



CATHOLIC
education office
HOBART

TRUANCY

Required action and reporting Prep - Yr 10
Required action and reporting Year 11-12

Proforma letters to parents:
5 days without explanation
10+ days
20+ days

Documentation for prosecution
Certificate of Absence

Exemption - full or partial

ADOPTED BY:

St Peter Chanel
CATHOLIC SCHOOL



STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL Prep - Year 10

Student attendance at school is important and it is a legal requirement that schools must maintain an accurate record of all student attendance. Principals and staff have a duty of care towards students attending the school. This entails a responsibility to know which students are at school at a given time. Principals, as part of their day-to-day management, have a responsibility to follow up unexplained absences for students enrolled at their school. Whilst many schools already have an established procedure for addressing student absence, the following sequence of steps outlines the minimum requirement for schools in managing student absence. Relevant details of any contact or attempt to contact parents/carers in relation to a child's absence should be documented.

STEP 1	DAY ONE of absence	The single most effective strategy to improve student attendance is to follow up an unexplained student absence at the first opportunity. This may involve a phone call, note or email to the parent/carer on the first day of the absence, where parents have not already contacted the school.
STEP 2	Up to FIVE DAYS 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised' absence	<p>If a student is absent for three (3) consecutive days and there has been no notification from the parent/carer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School must attempt to contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for the child's absence. <p>If a student is absent for five (5) consecutive days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal may send <i>Proforma Letter One</i> to the parent/carer asking them to make contact with the school to discuss the absence (if other attempts to contact the parent/carer have failed). • Principal may, under the <i>Education Act 1994</i>, request a parent/carer to provide a certificate from a registered medical practitioner (this may occur later than five days at the discretion of the principal).
STEP 3	TEN DAYS 'yet to be explained' or 'unauthorised' absence in one school term	<p>If a student is absent for ten (10) days in any one school term or there is a pattern of absence which is of significant concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School should consider requesting a meeting with the parent/carer to ensure that there is no underlying problem behind the absence. • Principal may send <i>Proforma Letter Two</i> to the parent/carer outlining attendance concerns. • Principal should consider involving CEO and/or the school social worker. • Continued difficulty in contacting the family may necessitate sending a registered letter to the parent/carer.
STEP 4	TWENTY DAYS of absence in one school term, irrespective of reasons provided	<p>If a student is absent for twenty (20) days in any one school term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School must initiate a 'case management' approach, involving face-to-face contact with the parent/carer, with the emphasis on a plan to support the student's return to regular attendance. • Principal may send <i>Proforma Letter Three</i> to initiate the above meeting. • Principal must involve the CEO to develop a strategy to restore attendance. The strategy may involve a flexible arrangement – for example provision of alternative placement, part-time schooling or open learning. <p>A principal should inform the CEO when a student has been absent (unauthorised) from school for 40 days. The CEO will ensure that an investigation is made and appropriate measures taken, including prosecution where appropriate.</p>

STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL – Years 11/12

Student attendance at school is important and it is a legal requirement that an accurate record of all student attendance must be maintained. Principals, as part of their day-to-day management, have a responsibility to follow up unexplained absences for students enrolled at their college. The following sequence of steps outlines the minimum requirement for colleges in managing student absences. Appropriate counselling and support services will be made available to students at all stages of this process. Relevant details of any intervention should be documented.

STEP 1	Subject absence	<p>If a student is absent for three (3) consecutive sessions in a subject or shows a pattern of absence in the subject which is of significant concern, the subject teacher will follow up the absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request the student to provide a satisfactory explanation for his or her absences, and to supply relevant documentation, where appropriate. Inform the student's home group teacher of any ongoing attendance issue.
	Absence continues in a subject OR a pattern of absence is emerging across the student's timetable	<p>If there is no resolution and/or a pattern of absence is emerging across the student's timetable, the home group teacher will take responsibility for follow-up of attendance and will develop a negotiated strategy to resolve the issue. This may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a phone call to the student's parent/guardian sending a college-based letter to the parent/guardian outlining attendance concerns development of a student contract involvement from Student Services and/or course counselling.
STEP 2	Absence unresolved	<p>If there is no satisfactory resolution, the home group teacher will refer the student's attendance issue to the Assistant Principal or Attendance Coordinator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter based on the provisions of Secretary's Instruction No. 3 may be sent from the principal to the student asking him or her to contact the college to explain the absences. The principal may, under the <i>Education Act 1994</i>, request the student to provide a relevant certificate from a registered medical practitioner.
STEP 3	Student contacts and provides a satisfactory explanation OR	<p>If the student responds to the principal's letter within five (5) working days and provides a satisfactory explanation for the absences, the principal must inform the student, by letter, that the enrolment is continuing. It is likely that the student will be cautioned and the college will monitor his or her ongoing attendance.</p>
	Student provides unsatisfactory explanation OR Student does not contact the college	<p>If the student responds to the principal's letter within five (5) working days and provides what the principal considers to be an unsatisfactory explanation for the absences, the student must be given notice, in writing, that the enrolment will lapse if he or she is absent, without reasonable cause, from a further three (3) consecutive sessions in a subject, or again shows a pattern of absence that is of significant concern to the principal.</p> <p>If the student has not contacted the college within five (5) working days after the posting of a principal's letter as described in step 2 above, the student's enrolment in all subjects shall lapse.</p>
STEP 4	Student's enrolment lapses	<p>If a student's enrolment lapses for any of the reasons outlined in step 3 above, the student must be notified in writing. The letter of notification is posted from the college to the student's last notified address. A student whose enrolment has lapsed may apply to re-enrol. If that application is accepted by the principal, all usual enrolment and counselling fees may be charged in relation to the re-enrolment.</p>

Proforma 1

<Parent Name>

<Address>

Dear <Parent>

I am writing to you about <son's/daughter's> attendance. Our records show that < > has been absent from school for five consecutive days without satisfactory explanation.

Your <son's/daughter's> teacher has been unable to contact you by telephone to determine the reason for the absence. I therefore request that you contact < teacher> to discuss this matter.

Under the *Education Act 1994*, you are required to ensure that your child attends school every school day unless there are genuine reasons for absences, such as illness. Absences affect both the individual's learning and the learning of others in the class group and it is important for children to attend school regularly.

If you are worried about your child's attendance, or if you are having problems getting < > to attend school please do not hesitate to phone the school and ask to speak with me directly so that we can work together to solve the problem.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Proforma 2

<Parent Name>

<Address>

Dear <Parent>

I am writing to you about <son's/daughter's> attendance. Our records show that < > has been absent from school for more than ten days this term without satisfactory explanation.

Under the *Education Act 1994*, you are required to ensure that your child attends school every school day unless there are genuine reasons for absences, such as illness. Absences affect both the individual's learning and the learning of others in the class group and it is important for children to attend school regularly.

I therefore request that you telephone the school and ask to speak with me directly or make an appointment to see me so that we can discuss the reason for the absences.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Proforma 3

It may be wise to send by certified mail

<Parent Name>

<Address>

Dear <Parent>

I am writing to you about < son's/daughter's > poor attendance. Our records show that < > has been absent from school for more than twenty days this term without satisfactory explanation.

Under the *Education Act 1994* you are required to ensure that your child attends school every school day unless there are genuine reasons for absences, such as illness. Absences affect both the individual's learning and the learning of others in the class group and it is important for children to attend school regularly.

Under the *Education Act 1994* legal proceedings can be undertaken by the Secretary of the Department of Education where there is evidence that a parent or carer is knowingly keeping their child from attending school regularly.

I therefore request that you telephone the School Office by <day and date> to make an appointment to see me in order to discuss how your child's attendance can be satisfactorily restored.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Documentation for Prosecution for Chronic Truancy

Notify the CEO for advice and set in place the following procedures:

1. Parents are required by the Education Act to send their children to school every school day. If children present with a pattern of absences the procedures for dealing with One Day, Up to Five Days, Ten Days and Twenty Days of absence in one school term are outlined in the accompanying document *Student Absence From School – Prep to Year 10*. The appropriate pro-forma letters are attached.
2. The Act requires that the Secretary of the Department of Education be notified of truancy and provides for the prosecution of parents who do not send their children to school.
3. If the procedures of 1 above do not remedy the matter and absence of up to 40 days occurs without authorisation* a dossier of information and documentation is required to be forwarded to the Secretary. This constitutes the information required for prosecution.
4. This dossier should contain the following:
 - (i) Points of reference:
 - Name(s) and date(s) of birth of child/children
 - Parent(s)
 - Address
 - Home phone number
 - School at which they have been enrolled
 - Attendance
 - (ii) Attachments:
 - Attendance record
 - School social work involvement (teacher or other)
 - School record of contact with parent(s) – telephone calls, meetings, correspondence, etc with dates
 - Letters sent re non-attendance.
 - (iii) Certificate re attendance to be signed by the principal
5. The Department's office will formulate a calendar of non-attendance and would need notice of when attendance was not required (holidays, pupil-free days) to remove these from the calendar.
6. As prosecution must be within six months of filing the summons it is necessary to start the process after 4 – 5 weeks' absence, to keep records up to five months then apply for prosecution within the six-month period.

* *If students are to be absent for prolonged periods e.g. to travel interstate or overseas with their parents for an extended period, part-time exemption from attendance should be sought from the Secretary of the Department of Education. See attached protocols for Exemption.*

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Certificate of Absence

Pursant to Section 16 (1) of the Education Act 1994

I (Name)

of: (Address)

..... in Tasmania

being the Principal of: (School)

.....

do hereby certify that on the following days

.....(Student Name)

.....

a child enrolled at the said School did not attend the said School.

Week

Dates Absent

No of Days School

Total Days Absent:

Total Days School Open:

General Comment:

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Exemption

The Education Act allows for application for exemption from full-time attendance at school for particular reasons.

Generally exemptions can be sought under section 7 of the Act

- (i) for a student to leave school before the age of 16 OR
- (ii) for a student to attend school part-time OR
- (iii) can be sought for a limited period of time e.g. one-two terms to, say travel overseas.

In the case of (i) and (ii) the request for exemption should include:

- (a) What the student plans to do
- (b) The school's position re this
- (c) The parent's position especially if parental support is required for the student to put his/her plans into effect.
- (d) Any other information which can demonstrate that an exemption is in the best educational interests of the student e.g. supporting documentation from a medical practitioner.

In the case of (iii) where the exemption is sought for a set period of time that period must be specified – the beginning and ending dates – and any information in support of the request.

The exemption request is then sent with a covering letter from the principal and the CEO to the Secretary of the Department of Education for approval.

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