



ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS



REACH: EQUITY – We demonstrate equity and provide opportunities for everyone

Policy Rationale

Going to school every day is vitally important so students do not miss out on important ideas, concepts, knowledge, and skills for future learning. At our College we want every student to do their very best. To get the best education, they need to go to school every day.

The Education Act requires that students attend school until the end of the year in which they turn 17 year and 6 months or they turn 18 years of age, whichever occurs first. The teenage years are a time for young people to develop independence and find their place in the world, including how they take part in their school life. By working together, our school community can support students' attendance and engagement.

Ballajura Community College commits to;

- ensuring that every student has the opportunity to gain an education and achieve their full potential
- assist in addressing complex factors that impact attendance both inside and outside the school gate
- collaboration with government agencies to support a holistic approach to attendance
- implementing strategies that are community-led and strengths based.

Attendance and engagement responsibilities

STUDENTS

- ✓ Attend school every day
- ✓ Be on time to all classes
- ✓ Sign in at Student Services if you are late to school
- ✓ Engage in learning and demonstrate REACH values
- ✓ Students must have parent permission to leave school grounds during the day. Students must sign out at Student Services and be issued with a leave pass.

PARENTS/CARERS

- ✓ Ensure students attend school every day
- ✓ Provide an explanation within three days for valid student absences for sickness, medical appointments or urgent business that cannot be conducted at any other time
- ✓ Provide a written explanation or contact the College via telephone call or email for all absences
- ✓ Provide a medical certificate for related absences of three or more consecutive days.
- ✓ Send notes to school when the student returns specifying the date and reasons for the absence(s)
- ✓ Avoid vacations during school terms.
- ✓ Contact the College for support with overcoming barriers to regular attendance.

Procedures

Promote attendance and engagement

Ballajura Community College builds student, family, school and community resilience and promotes protective factors to maximise attendance;

- Breakfast Club encourages student attendance through provision of a healthy breakfast prior to school three mornings per week
- A caring and engaging pastoral care group experience is provided at the beginning of each day
- All staff seek to build positive relationships with students and parents
- All staff create safe, supportive and culturally appropriate learning environments and use CMS low key skills to manage behaviour
- Teachers demonstrate expectations, behaviour and work ethic in their classes that aligns with our College values and code of conduct
- Staff work with families to address barriers impacting regular student attendance
- A reward activity is organised at the end of each term for students with an acceptable attendance.

Prevent poor attendance

Ballajura Community College aims to prevent poor attendance for those students most at risk;

- Parents are notified daily of their child's absences via automated SMS twice daily
- Student attendance is monitored by Pastoral Care Group teachers and Year Coordinators through a weekly SEQTA report
- Parents are emailed during week 5 and week 10 of each term to communicate attendance rate and unexplained absences
- Students with poor attendance are identified by the SAER Team who consider the individual context and circumstance and determine how the College can work with the family to restore regular student attendance
- Home visits are conducted to support parents with addressing issues impacting student attendance where appropriate
- Various external agencies are engaged to support families by addressing issues impacting student attendance
- Referrals may be made to Department of Communities Child Protection where relevant
- The SAER team refers disengaged Year 11 and 12 students to the Regional Office's Participation Team and can nominate disengaged Year 10 students to the Regional Office's Year 10 Engagement and Transitions program
- Disengaged students are supported to investigate alternatives to full-time schooling.

Respond to Low Attendance

At Risk Indicated – 80-90% attendance rate

- The SAER Team approves 'Attendance Letter – At Risk Indicated' (*Refer to Appendix III*) to be sent to parents of identified students with 'At Risk Indicated' status.
- This letter aims to inform parents that attendance is a concern and provide strategies to assist with restoring regular student attendance.

At Risk Moderate Stage 1 – 70-80% attendance rate

- The SAER Team approves 'Attendance Letter – At Risk Moderate Stage 1 – Attendance Action Plan' (*Refer to Appendix IV*) to be sent to parents of identified students
- This letter informs parents that the Year Coordinator will work with the student to develop an **Attendance Action Plan** (*Refer to Appendix VIII*).
- An **Attendance Action Plan** addresses challenges impacting attendance and aims to assist the student to restore regular attendance.

If attendance does not improve,

- The SAER Team and Head of Student Services approve 'Attendance Letter – At Risk Moderate Stage 1 – Attendance Improvement Plan' (*Refer to Appendix V*) to be sent to parents of relevant students.
- This letter requests parents and student attend a meeting with the Head of Student Services and relevant Student Services Team members to develop an **Attendance Improvement Plan** (*Refer to Appendix IX*).
- An **Attendance Improvement Plan** addresses barriers impacting attendance and identifies home and school-based strategies to restore regular student attendance.

At Risk Moderate Stage 2 – 60-70% attendance rate

- The SAER Team and Deputy Principal approves 'Attendance Letter – At Risk Moderate Stage 2 – Responsible Parenting Agreement' (*Refer to Appendix VI*) to be sent to parents of identified students.
- This letter requests parents and student attend a meeting with the Deputy Principal, relevant Student Services Team members and other stakeholders to develop a **Responsible Parenting Agreement** (*Refer to Appendix X*).
- A **Responsible Parenting Agreement** identifies reasonable steps and supports required to ensure regular student attendance is restored.

At Risk Severe – Below 60% attendance rate

- Where previous strategies have been unsuccessful in restoring regular student attendance, the Principal notifies the Coordinator Regional Operations at North Metropolitan Education Regional Office of intent to convene an Attendance Advisory Panel.
- The Deputy Principal coordinates the organisation of the Attendance Advisory Panel in accordance with Department of Education procedures.
- The Principal sends 'Attendance Letter – At Risk Severe – Attendance Advisory Panel' (*Refer to Appendix VII*) to parents of the identified student, requesting them to attend an Attendance Advisory Panel meeting.
- The purpose of the panel meeting is to provide an independent view on the case, find out why the student is absent from school and recommend advice and support to restore regular student attendance. The panel may be held as one meeting or as a series of meetings.

Vacations during school terms

The *School Education Act 1999* does not allow principals to give permission for families to take vacations during the school term. As students are required to attend school every day, time off for vacations is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

There is no requirement within the *School Education Act 1999* or *School Education Regulations 2000* for teachers to provide a work package. The College Assessment Policy will be applied in the event that assessments are missed during unauthorised vacations.

We strongly encourage families to organise vacations during school holiday periods. Parents should contact the College to discuss any vacations occurring during school terms.