



DARAMALAN COLLEGE

ENCOURAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Daramalan College is required under the ACT Education Act to have in place processes for encouraging student attendance. The College aims to work with parents/guardians to ensure that students attend school regularly so that each student can achieve the best educational outcomes possible.

Policy

1. Students under 17 years of age and who have not completed the requirements of the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate are required to attend school on a regular basis unless the parents have applied for and gained an Exemption from the ACT Education Directorate.
2. Should a student be absent from school the parent/guardian must provide an adequate explanation for the absence.
3. Pastoral Tutors, Classroom teachers and Pastoral Leaders will monitor attendance patterns of students and parents/guardians will be contacted regarding any attendance concerns.
4. The College will ensure that parents/guardians are well informed about the importance of regular school attendance and the processes for explaining absences.
5. If a student develops a poor attendance pattern, the Pastoral Leader will implement the following processes to encourage attendance:
 - a. Speak with the student to ascertain the reason/s for the poor attendance.
 - b. Discuss with parent/s or guardian/s concerns about the issue and determine agreed strategies to improve the student's attendance. Strategies include:
 - i. counselling,
 - ii. requiring medical certificates for absences,
 - iii. interventions and support measures (external agencies, Wellbeing Support Plan, Return to School plan),
 - iv. communicate with the Assistant Principal Curriculum (revised academic programmes)
 - c. If the above actions are unsuccessful, the College will formally advise the parent/guardian and student (in writing) of the impact that on-going poor attendance may have on the possibility of certification at Year 10 and Year 12 levels as well as their obligations under the Education Act.
 - d. As a last resort, advise the parent/guardian of students under 17 years who stop attending school on a regular basis, that the appropriate officer in the ACT Education Directorate will be notified.
6. The College will maintain records on Synergetic to demonstrate that action has been taken to encourage attendance by each student with an attendance issue.

Procedures

1. The College keeps daily records of attendance. If a student develops a pattern of poor attendance the Pastoral Tutor (Years 7/10) or the classroom teacher (Years 11/12) will inform the Pastoral Leader who will discuss this with the student and the student's parent/guardian in order to achieve a resolution. A plan to encourage attendance will be made, including strategies listed in 5b on the previous page.
2. Should the first level of strategies employed to improve the attendance pattern not bring about improvement, an Attendance Notification 1 letter (see Appendix 1) will be sent to the family by the student's Pastoral Leader and the matter referred to the Assistant Principal Pastoral Care who will work with all parties to implement strategies to encourage attendance. The proforma Attendance Notification letter will be edited and personalised to suit the student and their situation. This occurs when 10 or more unexplained absences have occurred within a semester or when the repeated absences do not have medical certificates to explain them. If no progress is made in improving attendance at this stage, a request will be made by the Pastoral Leader for the family to apply for an exemption from full time schooling from the ACT Education Directorate if appropriate.
3. If these actions do not result in improved attendance, the Attendance Notification letter 2 (see Appendix 2) will be sent. This will occur when 20 or more unexplained absences or non-medically certified absences take place. This includes a request to attend a meeting with the Assistant Principal Pastoral Care to make a formal Return to School plan to encourage and improve attendance.
4. If this meeting does not lead to an improvement in attendance, the matter will be referred to the Principal who will ensure that all options have been exhausted prior to referring the matter to the ACT Education Directorate. This referral is as per the processes outlined in Section 102 of the Education Act 2004. The Principal will also, in consultation with other key staff, decide about the awarding of an ACT Year 10 or ACT Senior Secondary Certificate if the student's attendance record is unsatisfactory.
5. Students who undertake approved external programs that impact on attendance at school (e.g., Dance or Sports programs) will be directed to seek a Partial Exemption Certificate from the ACT Education Directorate.

Approved by:	College Executive
Contact Staff Member:	Assistant Principals Pastoral Care
Implementation Date:	December 2021 (Updated November 2021)
Supersedes Policy Dated:	October 2019
Revision Date:	Term 4 2023

Appendix 1: Attendance Notification proforma letter 1

Dear

I am writing to advise you that we have some concerns about your student's school attendance record.

..... has been absent for days so far this semester without adequate explanation.

It is a requirement under the ACT Education Act that all students under the age of 17 years who have not completed the requirements for the Senior Secondary Certificate or an approved exemption from full-time school must attend school regularly. It is the responsibility of schools to monitor and follow-up issues relating to compulsory school attendance.

If your child's poor attendance continues, it will be necessary for us to have a formal meeting with you as the next step in relation to this matter. If there is any documentation that you have to support your child's poor attendance at school, I would ask that this be forwarded to me within a week of receiving this letter.

Please be aware that poor attendance may result in your student being unable to be assessed and may lead to them not being awarded a Year 10 or Year 12 Certificate.

Please feel free to contact me or the Assistant Principal Pastoral Care should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

House Coordinator/PCA

Date:

Appendix 2: Attendance Notification proforma letter 2

Dear

I am writing to follow up the first letter that I sent to you regarding the continuing poor school attendance of.....

As you are aware, students must attend school regularly until they are 17 years of age, unless they have completed the requirements for the Senior Secondary Certificate or they have been given an exemption from full-time school attendance. It is the responsibility of the school to monitor attendance and follow-up if there is an unsatisfactory pattern of attendance.

As your student's school attendance has not improved since my first letter to you, it is essential that you make an appointment for you and your child to have a meeting with the Assistant Principal Pastoral Care,, within a week of receiving this letter. The contact number is.....

At this meeting, we will be looking to establish some agreed strategies to improve your child's school attendance. If this is unsuccessful, we will need to have a meeting with the Principal and also, possibly, an authorised representative (non-government) from the ACT Education Directorate.

I need to notify you that your student's ability to be assessed may be in jeopardy if their attendance pattern does not improve. This may impact on our ability to award a Year 10 **or a 12 Certificate** at the end of this year.

Yours sincerely,

House Coordinator/PCA