

## School Attendance - Unexplained Student Absences

April 24, 2018

Dear Families of Galilee,

A review of the *Victorian Government's School Attendance Guidelines* was completed at the end of 2017. The requirements below are a legal expectation of schools and parents/guardians.

This review resulted in amendments to the Attendance Guidelines which now require all schools to:

- Make immediate contact with parents/guardians, as soon as is practical, on the 'same day' of an unexplained absence.
- Make all 'reasonable attempts' to identify the whereabouts and safety of all students who are absent.
- Request that parents/guardians provide **a written explanation for all absences.**

**'Unexplained Absences' are defined as a student's non-attendance at the school in which they are enrolled, where no notification or explanation for the absence has been provided by parents prior to the commencing of the school day.**

In accordance with the *Part 2.1.1 of the Victorian Education Act 2006*, parents/guardians are required to ensure that their child attends school, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

- There is an explained absence such as illness, appointments, bereavement, family holidays etc.
- There is an approved exemption from school attendance or enrolment for the student.
- The child is registered for home schooling and is only partially enrolled for particular activities.

### **From the commencement of Term Two (to be fully implemented by the end of Term Two) 2018:**

- Parents/guardians are responsible for contacting the school on that day of an expected absence to inform them and to provide an explanation for their absence OR late arrival after 9am.
- This must be done prior to the commencement of the school day at 8.50am.
- This may be done by contacting the school on (03) 96992928 directly, and leaving a message on the school answering machine.

### **Where an unexplained absence is identified, the school will:**

- Make all reasonable attempts to contact the parents/guardians that morning. This will in the first instance be done via an automated email message.
- Where no response is received by the parents/guardians that morning to the email, a subsequent phone call will be made to seek an explanation.
- In the event that contact cannot be made with the parents/guardians the school will attempt to communicate with emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file.
- **Where there is no response and there are concerns for the safety and welfare of the student contact may be made with Victoria Police (000).**

# GALILEE REGIONAL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**Follow up actions:**

- The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
- 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.
- The Department of Education and Catholic Education Melbourne may seek student attendance records.
- Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in: 1/a formal attendance conference being organised with parent/s, 2/unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the principal to Catholic Education Melbourne and then 3/ unresolved attendance issues to then be reported to the Department of Education and Training Attendance Officer.
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.

Please note that the process will not fully proceed until later this term when our software company has completed and upgrade to allow emails. Full implementation of the new Attendance Guidelines will be required by all schools by the end of Term 2, 2018. Please view our Updated Attendance policy on our school website for other information.

To ensure the safety and welfare of all students attending Galilee Regional Catholic Primary School, we remind all parents/guardians of their obligation to make contact with the school to provide an explanation on the morning of an expected absence or late arrival by 8.50am via the school telephone ( 96992928 ) and to provide a written explanation provided upon their child's return to school.

We appreciate your cooperation with the implementation of this new policy to increase the safety of our students.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Millar  
Principal  
Galilee RCPS