



**SOUTHERN CROSS**  
— GRAMMAR —

POLICY

**ATTENDANCE  
MONITORING**

April 2019

## Document History

Version	Date	Board / Committee Approval	Approval Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	March 2011			Developed
1.1	February 2016			Updated
1.2	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finance and Governance Committee</li><li>• Board</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13 May 2019 (Reviewed)</li><li>• 17 June 2019 (Approved)</li></ul>	Updating of formatting, general terminology. Inclusion of VCE attendance requirements.



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## Introduction

All students who are enrolled at Southern Cross Grammar, regardless of their age, are expected to attend whenever instruction is provided. Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. At Southern Cross Grammar, attendance and participation are addressed in the context of a supportive school community.

## Purpose

This policy outlines what Southern Cross Grammar's expectations are for attendance. Specific attendance requirements apply to VCE students as per VCAA guidelines.

## Scope

Attendance at school refers to presence at a school-endorsed and supervised activity by enrolled students. Students may be regarded as 'attending' when they are being provided with educational instruction through excursions and sports days as well as through classroom-based activities and school approved competitions and examinations.

## Responsibilities

### Southern Cross Grammar Board

The Board will:

- support the school to maintain accurate records of student attendance and implement practices promoting the regular attendance of students at school

### Principal

The Principal will:

- ensure a set of school processes to manage attendance issues is developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed
- maintain an accurate record of student attendance (roll). Attendance registers must be available to authorised officers at all times
- provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- advise parents promptly when their children are absent from school without explanation
- ensure that all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented
- ensure that school personnel are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school
- provide processes for regular parent/carer notification of individual students' attendance records
- meet statutory body attendance requirements, such as VCAA
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and report to the Board.

## Teachers

Teachers will:

- monitor attendance and record all student absences at the beginning of each period
- ensure constancy and consistency in checking and following up student absences

## Parents and Caregivers

Parents and caregivers are responsible for:

- demonstrating to the child the importance they place on school attendance
- ensuring that their children attend school each day as a matter of priority
- promptly notifying and explaining their child's absences from school
- providing written notice when leaving the school or when enrolling the child in another school
- providing advance notification to the Principal of extended absences

## Principles

Southern Cross Grammar adopts a supportive school community approach to students' attendance at school. The school promotes practices that are most likely to impact positively on attendance. Southern Cross Grammar addresses the following areas:

- Curriculum which is inclusive and relevant
- Learning and teaching practices which are intentional and embedded in purposeful and meaningful experiences
- Approaches which foster the health, well-being, safety and development of resilience in students
- Development of a learning culture in which good relationships are modelled at all levels
- Professional learning which responds to changing educational and social contexts
- The early identification and targeting of specific groups of 'at risk' students with provision of the necessary support to maintain attendance and participation. Particular target groups will include:
  - Students with special needs
  - English as a Second Language (ESL) students

## Attendance Monitoring Procedure

- As a minimum students should be at school five minutes before the scheduled starting time so that they can be organised in time for the beginning of class.
- Junior School teachers will record attendance at the beginning of the school day (Homeroom) and at the beginning of the periods after recess and lunch recording both attendees and absences.
- Middle and Senior School teachers will record attendance at the beginning of the school day (Homeroom) and at the beginning of each period recording both attendees and absences.
- Teachers must immediately forward any notes they receive from parents/caregivers about a student's absence to Administrative staff. The administrative staff will then update the attendance data, including any relevant future absences.
- Administrative staff will compile and circulate to staff the absentee report each day by 10:00am.

- Parents/caregivers are requested to advise the school of their child's absence before the school day commences. This can be done via a phone call, a 24-hour attendance phone line will be available, or email to the teacher and administration.
- Where an absence is likely to be extended beyond a single day, parents are requested to notify the school as early as possible.
- After the third day of absence without explanation, parents/caregivers will be contacted by the school requesting the reason for the student's absence.
- Students who arrive at school late must sign in at Reception.
- In circumstances where it is necessary for a student to leave school during the day, they must be signed out by a parent/caregiver. If the student returns to school that day, they must be signed back in by a parent/caregiver at Reception.
- The school does not encourage excused and/or extended absences, but does understand that there will sometimes be accidents, illnesses or other special circumstances such as compassionate grounds, sport representation or off campus activities organised by the school, e.g. music camp. A written communication to the Principal is the required in such circumstances.
- In instances where particular students show a consistent pattern of unexplained non-attendance and/or lateness, Southern Cross Grammar will:
  - ensure that these students are provided with appropriate counselling and support
  - establish and maintain communication with parents/caregivers
  - engage the support of Support personnel and support agencies as appropriate
  - monitor the non-attendance and/or lateness patterns for these students on a daily basis and take action as appropriate
  - ensure that all staff who have responsibility for these students are kept informed of matters related to their non-attendance and/or lateness
  - explore the possibility of different curriculum models where appropriate.
- Additional information received about unsatisfactory attendance of students must be transferred to and substantiated by entries into the school database system. The information must include:
  - actual dates of absences and/or lateness
  - details of any excused and/or extended absence
  - whether or not an absence and/or lateness was explained by the student's parent/caregiver
  - noting any consistent patterns of absences and/or lateness
  - details of any communication with parents/caregivers regarding a student's non-attendance and/or lateness
  - details of any action taken in relation to a student's absence and/or lateness
  - details of any counselling or support given to the student and/or parent/caregiver.
- Attendance information is provided on the Mid-Year and End-of-Year Student reports.

### VCE Protocols

Each VCE unit involves 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction, normally over the duration of a semester. In addition, it is expected that students will undertake up to 50 hours of self-directed learning for each unit.

Students undertake the majority of their learning and assessment in class. Consequently, attendance is critical. The school expects that parents and students will not make personal appointments during the normal school day.

Students who are absent without the approval of the school for more than 20% of scheduled class time for a unit in one term may receive an "N" for that unit.

A warning letter will be emailed to parents/carers after a student has missed 15% of scheduled class time.

The responsibility rests with each individual student to account for all absences. The school will maintain and retain documentation and records relating to each VCE student's attendance and will record approved and unapproved absences.

The 80% does not include all sanctioned school activities such as off-site VET classes, compulsory subject-based excursions, House activities or inter-school sport.

The school must be notified on the morning of any absence and absences must be followed up by:

- A note from a parent/guardian
- A medical certificate (for an absence of more than 2 days) submitted to the VCE Coordinator on the day of his/her return to school

Unauthorised absences are absences not related to illness or extenuating circumstances.

Examples of unauthorised absences include hair appointments, driving lessons, missing the bus and arriving to school late and shopping.

- Absences that are unauthorised may result in disciplinary action.
- Ongoing unauthorised absences may result in an "N" for a unit, especially if the 80% attendance rule is breached.

Parents/guardians will be notified in cases of unauthorised absence.

### Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of Southern Cross Grammar's cycle of review for all policy.



## **Appendix 1 – Letter Requesting Reason for a Student’s Absence**





**SOUTHERN CROSS**  
GRAMMAR

<Parent Name>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Parent>

I am writing to you about <son's/daughter's> attendance. Our records show that <child's name> has been absent from school for three consecutive days without satisfactory explanation.

We have been unable to contact you by telephone to determine the reason for the absence. I therefore request that you contact me to discuss this matter.

Under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, you are required to ensure that your child attends school every day unless there are genuine reasons for absences, such as illness. Absences affect both the individual's learning and the learning of others in the class group and it is important for children to attend school regularly.

If you are worried about your child's attendance, or if you are having problems getting <child's name> to attend school please do not hesitate to phone the school and ask to speak with me directly so that we can work together to solve the problem.

Yours sincerely

PRINCIPAL



## **Appendix 2 – Letter Requesting a Meeting with Parent to Discuss Unexplained Student Absence**



**SOUTHERN CROSS**  
GRAMMAR

<Parent Name>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Parent>

I am writing to you about <son's/daughter's> attendance. Our records show that <child's name> has been absent from school for more than ten days this term without satisfactory explanation.

Under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, you are required to ensure that your child attends school every day unless there are genuine reasons for absences, such as illness. Absences affect both the individual's learning and the learning of others in the class group and it is important for children to attend school regularly.

I therefore request that you telephone the school and ask to speak with me directly or make an appointment to see me so that we can discuss the reason for the absences.

Yours sincerely

PRINCIPAL