



IONA COLLEGE

Student Attendance Policy

Iona College is a Catholic Boys School conducted by the Missionary
Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Authors: Dean of Learning and Teaching/
Dean of Students

Iona College seeks to provide a dynamic Catholic learning community within the Oblate spirit, so that its members are faith-filled, resilient, courageous, well-balanced and prepared to make a difference

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Background

In partnership with parents, caregivers and other stakeholders, Iona College is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students which addresses their educational needs.

The Queensland Government states that *“each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age has a legal obligation to ensure their child is enrolled and attends a state school or non-state school, on every school day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse”* (det.qld.gov.au).

Iona College believes:

- Daily school attendance is important for success in education and to ensure young people don't fall behind, academically, socially or developmentally.
- Young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives.
- School participation maximises life opportunities by helping students to develop important skills, knowledge and values which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.
- Regular attendance at school, including retreats, camps and activities, enables students to develop a sense of belonging to a peer group and assists in building resilience and social skills.
- Inconsistent attendance is detrimental to children's progress, and holidays extended into term time are firmly discouraged for the same reason.
- School attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child is enrolled and attends school every day unless there is a reasonable excuse for the absence.

Acceptable reasons for student absences include:

- Illness.
- Family trauma or bereavement.
- Events of cultural significance.
- Participation in a school organised activity e.g. work experience.
- Representation in elite sporting/cultural activities e.g. Met East trials.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence are:

- Truancy.
- Shopping expeditions with or without caregiver.
- 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 haircuts, driving lessons / tests).
- Visiting family or friends.
- Family holidays.

Iona College strongly encourages families not to schedule holidays during school time. This minimises the disruption to student learning. If scheduling a holiday during school time is unavoidable, please read, complete and submit the forms available on the College website at

http://www.iona.qld.edu.au/images/stories/PDF/absence_term_time_2013.pdf



Notifying the College of Absences

From time to time a student may be absent from their educational program. To comply with their legal obligation to provide a satisfactory reason for these absences, parents should advise the College of their child's absence by calling the absentee line by 9.00 a.m. In addition, the student needs to bring a note explaining his absence on his first day back at school.

Absences that result in missed assessment:

Where a student's absence necessitates them missing a piece of assessment or an examination, the following must occur:

1. Parents must contact the absentee line by 9.00 am (as per usual procedure).
2. Assignments - The Year Level Coordinator (Years 5 and 6) or Head of Department (Years 7 to 12) must be contacted to explain the absence and negotiate alternative arrangements.
3. Examinations – Years 5 to 10 - The Year Level Coordinator (Years 5 and 6) or Head of Department (Years 7 to 10) must be contacted to explain the absence and negotiate alternative arrangements.
4. Examinations – Years 11 and 12 - The Dean of Learning and Teaching must be contacted in the case of a missed examination.
5. Upon return to school, students in Years 11 and 12 MUST supply a medical certificate outlining the dates he was incapacitated.

Regular Absences

Parents are requested to communicate with the school if their son is having difficulty attending school so that we can work in partnership to assist the student to re-engage in school. Parents should be aware that if school attendance falls below acceptable levels, they may be asked to attend an interview to discuss their son's enrolment.

Student Responsibilities

- Students are expected to be at school each and every day and ready for tutor group before the first bell at 8.25 a.m.
- All students are expected to attend classes punctually, according to their timetable, and to be fully prepared for work and learning.
- All students are to be accountable for their own attendance and participation.
- All students are expected to remain in class each lesson.
- Students are to remain at school during school hours unless they have permission from parents/carers or the school.
- Students are responsible to liaise with their teachers and ensure all missed school work is completed.

Students who arrive late

1. Students who are late to school must report to Student Reception to sign in and have their diaries stamped **before** they go to class. Failure to do this will mean the student is still recorded as absent and parents will be contacted to advise their child is not at school.
2. When parents are aware their child will be late (e.g. because of an appointment), the student should arrive on the day with a note from his parents explaining his lateness. For unavoidable delays (e.g. transport issues), the student must provide his tutor with a note on the following day.



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3. Students who arrive late to class must have a note in their diary explaining their lateness. When arriving at their classroom, they must knock and wait for permission before entering the room so as not to disrupt the lesson.
4. Persistently late students will be referred to their Head of House or have some other consequence imposed as determined appropriate by the Dean of Students.

Early Departures

Students who wish to leave the College early for any reason must provide a note to their Head of House who will then stamp and date their diary. Prior to their departure, the student must sign out at Student Reception.

College Responsibilities

While parents and caregivers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child(ren) attend school every day unless there is an acceptable reason, the College, as a part of its duty of care, monitors part or whole day absences.

The College will:

- Inform parents of their legal obligations in regard to enrolment and attendance.
- Implement strategies and work with other stakeholders to manage student enrolment, absences, chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy.
- Monitor student absences and identify when a student is absent for three or more consecutive days, or where there is a pattern of persistent unexplained absences, or where a student's attendance rate is reasonably considered unsatisfactory.
- Take reasonable steps to follow up unexplained absences as soon as possible or ideally within three days of the absence.
- Work with other stakeholders to re-engage students and their families with the aim of returning the students to school.

Students at Iona College are expected to exceed the state average of 91% attendance rate.

College Responses to Absences

When a student is absent without explanation the College will take the following actions:

- An SMS message or phone call will be made each day to parents of students who are absent without any notification from parents being received via the absentee line by 9.00 am.
- Where the student has been absent for 3 days or a pattern of absences has been identified, the parent will be contacted by the student's Year Level Coordinator (Years 5 and 6) or Head of House (Years 7 to 12) to discuss the reason for the student's absence.
- Where there is a persistent pattern of unexplained absences or absences without reasonable justification, a student's attendance can be considered unsatisfactory. The Rector or his delegate will contact the parent/guardian, requesting a meeting to discuss the reason for the absences. At this meeting, the College will discuss ways of supporting the student to re-engage with his schooling.
- If, after a period of time, the student is not attending school, a process discussing the student's continued enrolment at the College will be implemented.
- Students in Years 11 and 12 – If, through irregular attendance, a student enrolled in an Authority or Authority-registered course has displayed insufficient coverage of course content and/or failed to complete adequate assessment, semesters of credit may be reduced or the student may not have a level of achievement recorded at all. As per QCAA policy, students in this situation will be informed prior to the finishing day for Year 12.



Student Absences for other reasons:

Special Leave

Parents requesting special leave of three (3) or more days must put their request in writing and submit it **at least one month prior to the intended absence**. Where an absence will affect the student's completion of examinations, the Dean of Learning and Teaching will consider the request, however, parents should be aware of the College's Assessment Policy which clearly states the College is under no obligation to provide alternative arrangements for students who miss an examination for any purpose other than illness. Missed assessment in Years 11 and 12 could impact on a student's exit results and/or result in the student having insufficient course coverage or inadequate assessment which can result in the student's semesters of credit being reduced.

Under no circumstances are students allowed to sit examinations early.

Exam Blocks

During exam blocks, students in Years 11 and 12 are only expected to attend school during their designated examination times. They may also come onto the College grounds during this time for study purposes, to submit assessment tasks or to speak to a teacher. It is expected they wear full and correct college uniform whenever they are on the college grounds. There is no requirement for Years 11 and 12 students to sign in and out during exam block.