

ST COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE



ACT JUSTLY

ATTENDANCE AND CRITICAL CARE SEARCH PROCEDURE

The St Columba's processes outlined in this document follow, and are written in alignment with, these relevant CSPD policies, guidelines and procedures:

- [CSPD Student Attendance Procedures](#)
- [CSPD Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Procedure](#)
- [CSPD Student Exemption Procedure](#)
- OSCAR Attendance Portal
- Assessment and Reporting Handbook Stage 5 & 6 – St Columba's
- The Education Act 1990 (NSW Legislation)

CONTACT PERSON

Principal

Assistant Principals

Head of Wellbeing

DATE OF PUBLICATION

February 2005

STATUS

Working Document

DATE TO BE REVIEWED

March 2026

LAST REVIEWED

March 2023

Rationale:

The Education Act requires that children of school age (six - seventeen years) are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless formally exempt. Our College requires that post-compulsory aged students also attend College unless a valid reason exists.

Regular attendance at College is essential if students are to maximise their potential. While parents are legally responsible for promoting regular attendance for their children, College staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor absences.

Aims:

To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend College do so regularly, and without unnecessary absences.

Implementation:

- 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 students experiencing difficulties at College.
- All enrolled students are required to attend College unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Parents/Carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend College regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary. Parents / Carers have a further responsibility to provide a written note to the College explaining why an absence has occurred.
- Parents/Carers of students who are to be absent are required to report the absence. The absence is then to be confirmed in writing by a note from parents/carers.
- Independent students not living with parents or carers are also required to provide notes.
- Inadequately explained absences will cause the Wellbeing Class Teacher to communicate with parents/carers and the student involved so as to implement strategies that will resolve the problem.
- Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues of post-compulsory students may result in their withdrawal from College.
- The Principal will ensure all student absences are recorded each period by teachers, are aggregated on our database and communicated to the CSPD
- The Department of Education, CSPD and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- Student absence figures will appear on student Semester 1 and Semester 2 reports.

Responsibilities

The College staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of well-being and belonging to the College community.
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

1.0 Procedures

For Staff

- Wellbeing Class Teachers will mark the roll electronically during the Wellbeing Class period using Compass.
- A hard copy of the electronic record is to be generated fortnightly and provided to the Principal and Assistant Principals.
- Notifications to parents regarding overdue explanations of absences are issued weekly.
- All teachers are to mark a class roll at the beginning of each lesson. If a student is absent but Compass indicates they should be present, the class teacher is to notify the Student Office immediately. Matters of truancy must be reported to the KLA Leader of Learning. When truancy involves more than one missed class in one day, the student is referred to the Leader of Wellbeing.
- The Wellbeing Class Teacher and Leader of Wellbeing should look for patterns of absenteeism and truancy and implement procedures to address the issue.
- The Wellbeing Class Teacher must sign, initial and file notes which explain students' absences and file them in the designated student folder.
- When a student reports to the Sick Bay, the Sick Bay staff will contact parents or caregivers. The Staff will electronically record the time in the sick bay and if necessary, make an entry indicating a partial absence.
- If a pattern of late arrival to College develops (3 consecutive days), it is the responsibility of the Wellbeing Class Teacher to make contact with the parent/caregiver. If a poor punctuality or attendance pattern continues, the Wellbeing Class Teacher will refer the student to the Leader of Wellbeing who will conduct an interview with the student and parent in an attempt to rectify the situation.
- Each week all unmarked rolls, unexplained absences and inconsistencies are emailed to the whole staff. These inconsistencies must be resolved as soon as possible.

For Students

- Students must be in attendance between 8.53am and 3.05pm (students attending TAFE or cluster classes are exempt).
- All students move to Wellbeing Class immediately upon arrival to school anytime between 8.53am and 9.05am.
- Wellbeing Class teachers mark students as 'present' but issues a LOW detention for 'Late to Wellbeing Class' via Compass
- Wellbeing Class teachers submit their roll at 9.05am, not before.
- Students who arrive at school after 9.05am must sign in at the Student Services Office. A partial absence is recorded. Students without a parental explanation will be issued with a LOW detention by student services staff.
- Students who need to leave the College premises before the end of the College day must present a note signed by the students' parent or caregiver. The note must indicate the time and reason for early departure. The note must be confirmed and signed by the Leader of Wellbeing.
- Students leaving the College premises must sign out at Student Services.
- Students who need to leave College due to illness are to report to the College sick bay. A student will be signed out from the sick bay when collected by a parent or caregiver.

- All absences (partial and full) must be explained in writing (letter or email) within 7 days (in special circumstances this can be done via a phone call), or by replying to the sent SMS.

NSW ATTENDANCE REGISTER CODES

(for implementation in all NSW Colleges from January 2012)

Note: The symbol X is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.	
Symbols to be used where students are absent from College	
Symbol	Meaning
a	The student was absent on that day.
Pa	The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence	
Note: The following symbols should be recorded above the a or Pa symbol as appropriate.	
Symbol	Meaning
A	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no notice has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of the absence.
B	The student is absent from the College on official College business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the College site to undertake: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - College sport (regional and state carnivals) - College excursions.
E	The student was suspended from College.
F	Year 11 or 12 students participating in flexible timetable not present because they are not required to be at College. Or Student who has completed Year 10 but is below the age of 17 years participating in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approved education or training, or - if the child is of or above the age of 15 years-paid work or a combination of approved education or training and paid work.
H	The student is attending two or more education settings for a period of time (shared enrolment). This symbol is recorded where a student accesses a specialist educational setting on a sessional or full-time basis in line with Diocesan Policy. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream College, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour Colleges - juvenile justice - hospital Colleges.
L	Principals may record up to 15 days in a College year for students of compulsory College age who have provided an explanation of the absence which has been accepted by the principal. Additional days for students not of compulsory College age may be recorded at the principal's discretion. This symbol is recorded where a student's absence is due to reasons accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - misadventure or unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to the College - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.
M	The student was exempted from attending College. (See <i>Guidelines for Exemption from Attendance at NSW Catholic Systemic Colleges</i>)
S	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 duration of the absence is more than four days.

Critical Care Students – Absence Procedure

Critical Care students are identified in this document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pcQcm80Us8yE4DrP-FGTmJgXluJew-oH1mKLtqAsc6E/edit>

Absence with Parent Consent

- If a critical care student is absent, parents have been asked to inform the school prior to 8.45am
- Student Services will notify the Leader of Wellbeing and Wellbeing Class Teachers via email re absence, following parent notification.

Absence without Parent Consent

- If a critical care student is not present in Wellbeing Class, and no parent notification has been received, Wellbeing Class teacher to notify Leader of Wellbeing immediately. Leader of Wellbeing to advise Principal and Assistant Principals of possible Critical Care Incident. (Do not use email or leave messages. Notification must be direct to the person).
- Leader of Wellbeing to attempt to verify if student was seen on bus or in yard. If student has not been seen on property, Leader of Wellbeing to ring parent to notify of absence. Parent asked to attempt to contact student via mobile and to inform school if he/she is located. Leader of Wellbeing to notify Principal and Assistant Principals.

When any student is absent from class

- If student is not present in class: Classroom teacher to check Compass daily attendance. If student should be present but is not, classroom teacher to notify Student Services immediately by sending a responsible student from class. No emails.
- Student Services to notify Principal, Leader of Wellbeing, Student Counsellor and Assistant Principals via the runner or direct phone call. Assistant Principals will co-ordinate immediate search of school.
- In the event that student is not located, parents and police to be notified immediately. Assistant Principals to notify Principal.

Responsibilities:

Parent:

- To notify the College when the student is absent, by ringing the Student Services Office on 4754 8900.

Student Services:

- To notify Wellbeing Class Teacher and Leader of Wellbeing by email following parent notification of absence.
- To notify Principal, Leader of Wellbeing, Student Counsellor and Assistant Principals following classroom teacher notification of absence from class.

Wellbeing Class Teacher

- To liaise with Leader of Wellbeing re: student attendance and support structures.
- To notify Leader of Wellbeing immediately if student is not present in Wellbeing Class and no notification email has been received from Student Services.

Leader of Wellbeing

- Fortnightly contact with parent to discuss student progress and support.
- To call parent immediately if student is not present in Wellbeing Class without notification.
- To participate in whole school search for student if not present in class, following notification from Student Services, if available.
- To liaise with Head of Wellbeing and Student Counsellor re: student progress.

Classroom Teacher

- To notify Student Services immediately if student is not present in class, following Compass check to confirm attendance in Wellbeing Class.

Assistant Principals

- To participate in whole school search for student when missing from class.
- To notify Principal of student's absence from school or class if search is unsuccessful after 15 minutes.
- To notify Principal if police have been called. **000 must be called, not a local police station.**
- To initiate this protocol following notification re: student care requirements.
- To liaise with parent and student re: progress.
- To participate in whole school search following notification of student absence from class.
- To ring parents if whole school search is unsuccessful.
- To monitor application of protocol responsibilities.

Critical Care Search Protocol

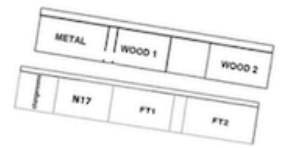
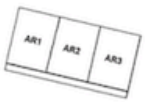
MOBILE PHONE NUMBERS

PRINCIPAL PHILLIP SCOLLARD MOBILE: 0418 609 969	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL MEGAN BERTENSHAW MOBILE: 0425 814 918	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL ROSS GAWTHORNE MOBILE: 0409 033 011
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT JENNY LO CASCIO MOBILE: 0427 072 092	HEAD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND MISSION MARK SATTLER MOBILE: 0448 976 377	BUSINESS MANAGER JENNY LO CASCIO MOBILE: 0427 072 092
SCHOOL COUNSELLOR CRAIG KING MOBILE: 0422 376 988	HEAD OF DIVERSITY MELISSA MORAN MOBILE: 0408 649 421	ADMIN CO-ORDINATOR COLLEEN MITCHELL MOBILE: 0448 804 733
HEAD OF TEACHING & STUDENT GROWTH CANDICE FERREY MOBILE: 0407 447 389	HEAD OF WELLBEING TRACY MULHALL MOBILE: 0416 221 636	
HEAD OF LEARNING CHELSEA GAWTHORNE 0425 127 555	NSW Police 000	

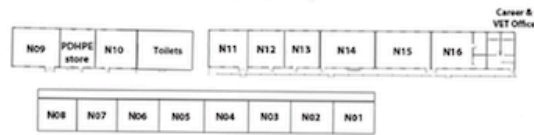
SEARCH PROTOCOL

1. Highlight Leader in charge of search (table above).
2. Name of student missing _____
3. Highlight the area you have been asked to search (1 female and 1 male LOL/LOW in each search team if possible)
4. Search area. **Toilets are a priority (St Francis and Clonard building searches)**. Knock on any closed door, announce your teacher names, ask the student to come out immediately and they have one minute or you will open the door. Explain that teachers are looking for a missing student and if the student is not found within 15 minutes, the Police will be called to assist the search.
5. Contact Leader in charge of search if you locate student (if no answer contact Executive Assistant) and describe student's state OR return to Principal and Assistant Principal Offices if student is not located.
6. Leader in charge of search wait for all LOL and LOWs to return. Speak to Assistant Principal if 15 mins has passed, Principal or AP to then call Police for assistance.
- 7. No staff member is to search bush areas surrounding the school, just school site areas.**

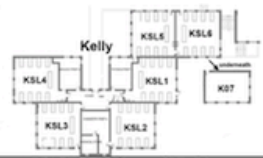
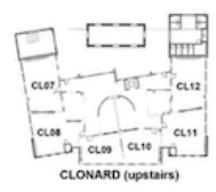
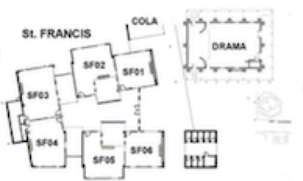
Name of teacher	AREA
	Clonard: Upstairs and downstairs Clonard including toilets and locker area. Check both stair areas. Please ensure you are in a male and female team.
	WEST: St Francis toilets, St Francis (SF01-SF06), and back of St Francis, Ag farm, Drama room.
	Courts and Henson: Check Courts, Chicken coop (behind courts), Henson oval, lower basketball courts and squash courts (front and behind).
	Art rooms, Metal, Wood, Food Tech and both change rooms. Go around back of old food tech, Science and return through Busbay.
	NORTH: N01 to N16, including ASPECT room. Knock on all doors and enter all rooms to check.
	Lower Main building: Brauer Hall, Student Services, Counsellor's Office, Staff toilets, Reception office, Moran Hall, Canteen, Xavier, Chapel, Roselee's office, Conference Room, Meeting Room, and Archway.
	Upper Main building: MO1 to M07 (this includes Japanese rooms), Presentation Space and bathrooms outside, LOWs office, Admin office, Head of Learning office, Head of Mission office; RE office, staff lunch room, staff annexes, photocopy room, staff upstairs toilets and staff study.
	Lawrence: L01-L03, go around whole block, back of Clonard garage, road out to car park and look out to Grotto
	CONVENT: Search all rooms in The Convent; outside COLA, garage area, surrounding gardens and road area to entire building
	EAST: Go to library, check toilets near Technology hub, Technology hub, walk around back of library to the fenced area; Science block; including the gym (K07)
	Chris Carpenter: On approval from Principal or AP or other Leadership Team member, go to Grotto, Colosseum and front driveway with a female staff member.



North Buildings



Career & VET Office



SCALE



DRAFT ONLY

ABSCONDING - GUIDELINES (CSPD)

Best Practice Guidelines
Guidelines and Management
Response and Guidelines

All staff have the responsibility to respect and respond to all students in their care. As well as assisting students to achieve their individual learning goals, staff have a duty of care to implement structures which ensure the wellbeing and safety of every student.

It is vital that the safety of students and staff remains a priority. Reasonable steps must, therefore, be taken to ensure students remain safe, and under staff supervision, within the learning spaces and/or school grounds at all times, throughout the school day.

When a student is at risk of leaving the learning spaces, and/or the school premises without permission (abscond), this will be identified in the student's current risk assessment, risk management and/or behaviour management plan. If this is the first incident with the student, it will be necessary to complete a risk assessment and management plan. Consideration will need to be given for off-site activities, for example, school excursions.

Use of Restraint

Restraint will only be used when a student is at serious risk of harm. In these cases, the least physically restrictive methods of restraint will be employed. Where possible, have this as part of the risk management plan signed by the parent/carer.

In the event a student leaves class without permission, staff are to:

- Remain calm.
- Do not block or obstruct the student from leaving.
- Keep the student in your line of sight.
- Contact the office and alert them that the student has left the class and assistance is required. The executive staff member will direct the course of action.
- Carry a mobile phone to provide details of the location and direction the

student has taken.

- If possible, ask another staff member to remain with your class and ask for assistance from other staff.
- Limit verbal instructions, short concise sentences, encourage the student to be safe and return to class.
- If safe, allow time for the student to calm down.
- Once calm and returning to space, praise for making a good choice.
- Conduct a risk assessment or risk review to develop/update risk management plan.
- Parent/carer to sign new/updated risk management plan.
- Risk Management Plan is uploaded to FACES and shared with relevant staff.
- If the student has a Personalised Plan please site there is a risk management plan in place.

In the event a student leaves the school grounds without permission, staff are to:

- Remain calm.
- Keep the student in your line of sight.
- Contact the office and alert them that the student has left the school grounds and additional assistance is required.
- The executive staff member will direct the course of action.
- Carry a mobile phone to provide details of the location and direction the student has taken.
- Limit verbal instructions, short concise sentences, encourage the student to be safe and return to the school grounds.
- Maintain a safe distance to monitor the student. Active pursuit may encourage the student to run.
- If the student is no longer in your line of sight, the executive staff member will direct the course of action, this may include:
 - contacting police
 - informing parents
- Once calm and returning to school, praise for making a good choice.
- Inform parents/carers and the police as soon as the student has returned to school.
- The Principal or member of the executive will debrief staff involved in the incident.
- Conduct a risk assessment or risk review to develop/update risk management

plan.

- Parent/carer to sign new/updated risk management plan.
- Risk Management Plan is uploaded to FACES and shared with relevant staff.
- If the student has a Personalised Plan please state there is a risk management plan in place.

Strategies for Improving Attendance

- Analysis of attendance data by LOWs at fortnightly LOW meeting and student awareness via information and reward program at Year Assemblies.
- Interviews with parents, Wellbeing Class Teachers and Leader of Wellbeing.
- Reviewing education program of student with parents and relevant staff.
- Referral to College Counsellor.
- Convening Attendance Planning Meeting
- Register communication of attendance data to parents via Skoolbag and newsletter
- Using support from CSPD Student Services.
- The outcomes of meetings are to be recorded and copies of implemented plans are to be kept as a record.

When College-based interventions are unsuccessful:

If a problem with a student's attendance persists following the implementation of the above listed options, the Principal will notify the Diocesan office.

Attendance audits will be conducted in Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 of each term during LOW Meetings. Those students who are deemed to have unsatisfactory attendance will be supported through the Diocesan Attendance Intervention guidelines.

Ongoing attendance issues will result in the implementation of the following strategies in an attempt to improve attendance:

Steps for responding to Habitual Unexplained Non attendance at school of children and young people in Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta

Note: this is a minimum requirement. If at any stage there is a need to escalate the response please consult the DoSP

