Student Attendance Policy

Policy Objective

• To ensure OLMC Parramatta has in place comprehensive record keeping of student attendance in order to meet the College’s Duty of Care - legal requirements according to the Education Act 1990 and maintain the safety and wellbeing of students.

Policy Statement

• Under the 1990 Education Act, schools are required to ensure that individual students meet certain attendance standards. This includes mandatory attendance for students under 17 years of age unless exemptions are applicable. From January 2015 all schools in NSW are required to use the mandatory Attendance Codes to record student attendance on the attendance register or roll.

• Attendance is integral to a student’s involvement in the life of OLMC Parramatta. It is compulsory for students to attend the College for the full duration of each term; including carnivals, retreats, camps, excursions and reflection days, so that they can achieve their best academically, spiritually and socially.

• A register of enrolments that includes the following details will be maintained for each student.
  - Name, age and address
  - The name and contact telephone numbers of parent(s)/carer(s)
  - Date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student’s destination

• OLMC Parramatta recognises that keeping records of student attendance is a legal requirement and the College undertakes to have systems in place that reflect a diligent approach to this responsibility. OLMC monitors the daily attendance and absence of students in the College by maintaining a daily register for each Homeroom, in Synergetic using the NSW Attendance Register Codes.

• OLMC believes an efficient attendance system is vital to the overall care of students. The system enables the College to become aware of student illness (at school or home), misadventure or other incidents and respond appropriately.

• The College is committed to handling all such occurrences with sensitivity, respecting the privacy of the students and families involved, as appropriate.

• An efficient attendance system enables smooth functioning of the College including the conduct of classes, excursions, evacuation drills and the like; as it accounts for student whereabouts.

• OLMC recognises that all members of the College community (including parents/carers, students, teaching and non-teaching) play a role in ensuring the attendance system is effective.

Supporting Procedures

All students are responsible for:

• Ensuring their attendance is recorded in Homeroom;
• Signing in at Student Centre, if they arrive after 8:50am having their Diary time stamped and showing this to their Pastoral/Subject teacher;
• Attending every timetabled class;
• Providing an explanation of lateness if their parent/carer has not provided a written explanation to the Student Centre Staff;
• Asking the subject teacher to sign their Diary – Out of Class Log when leave from the classroom is sought. Students must carry this Diary with them at all times;
• Attending a Monday afternoon College detention (as arranged by the subject teacher) for any lesson missed without an acceptable explanation (Senior students may make up any lessons missed in a study lesson);
• Providing a signed permission note from a parent/carer to leave the College grounds during school hours. The note must be approved and signed by the Pastoral Leader or Assistant Pastoral Leader during Homeroom that day. Students must show the approved note to their subject teacher prior to the exit time. Students must then sign out in the Student Centre. N.B. Students in Years 7-10 must be signed out by their parent/carer in the Student Centre;
• Students in Years 11 & 12 may leave the College at the beginning of lunch if they have no afternoon classes. Students are required to sign in at Student Centre if they are remaining at school during an afternoon study lesson; and
• Please note that Years 11 & 12 students must attend Homeroom at the start of each school day, even if they have a study period in the morning. Students on a study period before lunch are to use the College Library or Year 12 may use the Senior Common Room.

Parent(s)/carer(s) are responsible for:

• Ensuring that the necessary arrangements are made for their daughter to arrive at the College at the required time each day during school term time;
• Ensuring that their daughter attends school every day the College is open for her instruction. Including but not limited to attendance at excursions, carnivals, retreats, camps and reflection days planned by the College as they are part of the educational program and attendance is compulsory;
• Responding to Absence & Lateness SMS messages (which they receive if their daughter has been marked absent or has arrived late without parent/carer explanation) by replying via text message with an explanation, including daughter’s name, year, date of absence and reason for the absence or lateness;
• Making medical and dental appointments outside school hours (where possible);
• Advising the relevant Pastoral Leader if their daughter is expected to be absent for more than three days, and detailing the reason for this absence (such as illness or other circumstances);
• Providing a medical certificate (with details of the nature of the illness) for their daughter should she suffer from an acute illness that necessitates extended leave from the College;
• Advising the relevant Pastoral Leader in writing of their (parent/carer) absence from home for more than a few days and providing the name, address and phone numbers of someone to act for them during their absence;
• Putting in writing requests to the Principal for planned extended absences of 5 or more days during term time (for example, an overseas holiday).

Date issued: March 2016
Please note - extended time away from school is not recommended for Years 10, 11 and 12 students. Application for Approval for Leave is available on the College website – Quicklinks/Absence Forms. Completed and signed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted 14 days prior to the extended leave commencement date; and

- Attending a meeting convened by the College to discuss their daughter’s repeated or unusual absence or lateness record/s.

**Pastoral Teachers are responsible for:**

- Being punctual in attending to their daily Homeroom duties;
- Marking student attendance, recording data in the Synergetic Attendance Management System and submitting it by 9.15am;
- Additionally, marking the Special Event Roll on Community Days e.g. Mercy Day;
- Ensuring students (including Homeroom Leader) do not mark the electronic roll, hard copy roll or complete the Special Event Roll; as this is a breach of the College’s Duty of Care;
- Ensuring that the electronic roll marking system is correctly used i.e. only students actually present in the room are to be recorded;
- Ensuring all students who arrive after 8.50am are directed to Student Centre to sign in and have their Diary stamped before going to class;
- Contacting a parent/carer on the third day to ascertain a reason for the absence; if a student is absent from school for 3 consecutive days and the parent/carer have made no attempt to contact the school. This rule also applies for 3 unexplained non-sequential absences. The outcome of this phone call is to be communicated to the Pastoral Leader;
- Collecting explanation/absentee notes written by parent/carer, if appropriate, for any absence from school within 7 days of the student’s return to school (this is a legal requirement);
- Reporting to the Pastoral Leaders any student attendance concerns such as;
  - repeated absences
  - unusual absences
  - fraudulent notes
- Providing a print out of the Homeroom Roll for the term to the Executive Assistant Student Services by week 2 of the following term with each day’s attendance initialled.

**Subject teachers are responsible for:**

- Keeping an accurate attendance record for every class they teach;
- Checking absences from their classes against the daily absences list (which is emailed each day) each lesson;
- Reporting unexplained absences from the class by immediately contacting Student Centre (using the phone in the classroom and ringing 5000) to investigate student whereabouts;
- Arranging Monday afternoon detention for any student who misses a lesson without an acceptable explanation, in consultation with the relevant Pastoral Leader and Leader of Learning;
- Checking that the Diaries of students who arrive late to class have been stamped at Student Centre;
- Providing Student Centre and Pastoral Teachers with the names of students on excursions/incursions. Then advising Student Centre Staff of any absences on the day of the excursion/incursion;
- Signing the Diary – Out of Class Log of a student who requests to leave the classroom for a period of time (for example, to go to the toilet).

Please note - students who wish to leave before the end of the day (for appointments) must have a note from their parent/ carer signed by the Pastoral Leader or Assistant Pastoral Leader; and

- Reporting repeated or unusual absences to the relevant Pastoral Leader and Leader of Learning.

**Student Centre Staff are responsible for:**

- Checking that all Homeroom attendance rolls have been digitally submitted daily (by 9.15am);
- Managing computer data entry including:
  - All daily explanations of student absences
  - All explanations of late student arrivals
  - All students who go home ill
  - All students who leave for appointments
  - All student sick bay attendance
  - Incursion and excursion attendance
  - Special event attendance.
- Issuing daily a Student Absence Events by Year Level to all teaching staff;
- Issuing on Friday a Student Part Day Absence Events by Year Level report for Pastoral Leaders;
- Following up on a subject teacher notification of a student’s unexplained absence from a class by:
  - Confirming attendance in Homeroom with the Pastoral Teacher
  - Confirming attendance with previous subject teacher/s
  - Checking attendance with College Counsellor/s, Learning Enrichment staff, Music Centre staff
- Alerting Pastoral Leader and Director of Pastoral Care of the unexplained absence. Pastoral Leader and Director of Pastoral Care to commence a search of the site and inform parent/carer of ongoing unexplained absence;
- Recording absence type in Synergetic on receipt of a parent/carer explanation according to the 2015 Attendance Register Codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absence Code</th>
<th>Symbol Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The student’s absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the College Principal. It is at the College Principal’s discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the College Principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The student was suspended from school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: - behaviour schools - hospital schools - distance education</td>
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The Pastoral Leader is responsible for:
- Signing permission notes for students to leave school early;
- Assisting Pastoral Teachers with maintaining attendance records, where necessary;
- Informing the Pastoral/Subject Teacher if it is expected that a student will be absent for a long period of time due to illness or another circumstance;
- Checking daily the Student Absence Events by Year Level report;
- Checking weekly the Student Part Day Absence Events by Year Level report for Pastoral Leaders;
- Following up any repeated or unusual absences (full or partial) by students in their year group including interviewing the student and contacting the parents/carers where necessary;
- Facilitating a parent/carer and student interview at the College if the pattern of absence or lateness continues, to explain the legal requirements relating to school attendance, and to reach an agreement about the student’s future attendance and punctuality;
- Liaising with the Director of Pastoral Care about any student attendance and punctuality concerns; and
- Consulting with the Director of Teaching and Learning on how to proceed with respect to assessments for cases of extended student absences.

The Director of Pastoral Care is responsible for:
- Working with the Pastoral Leader to manage any chronic attendance and punctuality issues;
- Checking and signing the School Attendance/Absence Report for each Homeroom, each term; and
- Ensuring School Attendance/Absence Report for each Homeroom and absentee notes are submitted 14 days prior to the extended leave commencement date.

The College Principal/Deputy Principal will ensure that:
- Accurate attendance records are maintained and documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern;
- Policies and procedures address attendance issues such as truancy and school refusal;
- Policies encourage good school attendance and staff are supported in addressing issues of non-attendance;
- College staff are trained to implement College attendance policies and procedures and persons with delegated responsibility for managing attendance records are supervised;
- Parent(s)/carer(s) are regularly informed of attendance requirements; and
- All cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.

Habitual Absence
- Procedures for managing poor school attendance of students are resolved by a range of school-based strategies:
  - Student and parent/carer interviews
  - Reviewing the appropriateness of the student’s educational program
  - Development of a school-based attendance improvement plan
  - Referral to the College Counsellor or external professionals
  - Support from school-based personnel, including Learning Enrichment Staff
  - Use of interpreters and translated materials when required

For students whose attendance is identified as being of concern, and where the destination of a student below the age of 17 years is unknown, the College will notify the Department of Education Officer with home school liaison responsibilities of the student’s full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents’ names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known work, health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents/carers or student.

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<td>An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the College Principal. This may be due to: - misadventure or unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to the school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - travel in Australia and overseas - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions. Less than 5 days requires permission from the College Principal; and 5 or more days requires a separate Application for Approval for Leave is available on the College website – Quicklinks/Absence Forms. Completed and signed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted 14 days prior to the extended leave commencement date.</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by the College Principal.</td>
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<td>S</td>
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<td>The student’s absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.</td>
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Extended Leave and Exemption from Attendance
See diagram below for process to be followed.

**Parent/Carer**
- 4 weeks prior to the commencement of leave
  - Proceed to www.olmc.nsw.edu.au/quicklinks/absenseforms
  - Download, print, complete and sign the relevant form (as indicated below)
  - Parental Application for Leave Form or
    Parental Application for Exemption from Attendance for Elite Sports or
    Parental Application for Exemption from Attendance for Entertainment Employment
  - Attach supporting documentations, itinerary, travel forms etc. to the relevant form

**Student**
- Work/Assessment Plan (Page 4 of the application form) to be completed and signed by each teacher
- 2 weeks (14 days) prior to the commencement of leave
- Completed form, together with supporting documentation to be submit to the Student Centre at OLMC Parramatta

**OLMC Principal’s Office**
- Request is logged in ‘Extended Leave/Exemption’ register
  - Check that school fees are up to date
  - Check students previous leave
  - Principal’s Approval for Leave/Exemption from School is completed

**OLMC Leave Granted**
- Principal’s Approval for Leave/Exemption from School form signed by Principal
- Documentation scanned and provided to Student Centre, Pastoral Leader, Pastoral Teacher and EA Teaching & Learning
- Copy of Approval provided to the Parent/Carer via Student Homeroom
  - Original documentation held on the student file

**OLMC Leave Denied**
- Principal’s Approval for Leave/Exemption from School form declined by Principal
- Principal provides a declinal letter to parent/carer
- Original documentation held on student file