



Dear Families

**RE: Student Attendance**

We would like to share some information regarding student attendance with our community. Under the School Education Act 1999, all schools are required to monitor attendance and intervene to support improved attendance for students at educational risk. Likewise, all parents are required to make their best efforts to ensure their children attend school. A basic benchmark for this is that anything below 90% attendance places a child at risk regarding education outcomes and maximizing social connection.

The outcomes of school non-attendance include:

- negative impacts on students’ academic achievement in the current year which can also impact subsequent years.
- increased social isolation for the student.
- a greater negative impact on young people’s outcomes when it is an unauthorised absence.
- a correlation with leaving school with fewer qualifications and reduced pathways options.

We know there are many reasons for non-attendance at school ranging from personal, medical, family, education, relationship and community factors. This makes school attendance and ongoing attendance rates a complex task in some households. Our goal is to promote strong school attendance and the importance of attending daily. We will work in partnership with families when low attendance occurs.

Our focus foremost is on prevention of educational risk due to low attendance, and we ask all parents to maintain the message with students that every day of attendance matters. This would include avoiding planning family events and holidays during the school term and ensuring attendance right up to the published final day of the term.

The College monitors attendance on a variety of levels with the understanding that attendance below 90% places a student at educational risk and we are obligated to act. We work in partnership with families to ensure appropriate attendance. The College ensures we have learning environments that are safe and foster belonging, and that appropriate challenge and support is provided to students. The family commits to making every effort for children to attend every day and notifies the school of any unexplained absences for our approval. We coordinate together regarding home and school strategies for students at significant risk due to attendance.

The chart below gives a breakdown of the amount of time missed in a year and if maintained, how it impacts the future education of the child.

Period of Absence	Rate of Attendance	Equivalent School Missed	Level of Educational Risk
Average 5 days per term	90%	1 year	Regular attendance
1 day per week	80%	2 years	Indicated at risk
1.5 days per week	70%	3 years	Moderate risk
2 days per week	60%	4 years	Moderate risk
3 days per week	50%	5 years	Severe risk
5 weeks per term	40%	6 years	Severe risk

Please be aware of the below in relation to absentees.

1. Parents must notify the College in writing to the Vice Principal of any planned absences. This will be used in times when families wish to have non-medical absences during the school term, including family holidays, elite sporting and departure prior to the end of term. If the absence is not approved, the College Assessment Policy is applied in secondary school, and this may adversely impact student grading and subsequent reflection in school reports.
2. Alongside ongoing attendance monitoring, the College will now distribute **formal communication** to all families mid-term and at the end-of-each term if their child's attendance has fallen below 90%. This is done with the awareness that attendance improvement plans may be in place, the Leader of Wellbeing may be aware of attendance reasons and challenges; and the trajectory of attendance may be improving. Regardless, attendance below 90% indicates an educational risk and we wish to acknowledge that. It also provides the College an opportunity to conduct a formal review our support in those cases.
3. For persistent or high-risk low attendance, the College will engage a case-management process, which will often result in formalising the attendance improvement strategies and support into an **Attendance Improvement Plan**.

We want to support our students to be at school every day. Here are a few points to consider what families can do and what the school can do to see our students at school.

**How can you help?**

- Plan holidays and family events for non-school days
- Try to schedule appointments for the end of the school day
- Make sure they go to school every day unless they are ill
- Ensure your child has a good routine before school, including sleep practices.

**How can we help?**

- Teachers show a genuine interest in your child's well-being and future success
- Teachers support your child to build positive relationships with other students
- Teachers support your child's learning with appropriate challenge and support
- Heads of Year monitor and support regarding wellbeing matters
- College Psychologists are available to provide triage and referral support regarding mental health needs.

Should you wish to discuss any of this further, for secondary please contact Simon Martino on [simon.martino@newman.wa.edu.au](mailto:simon.martino@newman.wa.edu.au) or for primary please contact Ryan von Bergheim on [ryan.vonbergheim@newman.wa.edu.au](mailto:ryan.vonbergheim@newman.wa.edu.au).

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



Lucie McCrory  
**VICE PRINCIPAL**

19 May 2023