



Policy: Attendance Management
Released: 2015
Reviewed:
Next Review: 2021

ST BERNARD'S ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

RATIONALE

In Catholic education, Christ is the foundation. All members of the St. Bernard's Catholic School community are committed to providing each child with the desire and opportunity to reach his/her highest potential: spiritually, emotionally, intellectually and physically, in an environment which reflects strong Christian values.

The School Education Act 1999 requires compulsory aged students to attend school or participate in an educational program of a school. Each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age has the legal obligation to ensure their child is enrolled and attends school, on every school day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse. Principals are to record/monitor student attendance, and use strategies to restore attendance if needed. St Bernard's Primary School monitors and manages student attendance in order to maximise the opportunities of all students to learn.

PRINCIPLES

1. Regular attendance at school is fundamental to student learning.
2. Low school attendance has been linked with many negative outcomes for students. Persistent non-attendance requires additional resources to re-engage students in schooling and to catch up on missed learning.
3. Truancy can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
4. St. Bernard's Primary School is committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their educational needs.
5. St. Bernard's Primary School is committed to supporting parents to ensure high attendance rates for each child.
6. St. Bernard's Primary School believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.
7. St. Bernard's Primary School monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance

DEFINITIONS

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence where the reason provided by the parent is considered to be legitimate and deemed acceptable by the principal.

PARENT

In relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child.

STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU) LIST

A list, usually referred to as the SWU List, containing the names of children who are missing from schools and educational programs in Western Australia. This list is distributed by the Department to administrators in non-government schools and some other agencies by agreement.

PROCEDURES

1. Teachers are to record absences using SEQTA by 9.00am each morning. Relief teachers are required to submit a form outlining who is absent from the class. This is to be delivered to the front office by 9.00am. This data will then be entered by the Administration Officer.

The Administration Officer will check completion of absences and follow up with those teachers who have not processed absences.

Parents may contact the school using one of the following methods:

- a. An email sent to admin@stbernards.wa.edu.au and the classroom teacher.
- b. A telephone call directly to the school.
- c. Verbally advising the teacher or the front office.
- d. A signed note sent to the school by a parent.
- e. Completing the relevant form at the school.

Any verbal method must be followed up by written notification.

The Administration Officer will process all of the forms of contact, listed above. Any emails will be printed and archived, along with signed notes.

A text message will be sent to all parents where there is an unexplained absence.

Arrival time will be recorded for any child who arrives after 9.00am; this will be done by staff in the front office.

Departure time will be recorded for any child who leaves before 2.45pm – unless a special whole school situation occurs as approved by the Principal.

Teachers are responsible for notifying the Administration Officer of camps and excursion. These need to be recorded on SEQTA by the Administration Officer.

Every three weeks the Attendance Officer will print attendance follow-up forms through SEQTA. These will be distributed via the class teacher to students.

When a parent is aware their child will miss three or more days of school due to a family holiday an Application for Leave must be submitted to the school.

Children who have 100% attendance for a semester will have a certificate produced by the Principal.

Attendance Records are extracted from SEQTA at the end of each year. Instructions are provided for this process by SEQTA. These records are saved on the shared drive and must be kept until the child reaches 25 years of age.

2. The principal will:
 - keep accurate attendance records for every student enrolled at the school (including attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions for Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Primary students);
 - record whether a student's absence was authorised or unauthorised; and
 - record a student as:
 - present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction; and
 - present if they are on a school-approved activity or attending off-site school events.

3. The principal will:
 - retain attendance records; and
 - retain documentation of all contact and intervention strategies implemented in addressing a student's absence.

4. The principal will:
 - comply with requests from Catholic Education Western Australia and the Department of Education to provide information on student attendance; and
 - include the attendance data of every student enrolled in response to requests for school attendance data (for example, participation in the Attendance Data Collection).

5. Where a student has a mental or physical illness and/or health care needs which may impact on their ability to attend the usual school site, the principal will:
 - inform the parent of a student of the student's right to an educational program and actively engage the parent and the student in negotiating access to a relevant program; and
 - arrange access to an educational program for a student who has a physical and/or mental health condition and/or health care needs and who cannot attend the regular site.

6. In the event of a student absence from school, the principal will:
 - request a reason for a student's absence be provided to the principal's satisfaction;
 - where a student has been absent for 15 half days or more over a term, a note will be sent to the parents to notify them of their child's attendance record.
 - where a student's attendance is below 90% or is identified as a concern:
 - investigate the reasons for the student's absence;
 - organise a parent/teacher meeting and/or case conference at the earliest opportunity to identify issues concerning the student's absence; plan improvement strategies; and
 - include identified attendance improvement strategies in a documented plan.

7. In the event of persistent student absence, the principal will develop and implement an attendance improvement plan consisting of:
 - a consultation phase;

- a formal meeting phase if attendance is not successfully restored through actions taken as a result of consultation;
- a process to monitor and review engagement with any plan or agreement developed in the formal meeting; and
- contact the truancy officer when parents fail to follow the engagement plan.

The principal will document all intervention strategies used to address a student's absence, so that, should it become necessary to proceed to prosecution, it can be clearly established that all reasonably practicable steps to restore attendance have been taken.

8. If a student cannot be located within 15 days of the start of an absence, and their parent/s cannot be contacted, the principal will:
 - complete an SWU Request form and email it to the Student Tracking Coordinator at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au; and
 - retain the student on the school's current enrolment register until email notification is received from the Student Tracking Coordinator that the student has been placed on the SWU list.

References

1. *School Education Act 1999 (WA)*
2. *School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)*
3. *Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008 (WA)*
4. *Department of Education Student Attendance Policy*