



Attendance Policy

1 Context

The *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* (SA) requires that children of compulsory school age (6 years up to the age of 16 years) are enrolled at, and attend, school. The responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent/caregiver. Students of Compulsory Education age between 16 and 17 years are required to be in attendance at school participating in an approved learning programme, or a combination of school and other approved training or learning programme, unless exempted by the Minister.

An approved learning programme is:

- (a) South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).
- (b) Technical and Further Education (TAFE) courses, or accredited courses offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTO).
- (c) Apprenticeships or Traineeships.
- (d) University Degrees, Diplomas, or other University award courses.
- (e) Other programmes authorised by the Minister for Education and Child Development.
- (f) A combination of the above.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 In realising its mission and vision Cabra acknowledges the importance of students being punctual and present 'all day, every day' because it:
 - (a) Engenders a sense of belonging for the students and their community;
 - (b) Enables students to participate fully in their learning;
 - (c) Enables students to gain maximum benefit from their schooling;
 - (d) Shows respect of self and others in the learning environment; and
 - (e) Is a good habit that will support hopeful future career aspirations and wellbeing.
- 2.2 Cabra recognises that some students have part-time loads, are enrolled in formal learning off-campus (e.g. VET, TAFE, Apprenticeships, Headstart University Courses) or have approved part/full-time exemptions which impact their weekly timetable. Full attendance to their individualised SEQTA timetables is expected.
- 2.3 Cabra Dominican College works with parents/caregivers to:
 - (a) Ensure student attendance and participation.
 - (b) Maintain accurate records of attendance.
 - (c) Ensure non-attendance is followed up through early intervention strategies.
 - (d) Develop strategies to resolve attendance difficulties.



3 Definitions

Habitual Absence is defined as 5 absences per term – explained or unexplained.

Persistent (Chronic) Absences as determined under Sections 68 (3) and 69 (3) of the Act, and the Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 (the Regulations), as a student of compulsory school age who has 10 or more days unauthorised absence in a term.

Student at Risk means a student who has Persistent (Chronic) Absences, Unexplained Absences or otherwise poor attendance in the opinion of the House Leader.

Unexplained Absences means an absence from school which has not been explained by a parent or caregiver in keeping with the Absenteeism or Lateness Procedure.

4 Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all students and parents/caregivers of Cabra Dominican College.
- 4.2 This policy is supported by staff working within or for Cabra Dominican College.

5 Principles

5.1 Partnership

- (a) Cabra staff (including the Mentor Teacher, House Leader, Director of Students and Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing and Leadership) will work with students and parents/caregivers to support students with good attendance practices and punctuality.
- (b) Parents/caregivers have a responsibility to work in partnership with Cabra staff to ensure good attendance practices and mitigate against Habitual Absence and Chronic Absenteeism.
- (c) Cabra is accountable to both the state and federal governments for maintaining accurate records of student attendance and reporting Unexplained Absences or Chronic Absences.

5.2 Acceptable School Absence

It is acceptable for a student to be absent from school (part or full days) when they are:

- (a) Ill. In the case of absence due to illness, students and parents/caregivers should be aware of the need for a medical certificate:
 - to certify absences longer than three days;
 - to certify absences of greater than 10 days per term; and
 - to explain absences on due dates or scheduled dates for SACE assessments.
- (b) Required to attend medical, dental or specialist therapy appointments that cannot be made out of school hours.



- (c) Engaged in elite sport training or competition with the approval of the Deputy Principal: Learning and Teaching.
- (d) Undertaking a family trip which has the prior approval of the Principal.
- (e) Able to provide the Principal with a genuine reason that prevents them attending school.
- (f) Suspended from school for disciplinary reasons.
- (g) Granted an exemption from school.

5.3 Exemptions from school

A parent/caregiver must apply to the Principal in writing for an exemption from school attendance if they wish to take their child out of school temporarily or permanently (part and/or full days). Students must attend school regularly until the Principal approves the exemption in writing. The Principal may approve conditional and part-time exemptions, or permanent exemptions.

The College recognises that, from time to time, parents/caregivers may seek to absent students from school for an extended period, such as for a holiday. Whilst the College recognises the positive impact family holidays can have on a student's development, the College's position is that extended periods of absence from term time can negatively impact a student's learning program and as such, should be avoided where possible. Parents/caregivers and students need to be mindful:

- (a) that extended absences may inhibit the ability for the College to provide a detailed academic report, due to the lack of learning evidence.
- (b) that it is incumbent on students to be proactive in reviewing SEQTA for a summary of the learning programme, and teachers will not be required to send work home, provide work in advance of a holiday, or meet with students on their return to catch them up.
- (c) of the impact missed work can have on their child's South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) outcome and final Year 12 result.
- (d) of the many specific requirements that need to be completed to a satisfactory standard for the SACE.
- (e) that absence due to family holiday does not entitle a student to special provisions; if compulsory SACE requirements are not met, it may result in a student having to repeat work or catch up at a later date for SACE completion to be achieved.

Exemption from attendance at school can be sought for:

- (a) Family travel or holidays during the school term.
- (b) Student Exchange Programmes.
- (c) Medical or health reasons.
- (d) Home education programmes (up to four weeks).
- (e) VET-based full-time employment.
- (f) Disability or mental health challenges requiring part-time exemption from school.



Parents may apply in writing to the Principal to 'home school' their child and seek an exemption from attendance at school.

Permanent exemptions can be granted for students aged 15 and 16 years of age who are taking up full-time employment. To qualify students must be:

- (a) Under 16 years of age and working more than 30 hours per week.
- (b) 16 years of age and working more than 25 hours per week.
- (c) Able to supply a letter of offer from the employing organisation, highlighting the position and the number of hours to be worked per week.

5.4 Unacceptable School Absences

It is not acceptable for students to absent themselves from school due to:

- (a) Truancy. This is a deliberate behaviour to avoid school, specific subjects and school organised events that form part of the academic and pastoral programmes.
- (b) Selectively opting out of school organised activities and events e.g. Retreats, Camps, Athletics/Swimming Carnivals, even if this is parent sanctioned.
- (c) Falling behind with work and taking time out of school to catch up.
- (d) Avoiding assessment tasks, or assessment deadlines.
- (e) School refusal.

6 Related Documents and References

- Cabra Dominican College Enrolment Contract
- Cabra Dominican College Attendance/Absentee Procedure
- Cabra Dominican College Student Handbook ('Absenteeism or Lateness Procedure')
- Cabra Dominican College Work Completion Policy
- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(SA\)](#)
- [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#)
- [Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#)



7 Revision Record

Document Title	Attendance Policy						
Document Type	Policy						
Document Date	March 2023						
Process Owner	Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing and Leadership						
Contact	Jason Thur (jthur@cabra.catholic.edu.au)						
Approval Authority	College Executive						
Review Date	March 2025						
Policy Distribution	Website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MS Teams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SEQTA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BoardTrac
Revision History	Edition Number		Date		Description of change		
	1.0						
	2.0		2018		Minor revision		
	3.0		2021		Significant revision/redrafting and incorporation of Extended Absence Policy		
	4.0		2023		Minor revisions to align with Procedure		