Statement

MacKillop Catholic College’s mission is to “provide a vibrant, inclusive learning community”. To achieve this, the College offers a range of comprehensive learning, wellbeing, religious and co-curricular programs to provide a well-rounded educational experience for its students. To maximise the benefits offered to students it is an expectation that students will attend all classes and scheduled College activities at all times.

Definition

- **Absence**: not in a certain place at a given time.
- **Attendance**: be at a place or class at a nominated time.
- **Instruction**: the act of teaching.
- **Enrolment**: linked to a course or school.
- **Legitimate**: in accordance with established rules, principles or standards.
- **Persistent**: constantly repeated; continued.

Rationale

All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.

Guidelines

1. Students are required to attend all classes during the school term and repeated nonattendance may affect their ability to fulfil course requirements and their overall results.

2. At MacKillop Catholic College it is also a requirement that students attend Home Room and Personal Development activities, Retreats and Reflection Days, Sports Carnivals, College Camps and other College activities. On enrolment parents sign an undertaking to support attendance at these activities.

3. Records of attendance are maintained for all classes and activities.

4. If a student is absent for legitimate reasons, the parent/caregiver is required to ring the College before 9.00am on the day of the absence. They also need to send a note in the Student Planner on the student’s return to school. The College will contact parents/caregivers by SMS at 9.30am if there has been an unexplained absence and a reply is expected as soon as possible thereafter. Unexplained or concerning patterns of absence will be followed up by the Home Room teacher, Year Level Coordinator or Director of Student Wellbeing in the first instance.

5. Persistent unexplained absence is referred to the Principal who initiates further formal contact with parents as determined in the Guidelines for Non-Attendance and Prosecution (July 2010). (Assistance from the TCEO is available to follow up unexplained absence where there is little or no response to College communication or no improvement in attendance at school. Extended unexplained absences for students under 17 must also be notified to Department of Children’s and Family Services by law).
6. The College recognises that students participate in non-College activities and events that are of considerable educational and personal value to them, such as playing in representative sports teams, participating in cultural experiences, or other opportunities. On such occasions, written notice is expected in advance to the Principal.

7. When a student experiences ill health, injury, or family emergency, College staff will work with the family to provide appropriate ongoing education and support.

8. It is important to be aware that the Federal Government requires schools to report on the attendance of students receiving Centrelink allowances (Austudy, ABSTUDY, AIC and PES etc). This involves reporting students with five or more unexplained absences for a term. Ongoing payment is dependent on satisfactory attendance.

9. The understanding of students and families of the importance of supporting this policy is fundamental to the commitment of supporting the mission of the College in providing a holistic Catholic education for its students.