



9 April 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians

Every year we have parents request, or sometimes simply tell us, that they wish to take their children out of the College during term time. The reasons are many and varied including, early or extended holidays, family weddings or overseas trips. Upon receipt of such requests, our Heads of Campus have been instructed to write to parents outlining the College policy in this regard. In short, the College does not condone student absence during term time as it is a breach of the Education Act, which clearly states that every child of school age must attend school every day of the school year.

The following extract from the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (as at 6 January 2014) makes it very clear what is required regarding student attendance:

*Section 176 Obligation of each parent*

1. *Each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age must-*
  - a. *ensure the child is enrolled in a state school or non-state school; and*
  - b. *ensure the child attends the state school or non-state school, on every day, for the educational program, in which the child is enrolled;*

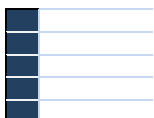
*unless the parent has a reasonable excuse\*.*

\*Please note that a reasonable excuse as defined in the Act **does not** include extended or off peak holidays, family trips, events or functions, which are the usual reasons we are given why parents are taking their children out of the College during term time.

Further, *Sections 176 and 178* (See Appendix 1) outline possible penalties and follow up for parents who breach the Act.

The College is bound by the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, and we therefore do not condone non-essential absences during the time when our Educational program is being delivered. To do so would be to breach Section 176 of the Act. Further, please understand that the College will **not** be providing additional work, or making alternate assessment arrangements for students who are not in attendance due to breaches of this Act. Students are likely to be given **no grade** for any assessment missed due to breaches of the Act.

As you are all aware, the College receives State and Federal government funding in addition to fees paid by parents. In March 2014, the College was audited by the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board regarding our enrolments and student attendance. These audits are conducted randomly across the state with little notice. Unfortunately, this audit revealed that despite the College informing some parents directly that we did not condone students taking extended holidays, there were a small number of students who had not attended the College for sufficient days in the period under review to qualify



for State Government funding. As a result, the College will potentially lose over \$8,000 in recurrent funding. This is very difficult in an economic climate that is so tight and most unfair on the majority of parents who do the right thing by sending their children to the College every day (unless they are ill). This action has resulted in a proposed change in College Policy to be considered by the College Council in April, that will see any shortfall in funding incurred as a result of non-compliance with the law, being passed on to parents. Like all independent schools, our budgets are set based on known contributions from parents and State and Federal governments.

It is important that all parents understand your legal obligations under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 regarding your child's attendance at the College, and that you do not seek permission to take your child out of the College during term time. Please do not put your child in a position where they are missing vital school work/assessment and do not take offence when our response to such a request is met with a letter reminding you of your obligations.

Yours sincerely



Dr Mark Sly  
**PRINCIPAL**

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## **Appendix 1**

### *Section 176 (Contd)*

#### *Maximum penalty-*

- a. for a first offence 6 penalty units; or*
- b. for a second or subsequent offence, whether or not relating to the same child of the parent – 12 penalty units.*

#### *Section 178 Notice to, and meeting with, parent*

- 1. This section applies, if an authorised officer reasonably suspects-*
  - a. a child who is of compulsory school age*
    - i. is not enrolled in a state school, or non-state school; or*
    - ii. is not attending the state school or non-state school in which the child is enrolled, on every day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled*
- 2. The officer may give a parent of the child a notice in the approved form about the parent's obligation under Section 176(1)*
- 3. The officer may also meet with the parent to discuss the obligation.*
- 4. If, despite the officer taking reasonable steps to meet with the parent under subsection (3), no meeting is held, the officer may give the parent a warning notice in the approved form.*
- 5. For the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act (2000), Section 14, an authorised officer acting under this section is a public official performing a function authorised under this Act.*