



POLICY ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL - LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DEPARTURES

INTRODUCTION

On occasions, students have necessary absence which is unplanned and unavoidable. Sometimes families make requests for students to be absent for a variety of reasons, often associated with travel and/or holidays. On occasions student absence causes requests for school work and/or changes to assessment routines. In the case of student absence, please advise the school as soon as possible by leaving an explanatory message on the Absentee Line 07 3437 5066. Written advice relating to a child's ongoing care following the absence is also required.

Please try to ensure that medical and dental appointments be made, as far as possible, outside school hours. Holidays taken outside school holiday times require a letter notifying the Principal of days absent. More than (ten) 10 days requires the completion of documentation for the Non-state Schools Accreditation Board

1. Guiding Principles

Good Shepherd Catholic School requires a high level student-attendance

It is understood that sometimes student absence is:

- Unplanned and unavoidable (eg injury, sickness, surgery – requires a doctor/specialist's certificate).
- Linked to a beneficial learning activity for the student (eg overseas/Australian travel).

Parents are required to complete the NON STATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION BOARD'S (NSSAB) documentation for more than 110 days absenteeism from school.

Extended absence from school is often a hindrance to the learning program of the student, however, in order for families to enjoy valuable time together due to the pressure of work commitments, Good Shepherd supports the families in their vacation leave.

School-based assessment needs to be fair to all students within the school in order to maintain the integrity of the Curriculum, thus when a child is absent for the assessment this will appear on the mid-semester/end of year report.

Teaching programs plans are flexible to allow for individual and year level differences.

Therefore, detailed work cannot be accurately predicted for future teaching and learning.

2. Unplanned and Unavoidable Absence - Guidelines for Health-related Absence (eg injury, extended illness)

The main priority is for the student to have appropriate resources dedicated to recovery.

Sometimes it is appropriate for schoolwork and assessment to be missed. Special consideration (including exemption from assignments/assessment) may be sought for the student's profile following contact from parents and appropriate documentation. This will be managed by the Teacher and the Students' Secretary in conjunction with the Principal.

If assignments/assessments are missed, or will be missed, parents are welcome to request assistance to work through the class procedures.

3. Registered Absence

A student may undertake a special education program ie. Distance Education. *Home Education Unit* Phone 07 3405 3916 or web:-

<http://education.qld.gov.au/homeeducation> or homeeducation@deta.qld.gov.au for 12months = home education and 16 weeks distant education.

Enrolment ceases at Good Shepherd for the period that the child/family is absent if enrolled in the above systems.

Re-enrolment occurs when the student returns to Good Shepherd.

Normal school fees will apply in order to hold a position for the return of the family to Good Shepherd.

RATIONALE

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School believes that regular attendance at school increases the opportunity for children to participate in the life of the community and to optimise students' learning. The Education Act requires that children of school age (six-fifteen years) resident are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Education Department.

- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.
- Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.

AIMS:

This policy aims to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Agreed Practice

Electronic rolls are marked twice daily and all absences noted. Late arrivals -8.50am or 2.00pm are marked absent. All absentee notes must be signed and dated by the teacher. At the end of each Term all notes are collected and filed in the student's file. Parents are reminded by newsletter to contact the school by letter or phone on the absentee line (07 3437 5066) to advise of a child's absence. Phone messages and emails are passed onto the relevant teacher. Phone messages must be followed up with a written note on the child's return.

If concerned about a student's attendance history, a teacher will inform the Principal or Assistant Principal who will endeavour to contact the parents by phone to discuss the child's absences. If absences continue, a letter is sent advising the parents of the legal requirement to attend school on a daily basis. A date is given by which time the parent needs to respond. If attendance remains a problem, a notification is sent to Brisbane Catholic Education Centre- Student Protection Officer to report the poor levels of attendance. A meeting will be set up to meet with the parent, staff and a member from BCE. If no improvement in attendance is made, the BCE and the School will notify the Non – State School's Office. If a student is absent without notification over an extended period of time, attempts will be made to contact the parent. The electronic roll will be marked as absent until the student's returns or until the school is notified that the child has enrolled at another school.

Our Expectations

- Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note or return a completed absence form (**See Form 1 below**) to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.

Our Commitment

- The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
- All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers.
- Brisbane Catholic Education Office, (BCEO), Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) auditors as well as the Courts may seek student attendance records.
- The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. (*See Form 2 below*).
- The principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised.

Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Child Safety.

- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to Brisbane Catholic Education, Non-State Schools and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

EVALUATION:

This policy will continue to be evaluated annually as part of the school's Strategic Renewal.

FORM 1:

GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPRINGFIELD LAKES

STUDENT ABSENCE FORM

Student Name: Teacher's name:.....

Date of Absence:

Reason For Absence:

.....

FORM 2

GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPRINGFIELD LAKES

STUDENT ABSENCES

Date.....

Dear Parent / Guardian,

It has been brought to my attention that your childhas been absent from school recently and has not yet provided a written note explaining the reason for the absence.

The date/s of the absence/s are:

It is an Education Department requirement that students provide a note from parents explaining all absences.

Therefore, you are required to provide a note covering the above absence/s from school as soon as possible.

Staff Signature.....