



H007	Attendance and Absenteeism Policy
Purpose	To articulate the policy position of John Calvin School Albany in relation to attendance and absenteeism of students.
Authority	Criminal Code Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) School Education Act 1999 and School Education Regulations 2000
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations	Principles: 1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are expected to attend normal school hours every day of each term. • In the event that a student is not in attendance, the school requires parents or guardians to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school. • JCSA records, monitors and manages student attendance in order to maximise the opportunities of all students to learn.
Delegation	Principal
Related Policies	Emergency, Crisis and Critical Incidents (PC005) Screening Staff and Volunteers (CP005) Child Protection (CP001) Chronic Illness and Allergy (H001) Mental Health, Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (H006) First Aid (H008) Excursion and Camp (I002) Behaviour Management and Discipline (R004) Students' Whereabouts Unknown (CP006)
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Review Authority	Governance
Keywords	Absence; absent; leave; safety; student wellbeing; attendance
Authorised by: Chairman	
Date:	
Author / Reviewer	C Brearley - August 2024



Version	Date Published	Changes Made	Author of Changes
1	June 2011		
2	July 2013		
3	July 2016		
4	May 2019		
5	July 2022	Add version management table. Changes to record retention period based on AISWA guidance July 2021. Alter student leaving school and lateness processes per feedback from staff meeting review, update receptionist role.	CB
6	Sept 2024	Add NPCSO. Various changes from updated guidelines to registration standards; definition of missing student under heading "Removal of a Student from the Attendance Records"; Change "unacceptable absenteeism" to "addressing persistent student absence".	CB



HP007

Attendance and Absenteeism Procedure

As stated in the School Education Act 1999, students are required to attend the school they are enrolled in on every day that it is open for instruction except in certain cases. The school must account for every absence of every student and maintain attendance records to promote the safety and wellbeing of all students enrolled.

PARENT / CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. It is the caregivers' responsibility to ensure that their child/ren attend school and are punctual every day unless there are acceptable reasons for absence.
2. Advance notice of absence may be made to school administration or class teacher via email, diary note, letter or phone call. In the event of absence on the day, parents are to contact school admin via phone or email.
3. Students are to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent which include:
 - Sickness
 - Danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease.
 - Temporary or permanent infirmity
 - Unavoidable and sufficient cause, e.g.
 - bereavement within the family or of a close friend; or
 - family trauma.
 - Attending a school organised activity, e.g., excursion, camp, work experience
 - Cultural event
 - Arrival or departure of an immediate relative from overseas

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Maintain electronic record of student attendance and absenteeism at the start of each half day, i.e., 8.45 and 1.30pm.
2. Monitor student absenteeism and contact parents/caregivers when a concerning pattern arises.
3. Consult with Principal for concerning absenteeism that remain unresolved or ongoing.
4. As far as is reasonably possible the whereabouts (and safety) of those absent will be established, and their safety and wellbeing ensured.

ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The classroom teacher will use their electronic roll to mark attendance at the beginning of the school day and after lunch.
2. Students who are not present during the marking of attendance are to be recorded as absent. Relief teachers will have a physical list which is to be referred to the school receptionist in the school office.
3. Students who arrive after the beginning of the school day are to report to the school office prior to going to class where the school receptionist will change their status from absent too late.
4. When a student is marked absent from school, the school receptionist is to check if the school has been notified of the student's absence in writing or phone by the parent or guardian. This check is to occur as early as possible on the same day that the student has been marked as absent.
5. The school receptionist is to follow up each absence with a phone call.
6. Student attendance figures will appear on a student's Semester Report.



STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

1. Parents or guardians are to notify the school office if their student is leaving school during school hours.
2. The school receptionist will inform the classroom teacher if a student is going to leave school during school hours.
3. The classroom teacher will send the student to the school office at the time of departure.
4. Students returning to school after an appointment are to report back to the school office to obtain an appointment slip before returning to the classroom.
5. If a student returning to class after an appointment does not have an appointment slip, teacher is to send student back to the school office to receive one.

SHORT-TERM ABSENCES - 1 or 2 days

Caregivers are asked to notify reason for absence, on, or before, the day of absence.

LONG-TERM ABSENCES - 3 or more days

Parent/caregivers are asked to notify reason for absence on, or before, the period of absenteeism. If the reason is sickness, the Principal or teacher must be satisfied with the reason and believe it to be true; otherwise, caregivers are expected to provide a Doctor's Certificate (for 3 days or more).

LONGER-TERM ABSENCES

Parents/caregivers are encouraged not to withdraw their children from school for family holidays. If this is necessary, parents should discuss these absences with the Principal or Deputy.

When students are unavoidably absent for a long period of time, where possible the school will provide details of work for students to go on with.

Note that neither the school nor caregivers have the authority to vary the attendance requirements as detailed in the Education Act 1999.

ATTENDANCE ISSUES DUE TO ILLNESS/SAFETY

The school will ensure that for students with attendance issues, the learning and support needs of the student are addressed by consulting with the parents. For students with frequent absences, explained as being due to illness, the school will:

- consult with parents regarding the health care needs of the student.
- seek medical certificates for the absences.
- collaboratively develop strategies aimed at addressing the student's learning and attendance at school.

Where safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns arise the school will:

- consult the Child Protection Policy (CP001) and its requirements.
- make necessary reports to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline or the Child Wellbeing Unit



ADDRESSING PERSISTENT STUDENT ABSENCE

1. The school will observe trends in student attendance which identify regular non-attendance without acceptable reason. The Principal will report on student attendance to the school committee noting identifiable trends and concerns.
2. The Principal or Deputy will notify the parent or guardian and request an explanation in cases of high level of, or regular absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is considered 10 days per term (80% attendance) without acceptable reason.
3. The Principal or Deputy will work with the parents to understand the reasons for ongoing regular absenteeism with the aim to restore attendance and protect the safety and wellbeing of the student.
4. If non-attendance is not resolved, the school will take reasonable steps to restore attendance; this may include working with AISWA consultants, notifying the local District Education Office Retention and Attendance Officer, contacting the Department of Communities: Child Protection and Family Support, or the Department of Justice.
5. Non-Attending students are to remain on the school's enrolment register; their non-attendance will continue to be recorded.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence:

- Lateness*
- Truancy
- Shopping expeditions with or without caregiver
- Haircuts
- Helping at home or at parent / caregiver's place of work
- Part-time or casual work (including travel to and from such work)
- Appointments which could be made out of school hours (including driving lessons / tests.
- Excessive time for appointments which are avoidable
- Holidays
- Sleeping in
- Minding younger siblings
- Minor family events such as birthdays

***LATENESS**

1. All school students who are late for the first scheduled lesson are required to report directly to the school office to receive a late note. If a student arrives to class late without a late note, teacher is to send student to front office to obtain one.
2. The school office maintains and tracks late records.
3. Acceptable reasons for lateness include parental written explanation, transport issues, compassionate issues, and other unavoidable reasons.
4. Persistently late students due to unacceptable reasons will be referred to the Principal who will set appropriate consequences.

STUDENTS MISSING FROM SCHOOL GROUNDS

1. If the student was known to have arrived at the school and absconds or cannot be found, the school property will be searched, and the parents phoned.



2. If the parent/caregiver cannot be contacted, the family emergency contacts will be phoned.
3. If the emergency contact cannot be contacted, the school will seek an explanation from the siblings, peers and friends of the absent child.
4. As last resort, if the school, the parents/guardians or next of kin cannot locate the student, the school will notify the police as soon as possible.
5. All instances in which a student leaves the school grounds without permission must be reported to the Principal or Deputy principal immediately. Where a student's personal safety is deemed to be at risk (e.g., young student) staff members have duty of care to try and find the student in order to return that student to safety. When an older student has left the school grounds without permission, the Principal or Deputy Principal is to alert the relevant parent or caregiver as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances and parental responses, it may be necessary to alert the police. In all cases a parent or care giver must be notified of the incident as soon as possible.

THE REMOVAL OF A STUDENT FROM THE ATTENDANCE RECORDS

1. Refer to Students' Whereabouts Unknown Policy (CP006) for further details.
2. Section 21 of the School Education Act 1999 gives the principal authority to remove a student's name from the school's attendance records when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the student is enrolled in another school, enrolled in home-schooling, is no longer resident in the state or has been granted an exemption under section 11.
3. A student can be regarded as 'missing' when they cannot be located, and their parent/guardian cannot be contacted, and the school has not received advice that the student is being educated elsewhere.
4. Under the Student Tracking System (STS), a cross-sectoral initiative involving public and private schools, 'missing' students must be reported to the Department of Education (DoE) Attendance Officer in the Regional Office who will advise whether the student needs to be referred to the STS Officer in DoE.
5. The STS Officer will authorise the removal of the student's name from the school's attendance records and recording on the Enrolment Register that the enrolment has ceased.

ARCHIVING STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE RECORDS

1. Current legislation requires enrolment and daily attendance records to be retained for 7 years after the student leaves the school. However longer retention periods have been adopted based on recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse, and the Australian Society of Archivists. Refer to Policy G006 Records management & its appendix 1 – JCSA Records Retention and Disposal Schedule for specific retention periods.
2. Daily attendance is recorded in an online database and backed up.