

Unity College



Attendance Policy and Procedures

Mission Statement

Unity College aims to be a welcoming and supportive community of people who respect ourselves, each other and the environment. Our school seeks to provide a holistic education, striving for excellence through the teaching and demonstration of the Christian message. We endeavour to provide a student-focussed education in a safe environment which creates equal opportunity for all to develop to their full potential.

Purpose

The purpose of this Attendance Policy is to document College, Student, and Legal Guardian mutual obligations regarding attendance and the procedures that must be followed to meet these obligations.

Rationale

Unity College recognises that every day of attendance in school contributes toward a student's learning and that maximising school attendance enhances academic, employment and social outcomes. Correspondingly, research has shown direct correlations between poor attendance and student disengagement, exposure to 'at risk' behaviours and poor academic, employment and social outcomes. Accurate attendance records are an important Workplace Health and Safety requirement to monitor the wellbeing of all of our students.

Goal

The Unity Community of Students, Legal Guardians, and Staff will work together to ensure all students meet the College expectation of 94% or above attendance and zero unexplained absences.

Section 1 - Partnership Obligations

- **Obligations of Legal Guardians**

- ✓ To ensure your child is enrolled at and attends school. This is a legal obligation, as set out in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.
- ✓ To make a written commitment to meet the Unity College attendance goal upon enrolment of your child.
- ✓ To ensure your child attends school for the whole day on every scheduled school day unless:
 1. Your child is too sick to leave the home or has an infectious disease or an injury preventing movement around the school.
 2. A medical or dental appointment could not be made out of school hours.
 3. The Principal is provided with another genuine and acceptable reason preventing your child's attendance.
- ✓ To provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences on or before the morning of the day of absence. (***see note below**)
- ✓ To provide a prompt response to any text message, email or letter received regarding your child's absence from school, even if you think an error has been made.
- ✓ To seek approval from the Junior or Secondary Phase Head of College if your child is to be absent for an extended period (longer than one week of consecutive Absence).
- ✓ To contact school support staff (Junior Teaching or Leadership Staff, Secondary Pastoral Co-ordinators or Guidance Counsellors) if your child is reluctant or refusing to attend school. To initiate or attend support meetings to improve your child's school attendance.
- ✓ To provide a dated and signed notification or to phone Student Reception staff explaining any reason for your child's late arrival at school.
- ✓ To provide a dated and signed diary notification or to phone Student Reception staff if your child is required to leave school early. (Please note that for student protection purposes, students in Prep – Year 9 require a Legal Guardian or Legal Guardian approved delegate to present at Student Reception if their child is to leave school early.)
- ✓ To ensure that emergency contact information for your child is up-to-date.

***Providing Absence notifications**

This is important for the safety and wellbeing of all students.

When a student cannot attend school for any reason, it is expected that the legal guardian will notify Student Reception by 8:30am on the day of absence. **It is College preference that ALL absence notifications are received by one of the two methods below:**

Telephone: College Absentee Line **5490 5700**

Parent Portal: Click on **Report Student Absence**.

- **Obligations of Students**

- ✓ To attend school for the whole school day, every day and be on time for all timetabled classes.
- ✓ To not leave school during school hours without permission and without obtaining an early departure pass from Student Reception.
- ✓ To always report to Student Reception if arriving to school later than 8:35am.
- ✓ To ensure work missed during any periods or days absent from school is completed.
- ✓ To take responsibility for your own regular attendance from Year 5 upwards.
- ✓ To ensure days absent are explained by your Legal Guardian.
- ✓ To discuss day(s) absent with your class/PC teacher if either attending regularly or getting your Legal Guardian's notification for an absence is difficult.

- **Obligations of College Staff**

- ✓ To maintain a welcoming, safe and supportive school environment that promotes student engagement with learning, student wellbeing and positive relationships.
- ✓ To monitor student attendance daily through roll marking at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session in the **Junior Phase** and at the beginning of each PC and period in the **Secondary Phase**.
- ✓ To notify Legal Guardians of any unexplained absences and late arrivals on a daily basis. At Unity College, this notification is made by SMS to the mobile phone of the student's main contact.
- ✓ To investigate the patterns and underlying causes of non-attendance so that appropriate support strategies can be implemented.
- ✓ To discuss individual attendance concerns with the student and/or Legal Guardian, and offer support to Legal Guardian and student when attendance has fallen under expectation.
- ✓ To notify the relevant authorities if efforts to support Legal Guardian and student to improve attendance has been unsuccessful.
- ✓ To ensure the Unity College Attendance policy is clearly communicated to all Legal Guardians and students via the College website, newsletter and enrolment package.

- Attendance and participation – a joint obligation

- ✓ Attendance reports will be produced regularly by the Student Wellbeing School Officer to provide a summary of overall attendance percentage, absence reasons and late arrivals/early departures.
- ✓ Students will be flagged if their attendance falls below expectation, or a pattern of late arrival, early departure or unexplained absence is emerging.
- ✓ Students and Legal Guardians may be required to attend an interview with a member of the College Leadership team if any aspect of attendance (overall percentage, arrival time, unexplained absences) falls below expectation.
- ✓ Cancellation of enrolment at Unity College may be considered for students who fall below attendance expectations if a Legal Guardian partnership and commitment to improve attendance cannot be established.

Please note: Students are required to meet Unity College attendance expectations to be eligible for College awards, Valedictory Formal, Rewards Days and other special events. This includes the expectation that students will have zero unexplained absences on their record.

Appendix: Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation

Students have two phases of schooling: The Compulsory Schooling Phase and the Compulsory Participation Phase.

The Compulsory Schooling Phase

- Starts the year a child turns 6. However, Prep is now compulsory in Queensland and a child must turn 5 by June 30 to start Prep. Parents can delay the child's entry to school, but they still must commence in Prep.
- Ends when the child turns 16 or finishes Year 10, whichever occurs first;
- During this phase, Legal Guardians have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school every day.

The Compulsory Participation Phase

- Starts the year the child stops being of compulsory school age (i.e. reaches the age of 16 or completes Year 10)
- Ends when the child:
 - i. Gains a Senior Certificate, Certificate III or Certificate IV; **OR**
 - ii. Has participated in eligible options for two years after the completion of the Compulsory Schooling Phase; **OR**
 - iii. Turns 17.

During this phase, Legal Guardians have a legal obligation to ensure their child meets the attendance requirements of the eligible option of their choice.

Section 2 - Attendance Procedures for College Staff

Important note:

Class rolls, whether electronic or paper based, can be required as evidence in court and assist in establishing that a school has met their common-law duty of care to students. Attendance records are required as part of a school's Workplace Health and Safety requirements and can be a critical factor in identifying serious student protection concerns. In addition, student attendance records are used for student reporting, fee allocation and government reporting.

Attendance Marking

JUNIOR

- Attendance will be marked for all students each morning by 8:50am and again after the lunch break by 1:15pm.

MIDDLE/SENIOR

- Attendance will be marked in **Pastoral Care** each morning before 8.50am by the Pastoral Care teacher.
- Student Reception staff will check the morning roll marking of Pastoral Care classes by 8.55am and follow up any unmarked rolls with the relevant teacher.
- Attendance will be marked within the first 10 minutes of **each period** for all subject classes throughout the duration of the school day by subject teachers.
- Classes extending over a double period will be marked in the first period of the double only. Attendance will be inherited for the subsequent session of the double period.
- Student Reception staff will check roll marking for each period of all subject classes at 2:15pm daily.
- Student Reception staff will advise the Assistant Principal – Junior or Middle/Senior of any rolls marked incorrectly or unmarked.
- An email will be sent to Secondary Subject teachers for any subject rolls not marked.
- Incorrectly marked rolls will be corrected by the teacher responsible for the class.
- Monthly reports of outstanding unmarked classes will be produced by the Student Wellbeing School Officer and forwarded to the Assistant Principal.


Present Categories

Students who are **on site** and:

- Present in class will be marked as '*Present – In Class*';
- Attending an approved in-school activity will be pre-marked as '*Present – Alternate Learning Activity*' by the teacher responsible for the activity;
- With Counsellors will be marked as '*Present – In-School Appointment*';
- In Sick Bay will be marked as '*Present – In Sick Bay*' by Student Reception staff.

Students who are **off site*** and:

- Attending apprenticeships/traineeships or other approved work experience will be pre-marked as '*Present – Work/Study*' by School Officers;
- Participating in an excursion or camp will be marked as '*Present – Excursion/Camp*' by the teacher responsible for the activity;
- Participating in a school-approved Sport or Arts activity will be marked as '*Present – Sport/Arts*' by the teacher responsible for the activity.

*Please refer to activity symbol  for detail of the approved activity by hovering over the icon.

* Please refer to Activities on page 8 for more detail on Activity roll creation and marking.

Students will only be marked as '*Present – Not Required to Attend*' upon instruction from College Leadership.


Absent Categories

Students who are:

- Not in Class and notification **has not been** received from a Legal Guardian, will be marked '*Absent – Unexplained*'.
- Not in class and notification **has been** received from a Legal Guardian to advise the reason for absence will be marked '*Absent*'. The category selected to define the reason for absence will be – '*Illness*', '*Appointment*' or '*Personal/Family*'.
- If **Junior Phase or Secondary Pastoral Care teachers** have received information from a Legal Guardian regarding a student's absence from school, they should enter the details (including absence category) into a log in eMinerva.
- If a Legal Guardian has informed **Student Reception** of the absence; the School Officer will enter these details into a log in eMinerva.
- Information received regarding future planned absences of students will be entered as a Notified Absence into e-Minerva by Student Reception or Pastoral Teachers.
- If a student is away on three consecutive days (or earlier if concerned) the Junior Phase or Secondary Pastoral Care teacher will contact a Legal Guardian.
- If a student has been previously marked as present at school but they are not in class, the subject teacher must ring Student Reception and advise that the student is not present. The Student Reception officer will inform available staff members (preferably Pastoral Care team members) within the Pastoral Centre that the student is missing. They will then attempt to locate the student who will be dealt with according to behaviour management policies.

*A student will only be marked as '*Absent – Not Required to Attend*', '*Absent – Truant*' or '*Absent – Internal Suspension*' upon instruction from College Leadership.

Unexplained Absences

- An unexplained absence occurs when the student is not present at school and the Legal Guardian does not contact the school.
- An SMS message will be sent to Main Contacts by approximately 10.00am each day. The Pastoral Care teacher will follow up any unexplained absences by contacting the student's Legal Guardians.
- Past unexplained absences are indicated by the red Unexplained Absence Alert icon  on class rolls. When the Pastoral Care teachers receive written explanation of the absence from the student's Legal Guardians they must update the absence category and enter details into eMinerva with the details. Teaching staff should regularly review the unexplained absence icon as part of their duty of care.

Late Arrivals

- A student is considered to have arrived late any time after 8:35am.
- A student arriving late will sign in at Student Reception and will be given a late slip. This slip must be presented to the teacher when arriving in class. If they do not present a late slip, teachers must send the student to Student Reception to sign in.
- Legal Guardians are required to provide an explanation for the late arrival via a signed and dated notification, a phone call to Student Reception or a notification on the Parent Portal. Students arriving late without Legal Guardian notification will be marked '*Absent-Unexplained*' for the period before their arrival at school.
- If Pastoral Care teachers observe a student has made a habit of arriving late or is late for three consecutive days, they will contact the student's Legal Guardian as per the policy for absentee students in this document.
- An SMS message will be sent to the student's main contact advising the student has arrived late to school.

Early Departures

- A student is considered to be leaving early any time before 2:35pm.
- All students leaving early will provide a notification from a Legal Guardian.
- If Student Reception staff are unsure of the validity of the notification, a call will be made to the student's main contact to confirm.
- Students in all classes Prep – Year 9 also require the Legal Guardian or Legal Guardian approved delegate to attend Student Reception in order to sign the student out. This is to fulfil duty of care obligations.

SMS Messages

Unexplained Absences:

- An SMS message will be sent to a student's main contact by 10:00am each day advising of any 'Unexplained' absences.

Late Arrivals:

- An SMS message will be sent to a student's main contact advising of students who have arrived late.


Incorrect SMS messages:

- Any incorrect messages caused by incorrect roll-marking will be made known to the Assistant Principal. The teacher will follow up by telephoning the student's Legal Guardian.

Non-Marking of Electronic Roll

- If the **school computer system is offline** hard copies of all Pastoral Care rolls will be provided by Student Reception. Subject rolls will be taken by completing a list of students present in class. Teachers must sign and date this hard copy document. Once the system is online, teachers will mark the roll in eMinerva using their hard copy roll. If this cannot be completed due to time constraints, teachers can send the roll to Student Reception for prompt entry. If the data is entered by Student Reception, the signed and dated hard copy will be required to be archived.
- In the event of an **evacuation**, hard copies of rolls will be taken to the evacuation area by Student Reception to be marked by Pastoral Care teachers. Pastoral Care teachers will advise Leadership of any unexplained absentees. These are to be signed and dated by the teacher taking the roll.
- During a **lockdown**, the roll will not be marked however teachers will need to account for students and reports names of any missing students as per approved lockdown procedures.

Activities

- An activity will be entered into eMinerva for students attending excursions, camps and other school based activities.
- A yellow alert  will appear next to the student's name on class rolls to indicate the student has a timetable clash. The activity will be marked by the staff member responsible for the event, e.g. Present – Work Study; Present - Excursion. This attendance category will inherit through the rest of the student's timetable for the day.
- Throughout the day these attendance categories **must not** be changed, unless the student is present in class. The category should then be changed to 'Present – In Class'.

Relief Staff

- Relief staff will have access to the school portal and eMinerva using their own BCE Username and Password, and are to mark attendance in eMinerva for each class they are supervising. If this is not possible, paper rolls will be provided, marked, signed and dated by relief staff and returned promptly to Student Reception for electronic entry. Paper rolls are then required to be archived for legal record keeping purposes.
- College staff conducting a cover lesson will mark attendance in eMinerva for the class they are supervising.

Mobile Attendance Application

- Teaching staff wishing to use the Mobile Attendance application can access it by using the URL <https://staffportal.bne.catholic.edu.au/mawa> and entering their BCE Username and Password. The User Guide – Mobile Attendance Application should be read prior to use.

Attendance Marking Training

- School Leadership will ensure all staff receive a written copy of the Attendance Policy document and will review this document annually.
- A copy of the Attendance Policy document will be included in Relief staff folders.
- School Leadership will provide attendance marking training to teaching staff annually.

References

BCE Student Attendance Policy - Approved 4 September 2014

<https://kweb.bne.catholic.edu.au/policiesandforms/ResourceStore/Information%20Services/Student%20Attendance%20Policy.pdf>

BCE Guidelines to Improve Student Attendance

<https://kweb.bne.catholic.edu.au/policiesandforms/ResourceStore/Learning%20and%20Teaching/BCE%20Attendance%20Guidelines.doc>

ACARA National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting

<http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-standards-for-student-attendance-data-reporting>

Every Day Counts

<http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/>

<http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/docs/parent-fact-sheet.pdf>