Comet Bay College

Seek Excellence

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026

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Comet Bay College monitors the attendance of all students enrolled in school, identifies students with attendance barriers and implements appropriate measures with the aim of restoring regular attendance. Regular attendance is defined at 90% (and above). We are here to work together with students and families to resolve any barriers that stand in the way of positive attendance and engagement.

1. Attendance Procedures

School begins with a warning bell which sounds at 8.43am and students are expected to be in Period 1 ready to learn by 8.48am.

If your child is not attending school for the day, it is a legal requirement for any absence to be covered by a written explanation from the student's parent or legal guardian. The School Education Act 1999 requires that an explanation of a student's absence is provided within three school days from the start of the absence.

This can be done by doing one of the following:

- Add an Attendance Note via the Compass parent portal by 10.00am (preferred method).
- Email Cometbay.col.Attendance@education.wa.edu.au stating the student's name, year, date, and reason for the absence by 10.00am.

2. Approved absences

Acceptable reasons for not attending school

There are six acceptable reasons for not attending school, being late to school or leaving early. These reasons will be covered as an 'approved absence' from school.

- Medical Appointment
- Illness (the Principal may request a medical certificate for prolonged absences that are due to sickness or injury)
- Approved Educational Activity
- Approved Cultural or Religious Activity
- Approved Vacation (approval to be sought in advance)
- An unavoidable natural event such as flood waters or cyclones

The Principal reserves the right to request evidence of the student's absence.

3. Unapproved absences

Unapproved reasons for not attending school

There are several reasons that will be recorded as an 'unapproved absence' if a student is away from school, such as:

- celebrating a birthday,
- sleeping in or had a big weekend,
- looking after other children or dropping other children to school,
- sport or other recreational activities that have not been approved by the school, and/or
- appointments that could be made outside of school hours such as a haircut.

Missing school for any of the above reasons may also have an impact on the student's Good Standing at the college and could impact Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY payments.

Please refer to the 'Assessment Policy' for the impact of an unapproved absence on the student's academic record, including missed assessments.

4. Late to school

When a student arrives late to school, they must sign in at Checkpoint. The parent or legal guardian should have provided the school with a reason for the student's lateness, via Compass, email, phone or a written note. As stated above, the late will either be a reason that is approved or unapproved. If the student continues to be late to school for no valid reason and despite intervention, they may lose their Good Standing. The Principal reserves the right to request evidence of approved reasons for a student's lateness.

5. Leaving school during the day

If the student needs to leave school early for any reason, the parent or legal guardian is required to provide the College with a reason for leaving early via Compass, email or phone call. Students will be provided with a "Green Slip" indicating the time to leave class and they should sign out at Checkpoint. Students will be provided with a departure pass to indicate they are legitimately dismissed from school. If the student returns to school after the appointment the student must go back through Checkpoint on arrival to school. The student's early absence will either be approved or unapproved depending on the reason why the student is leaving early.

6. If a student feels unwell or gets injured at school

If a student feels unwell or gets injured during the day, they will attend Student Support for assessment. Student Support or the First Aid Officer will sign out the unwell or injured child with the parent or legal guardians' permission. Students must not ring/text home on their mobile phone. If you receive a text/call from your child during the school day complaining of feeling unwell, parents are requested to remind their child of this process. This will be an approved absence.

7. Late to class – Chronicle tag

If a student is consistently late to their subject classes throughout the day for no valid reason, they will be issued with recess or lunch detentions by the classroom teacher or Dean of Learning Area to make up the loss of learning time. Ongoing refusal to attend class on time will also result in a loss of Good Standing.

8. Left class without permission – Chronicle tag

If students leave class without permission, this will be communicated to parents via an email. Teachers will follow up with students and issue consequences as appropriate to the context. Ongoing patterns of this behaviour may result in a loss of Good Standing.

9. Class avoidance or refusal/ onsite truancy - Chronicle tag

Students are timetabled into classes each day, it is the student's responsibility to attend these timetabled classes. Students are not permitted to miss classes without permission or wander around Comet Bay College grounds during class time without permission. When staff find students wandering, they will escort them to a buddy room for supervision for the remainder of the lesson and send an email home to parents regarding them being truant from class. Refusal to follow staff instructions, can result in after school detention. Ongoing refusal to attend class, despite intervention, will also result in a loss of Good Standing.

10. Truancy

Leaving school without a parent or legal guardian's permission will be considered truancy and will be treated as a breach of school discipline. Detentions including recess, lunch and after school will be issued to students who truant to make up the loss of learning time. Ongoing truancy despite intervention will result in a loss of Good Standing.

11. Students Whereabouts Unknown (SWU)

A student who has not attended school for fifteen or more consecutive days and cannot be located and their parents cannot be contacted, may be referred to Regional Office for support and assistance in locating the student.

12. Section 24

Students are eligible for a section 24 alternative attendance arrangement if:

- they are temporarily living in another location,
- they need to attend school in another location for all or part of a school week,
- it is unsafe for them to attend the school where they are enrolled, and/or
- they are enrolling with a community or training provider.

This includes students who temporarily attend:

- another school,
- a public registered training provider (formerly TAFE) or private registered training organisation (RTO),
- a community-based course including therapy, and/or
- School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health.

13. Notice of Arrangement (NOA)

For students in the final 2 years of their compulsory education period (Year 11 or 12) a 'Notice of Arrangement' is needed to approve an alternative full-time option or combination of activities that would be the equivalent to full-time schooling. If the option is with a private registered training organisation, that organisation will need to complete the relevant section of the notice as well as the parent. If the option includes employment, the employer will need to complete the relevant section of the notice as well as the parent. Once NOA has been approved for a student, they will be moved to the Former roll.

14. Exemption

Parents can apply for an exemption (under Section 11 of the School Education Act 1999) for their child to participate in activities other than full-time schooling. If the legal requirements are met, exemptions can be granted for:

- students in (or about to begin) Year 10 or who will reach the age of 15 years and 6 months in the year for which an exemption is sought, or
- students in Year 11 or 12 for who a Notice of Arrangement can't be used.

Students on an approved exemption will have their attendance recorded as E (Educational activity). Students on an approved exemption will have regular engagement with the Participation Officer until the conclusion of their expected formal schooling or they are moved to the Former roll.

15. Home Visits

Where student attendance is of a concern and efforts to contact and engage the family in improving attendance has been limited, school staff may inform the family of the intention to conduct a home visit. The home visit is intended to facilitate planning to improve attendance.

16. Responsible parenting agreement

School staff can develop a responsible parenting agreement (RPA) to support student attendance at school with parents and external stakeholders. An RPA sets out agreed actions to improve a student's attendance or behaviour at school.

17. Communication Schedules

The College uses several strategies to keep families informed about attendance. Parents will receive automated SMS messages from Compass as follows:

XXXX is marked absent for one or more periods today. Submit an absence note here: {attendanceUrl}	3pm SMS
XXXX has been marked absent for one or more periods as of 11am. Click here to explain absence: {attendanceUrl} or contact 9553 8100.	11.15am

The following schedule is used for formal letter communications:

Term and Week	Letter	Purpose	Person(s) responsible
Each Term in Weeks 3, 6, 9	Unexplained absences	Requests parents to provide explanations for absences	Attendance Officer
Each Term in Weeks 3 & 7	Pending home visit	Informs parents of intention to conduct home visit within the next two weeks	Head of Student Support
Each Term in Week 10	Letter of Attendance commendation	Informs parents of attendance over 95% - students are additionally rewarded with House Points	Attendance Officer
Terms 1-3 Week 10	Letter of attendance rate	Informs parents of attendance concern for rates below 88% lower school and below 85% upper school	Attendance Officer and Student Support Year Coordinator/Head of Student Support

18. Attendance Promotion Strategies

The College engages in several strategies to promote, improve and celebrate attendance.

Attendance Week

Attendance Week will be advertised at the commencement of each school year. In this week, students will receive rewards and recognition for engaging in specific activities.

Attendance Commendation Letters

The College sends commendation letters to students and their families who have over 95% attendance for each term. These students also receive 10 House Points as a recognition of their efforts.

Attendance Champions

Students with attendance rates of over 98% attendance in each term will receive an acknowledgment of their achievement.

If students are recognised as Attendance Champions in every term of the school year, they will go into a prize draw for the Major Attendance Award.