offers a curriculum, and approaches to teaching, that provide for the success of all students. The effectiveness of attendance record keeping and the resultant prompt follow-up of absences through a close liaison with parents/guardians and the school will encourage consistent attendance by students.

ATTENDANCE:

- Student's absence from school means that learning opportunities are reduced and this can ultimately lead to poorer student achievement. Where this happens, the impact will be felt long after the student has left school.
- Absence from school and class clearly affects the absent student, but also impacts on the teacher's ability to plan and present class work in a sequential and organised way. This can affect the progress of all students in the class, not only those missing, and can make classroom management difficult.
- School attendance helps children develop social skills, such as friendship building, teamwork, communications skills and healthy self-worth.
- The systematic monitoring of student attendance and the degree to which schools are able to address the absence issue is an important indicator of a school's ability to maximise the learning opportunities it offers to its students.
- Parental support for attendance programs is vital. It is necessary for schools and parents to develop a partnership in their approach to student attendance that highlights both the school's and the parents' responsibilities in this area.
- Schools should be satisfied that parents/guardians are aware of student absences. In the case of unexplained absences, principals should ensure that there is prompt communication with parents/guardians.
- Schools must clearly convey to parents that it is their obligation to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence. Parents also need to be aware of the processes used by the school in following up student absences.
- Parents should be encouraged to notify schools in advance of any absence, where practicable. Where there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a student, prompt communication should occur with the parents/guardians.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE ROLL

- Records of student attendance are required for all students enrolled at the school because of the need to:
 - monitor the legal requirement for students under sixteen years to attend school
 - discharge schools' duty of care for all students including those over the compulsory school age
 - supply accurate information for audit purposes.
- The attendance roll is a permanent record of the attendance of all students.
- Class teachers will mark the attendance roll at 9:30am and 1.35pm each day.
- On completion of roll, office staff are to notify parents via text, of any un-notified student absences.
- Replacement teachers are required to complete a printed roll format, which will then be sent to the office staff for completion of electronic roll.
- Attendance and absence records will form part of each child's half-year and end of year progress report to parents.
- Parents are required to inform the school of a student's absence prior to the start of school on the given day that the student will be absent. This may be done by text message to the school phone or by using the absentee form on the Skoolbag app.
- Parents of absent students are required to provide a written note, detailing the reason/s for absence. These notes are to be retained in each student's personal file.
- Staff members are to bring to the attention of the Principal any student/s whose attendance is irregular, any students who do not provide written notes adequately explaining absences, or whose absences appear unwarranted.
- The Principal will, after consulting with the class teacher, attendance records and the student, decide upon a strategy to be employed. As truancy is often indicative of other problems including engagement and family issues, the support strategies employed by the Principal will be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, they may include:
 - Initial telephone contact with parents
 - Counselling sessions for parents and/or students
 - Home visits
 - Formation of a support group
 - School attendance as a prerequisite to extra-curricular activities
 - Attendance rewards
- Ongoing truancy issues will be reported by the Principal to the appropriate welfare and government agencies.
- Rolls will be maintained using the electronic software.

Reviewed: 2014

Ratified:

Date of next review: