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## Related Policies

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### Purpose

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St Thomas Aquinas Primary School believes that regular attendance at school increases the opportunity for children to participate in the life of the community and to optimise students' learning.

The **Education Act** requires that children of school age (six-fifteen years) resident 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.

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

### Definitions

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### Policy

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#### **Aims:**

This policy aims 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:**

#### **Agreed Practice**

Rolls are marked twice daily and all absences noted. All absentee notes must be signed and dated by the teacher. At the end of each term rolls and notes are collected, checked, signed and dated by the Assistant Principal. At the end of each Year the rolls and notes are collected by the school secretary and stored in the archives. These are then kept for the period prescribed by the Education Act.

Parents are reminded by newsletter to contact the school by letter or phone to advise of a child's absence. Phone messages and emails are passed onto the relevant teacher. Phone messages must be followed up with a written note on the child's return. If concerned about a student's attendance history, a



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teacher will inform the Principal or Assistant Principal who will endeavour to contact the parents by phone to discuss the child's absences. If absences continue, a letter is sent advising the parents of the legal requirement to attend school on a daily basis. A date is given by which time the parent needs to respond.

If attendance remains a problem, a notification is sent to the Catholic Education Office to report the poor levels of attendance. The CEO will then write to the parent setting a date by which the parent needs to respond. If no improvement in attendance is made, the CEO will notify the Non –Government Schools Office.

If a student is absent without notification over an extended period of time, attempts will be made to contact the parent. The roll will be marked as absent until the students returns or until the school is notified that the child has enrolled at another school.

### **Our Expectations**

- Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note or return a completed absence form (See Form 1 below) to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.

### **Our Commitment**

- 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.
- The Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. (See Form 2 below).
- 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.
- 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.
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.



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**Evaluation:** This policy will continue to be evaluated as part of the school four year curriculum review cycle.

## References

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Forms

Nil

<b>Approved By:</b>	Leadership Team
<b>Issuing Service Area:</b>	
<b>Implementation Date:</b>	January 2005
<b>Policy Revision Date:</b>	September 2015
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	St Thomas Aquinas Principal