



# St Michael's Primary School

## Student Attendance Policy

### Rationale

School attendance is mandated under the Education Training and Reform Act (ETRA) 2006. In March 2014, the Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013 came into effect. All children of school age (six-fifteen years) resident in Victoria 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 Regional Director. *New guidelines in 2018 provided further guidance for notifying parents of unexplained absences.*

### Purpose

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

#### ABSENCES

- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of their learning, 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.

#### PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and punctually and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note to the school explaining why an absence has occurred. Communication of the absence can be in person or electronically but the school must maintain a written record of this.

#### SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- The school will advise parents promptly of unexplained absences. At St Michael's Primary School, classroom teachers will notify the administrative officer of any unexplained absences by 9.00am and parents will be contacted.
- If, upon being notified of their child's absence or contacted to seek an explanation, a parent reports that the child was not living with them on that day, the school should ensure they notify another parent who was responsible for ensuring the child attended school on the relevant day(s) (pg. 16 School Attendance Guidelines. 2018).
- If contact cannot be made with the parent, the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school (pg. 16 School Attendance Guidelines. 2018).
- If, following contact, the student's safety has been established, but no explanation has been provided within 10 school days, the absence will be recorded as an unexplained absence and noted in the student's file. (pg. 16 School Attendance Guidelines. 2018)
- The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained.
- 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. *Under the Act, legislation requires further action when a student reaches five days of unapproved or unexplained absence within a school year.*

- 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 Human Services.

#### RECORDING OF ABSENCES

- 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.
- System, Government authorities and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.

#### REPORTING OF ABSENCES

- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to System and Government authorities as required. In addition, it is reported to the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

### **Review**

Last review: March 2018