



ATTENDANCE and ENGAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Staff responsible:	Principal Campus Coordinator Social Worker Youth Worker
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Related school documents:	St Francis' Handbook

RATIONALE:

The curriculum of a Catholic school is concerned with students' integrated development as Christian persons – as responsible, inner-directed individuals of Christian virtue, capable of free choice and making value judgements enlightened by informed Christian conscience. Catholic schools seek to help students 'develop a total commitment to Christ' (Mandate p.7).

At St Francis' School, the attendance procedures reflect the philosophy of a Catholic CARE School. In particular, they recognise and draw upon the Gospel values of community, hope, compassion and the dignity of the individual. The procedures put child-safety as its highest priority. They recognise reengagement in education as a challenging process in which students with their families/carers, the school, and the teachers work together to achieve continuing personal growth. The procedures meet the legal demands of Duty of Care, and all compliance obligations of the Department of Education Services and Catholic Education WA.

DEFINITIONS:

Compulsory School Age is defined as from the beginning of the year in which the child reaches the age of 5 years and 6 months, and until the end of the year in which the child reaches 17 years and 6 months, or the child reaches the age of 18, whichever happens first (The Act Part 1, s.6).

Attendance is the period of time which students are expected to be at school, either on the school premises, or attending a school-endorsed educational activity off-campus.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The St Francis' School Principles promote engagement and attendance.

2. As a CARE school many of the students at St Francis' School have a history of non-attendance and poor engagement. The reasons for inconsistent schooling include but are not restricted to: mental health issues, family dysfunction, trauma etc.
3. Early intervention for students at risk is crucial and an attendance plan may be discussed at enrolment, student reviews or when required. St Francis' School also promotes attendance through a variety of strategies including:
 - Texting the student in the morning if required
 - School vehicle pick up/drop off as an interim measure
 - Home visits
 - The ability to access appointments at the school
 - Transport training
 - Attendance plans
 - Motivational outcomes
4. Parents/carers are required to contact the School if an absence occurs and a doctor's certificate is requested for absences of more than three consecutive days.
5. Support with Academic Programs is available to students and parents/carers when requested. Students can be provided work to complete at home.
6. St Francis' acts in an ethical and legal manner in its obligations to regulators around the monitoring, recording and reporting of attendance.

PROCEDURES:

1. Staff Procedures for Recording Attendance

Lesson 1 & 2 Teachers

- Using Seqta, attendance should be completed within the first 10 minutes of Lessons 1 & 2 commencing. The St Francis' Administration Team will send an SMS to families if the student is not marked present prior to Recess. Incorrect information/incomplete information can cause distress to families.
- If a student is not physically in the room students are to be marked absent.
- If a student is with the Youth Worker or Social Worker this will be indicated on the student absentee record

Lesson 3 to 6 Teachers

- Using Seqta, attendance should be completed by the classroom teacher at the start of the lesson, generally in the first 10 minutes.
- If a student is not physically in the room students are to be marked absent.
- If a student is with the Youth Worker or Social Worker this will be indicated on the student absentee record

General

- If a teacher believes a student's absence is irregular (eg was present before lunch, and now absent), they should send a message to reception, for this information to be noted and passed on to the student support team. If an explanation is apparent (eg student is in sick-bay) this can be conveyed to the teacher.
- Should a student feel they need to leave school at anytime during the school day due to any social and/or emotional reasons (and they text or call a parent/guardian to be

collected) the student will be directed to re contact the parent and request the parent/guardian contact the school directly to authorise the student to leave school premises. Every effort will be made to encourage the student to work through their issue and remain at school rather than opt to go home in the first instance. Students and parents will be reminded of the correct procedures should they not be followed.

- In any circumstance, the school will not allow a student to travel on public transport alone if it is assessed that it is unsafe for the student to do so due to the state of their mental health.

2. Resolved absence

It is a legal requirement that any absence must be covered by a phone call, SMS message, email or a written explanation from the student's parents/carer. Absences can be called in on 08 9262 4421 by parents/carers 24 hours every day. Parents/carers are requested to contact the school before 9.30am on the day of the absence with the following information:

- Name of student
- Year group
- Reason for absence
- Caller name and relationship to the student

The School will contact parents/carers via phone/text on the same day if a student has been marked absent during lesson one or two if contact has not been received. Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation by return phone call, text, email, or follow up letter.

Students who need to leave the School early must bring a note from parents/carers authorising the absence. Students must sign giving time and reason if they are leaving the school early or arriving late. If parents/carers are present they may sign for the student.

3. Unresolved absences

Absences deemed by the School to be unresolved may include the following reasons:

- Parents/carers have not contacted the School
- Parents/carers have contacted the School however reason for absences is deemed not valid
- School not able to contact parents/carers

The School will contact the parents/carers on the day of the absence. If contact cannot be made after a reasonable period or the absences are not deemed valid a letter quoting the requirements of parents under the Education Act will be sent to the parents/carers. If the absence continues the following may be employed:

- Meeting convened to discuss attendance plan and or issues related to non-attendance
- Home visit
- Support agencies may be contacted eg. Department of Communities
- Counselling may be recommended
- Participation Services may be employed if the students are in Years Eleven (11) and Twelve (12).

4. School Approved Absences

The School may deem an absence approved due to a valid and serious reasons which may include:

- Wellbeing of the student
- Wellbeing of the student cohort
- Attendance plan

5. Parent approved Leave

This is an absence that is deemed to be taken at the discretion of the family (e.g. holidays), thus there is a choice in the matter. Due to absences, the student may miss lessons and assessments. Students have course and assessment outlines for all their subjects, courses and academic programs. However, prolonged absences will have a negative impact on learning and grades.

6. Appointments

Where possible, parents/carers are encouraged to organise appointments outside school hours to minimise disruption to the school day.

7. Sickness, Injury and Wellbeing

Where possible, teachers will support the student's ongoing education and to minimise the impact of the absence on marks or grades. The academic programs and assessment outlines are available to parents/carers and students. A medical certificate must be supplied on the student's return if the absence is more than three days.

An attendance plan may be negotiated with the student, parents/carers and the School if a student's wellbeing is deemed at risk by the parent, doctor or support agency as they transition back to school from mental health concerns.

8. Truancy

A student who truant (absents themselves without permission) will be marked truant on the roll and parents/carers will be contacted to discuss this and the possible consequences

9. Late to school/Early Leaving

Punctuality is vital to ensure a good start to the day. The school day commences at 9:00am sharp. If a student arrives late to school they need to go directly to Administration to sign in and receive a Late Note which the student presents to their teacher on entry into the classroom.

Parent/Guardians will receive an SMS Text via mobile from the School to notify absence of any student who has not arrived to school by 10:30am daily.

When picking a student up early, parents/carers need to sign in at the office or provide a note. All students who leave early must sign out at the front desk.

10. Suspension

Even during school imposed suspension, students are expected to meet the requirements of their educational programme. Students should follow the programmes as best as possible while away from school which may include the need to organise friends or parents/carers to collect materials, and keep them informed of tests and assessments. The student (or family) is to advise the School of any difficulty in meeting this requirement. When assessments are set, the student should arrange with the Campus Coordinator to sit the assessment in isolation. The student does not have access to any part of the school nor communicate with other students while they are at school. The student is expected to submit all work by the due date.

11. Student at Risk

Students who fall below a 90% attendance (10 days, or 20 half days in one semester) are deemed to be at risk. If there is not a valid reason for this attendance rate, a case management process involving the parents may be used to encourage the student to attend school more regularly.

12. Sources of Authority & References

- CECWA [Enrolment Executive Directive](#)
- School Education Act 1999 (WA)
- School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)