

## **The Hazard - Truancy**

Truancy is the absence from college of a school aged student, without the consent of parents/guardians, during college hours.

Common reasons for truancy include lack of engagement at the college, embarrassment and frustration at poor performance, fear of bullying or harassment, drug dependency, family stress or conflict, homelessness and defiance of authority.

Truancy can compound the problems of students who are already behind in class as a result of behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties. They gradually fall further behind in their studies and jeopardise their chances of completing their education.

This increases the risk of students dropping out of college, becoming involved in delinquency and criminal activity and ultimately, reducing their adult employment prospects.

## **Enrolment & Attendance Policies**

In line with our legal obligations, Thomas Carr College has developed detailed policies and procedures to manage our obligations relating to Enrolment and Attendance of Students. Refer to our Student Enrolment Policy and Student Attendance Policy.

This policy has been developed specifically to manage issues relating to truancy.

## **Thomas Carr College's Policy**

Thomas Carr College is committed to the management of regular college attendance and providing a safe and positive learning environment which promotes engagement and participation.

It is our policy that:

- All unauthorised absences from college are unacceptable;
- High expectations of attendance will be made known to all students;
- Processes for unexplained student absences are implemented to reduce absenteeism and ensure the safety of students;
- Truancy prevention strategies are developed and implemented with the college community considering the needs of students; and
- Early intervention strategies and family support programs will be provided.

## **Management of Non-Attendance - Immediate**

College absenteeism is monitored closely to identify students who are truanting.

To avoid suspicion, parents/guardians are required to contact the college prior to college commencement time to explain their child's absence, late arrival or request for early leave.

All teachers are required to take a roll call in every class. Any student absences are recorded by the class teacher.

Where a student is absent from the college, student reception reviews absentee notifications to identify any students that are absent where no notification of absence has been received from a parent/guardian.

Where a student is absent without explanation and cannot be located by 9.30am parents/guardians are forwarded a text message to their mobile phones in the following terms:

*Dear Parent your child [insert name] was absent from Thomas Carr College this morning. Please contact the Thomas Carr College absentee line on 8734 2400 to confirm [his/her] absence.*

## **Management of Non-Attendance - Parental Notifications**

Where parents repeatedly fail to notify the college of legitimate absences, the college will write a letter to parents requesting that they comply with the college's notification procedures.

In cases of serious non-compliance, the college may request that the parents/guardians attend a meeting with the Head of School or Deputy Principal to discuss the importance of parental notifications in ensuring the safety of all students.

## **Persistent Non-Attendance**

All students found to be truanting will be subject to the consequences as outlined in the Discipline – Student Policy.

Where absences are recurrent the college will investigate the student's absences having regard to factors such as the day of the week, the class, subject or year level and particular social group that may affect their attendance.

Parents/guardians will be contacted to discuss issues which may be related to truancy. Where appropriate, the college will work with the parents/guardians and the student to develop an Student Management Plan for Attendance.

## **Staff Responsibility**

All staff are responsible to ensure that:

- Students are made aware of the importance of regular attendance and notification of absences;
- Accurate records of student attendance are maintained; and
- Where they have suspicions relating to possible truant behaviour they raise this with their Year Level Co-ordinator.

## **Implementation**

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training;
- Development and implementation of a whole college strategy to encourage regular attendance and to reduce truancy;
- Implement strategies to address specific needs of each individual student, according to their reasons for truanting;
- Development and promotion of positive relationships within the college by implementing programs that develop social and emotional skills, peer tutoring, mentoring and anti-bullying strategies;
- Establishing positive home-college relationships to assist parents/guardians to support their child's attendance at school. Refer to Every Day Counts;
- Effective incident notification procedures;
- Effective communication procedures;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

## **Related Policies**

Attendance Policy

Positive Relations Policy

Code of Behaviour (Student) Policy

Counselling Services (Student) Policy

Discipline Policy

Enrolment Policy

Student Duty of Care (Summary) Policy

**Policy status:** New

**Key Stakeholders:** College staff, students and parents

**Endorsement Body:** College Executive

**Ratification Body:** College Board Policy

**Author:** Core Wellbeing Team

**Date of Approval:** 2017

Date of Scheduled Review: 2020

**The content of this policy can be changed at the College Board's discretion at any time without notification.**