

# Our Commitment

## COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITIES

- In the Junior School, all student attendances/absences are recorded in the morning and afternoon by class teachers, and in the Middle and Senior School at the beginning of each lesson by subject teachers.
- At approximately 9:30am once all absentee notifications have been processed, Student Services contact the parents/caregivers of students with unexplained absentees via SMS.
- Unexplained lateness or absenteeism will be investigated by a follow up telephone call, e-mail and/or a letter home to families requiring an explanation of the absence.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to Heads of School weekly by the Business Manager for ongoing monitoring.
- Absenteeism will be addressed in the first instance by the Class Teacher/House Tutor when a student is absent for 5 days in a term (90% attendance).
- Continued or high level absenteeism will then be followed up by the Heads of School. Chronic absenteeism, as defined by the Education and Children's Services Act 2019, is considered 10 days per term (80% attendance). A meeting with families will then involve a documented school attendance plan.
- The Principal will meet and review attendance plans with families where improvement has not occurred. Reporting to agencies will occur at this stage.
- Student attendance, absence and late figures will appear on the student's College Semester Reports.



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# Attendance Matters at St Columba College



# Student attendance is the responsibility of the whole College community.

Monitoring school attendance enables identification of students at risk, as does the early implementation of intervention strategies. All school staff and parents/caregivers have a responsibility for the detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance. All members of the school community are expected to support the requirements of student attendance to ensure that students are attending every school day of the year.

**In South Australia, the Education and Children's Services Act 2019 requires that children between the ages of 6-17 years 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.**



At St Columba College we believe that students need to attend school regularly and participate fully in order to gain maximum benefit from their schooling. Regular and on-time attendance enables students to access a comprehensive education, enabling them to reach their full potential. School staff are role models for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality. Successful students are well-organised and begin the day on time.

Research shows that students who are absent for more than 10 days per year are disadvantaged both educationally and socially. Some of the effects experienced by these students include:

- Gaps in knowledge and understanding, resulting in discrepancies in learning and fundamental concepts.
- Lack of continuity and familiarity, resulting in students feeling less secure within the school environment.
- Loss of opportunities for interaction with peers which improves social, emotional and cognitive development.
- Missed opportunity to become familiar with societal standards, such as class rules and behavioural norms.
- Lack of understanding of the importance in attendance and punctuality.
- Inability to maintain friendships, resulting in isolation and possibly leading to being bullied/victimised.
- Loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Increased likelihood of leaving school early.

## PARENT/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/caregivers have a responsibility to ensure that students are enrolled in and attend a school every day, unless there are acceptable reasons for absence. Parents/caregivers are asked to notify the school of any absence before 8:50am on the day of the absence.

- Students should arrive at school before 8:40am and be on time to start the day. When a student is late for school (after 8:40am) it is a requirement that the student reports to Student Services to sign in. Junior School students will need a parent to accompany them.
- Students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent which include:
  - ◇ Sickness
  - ◇ Danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease
  - ◇ Temporary or permanent infirmity
  - ◇ Events of significance, such as births, deaths and cultural events
  - ◇ Attending a school-organised activity, for example, excursion, camp, work experience
  - ◇ Unavoidable and sufficient cause.
- Parents/caregivers must provide the College with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. Parents are asked to phone the College Absentee Line on 8254 0636 by 8:50am if a student will be absent. A diary note, letter, phone call or medical certificate is required for each day of absence. A written explanation is required after 3 days absence.
- If students are absent from school for more than 10 consecutive days (due to illness or holidays) parents/caregivers are required to apply for a temporary exemption from compulsory schooling. These application forms are available from Student Services and are to be completed and returned to the College to be processed.