ATTENDANCE POLICY
VISION

St. Francis Xavier College is a Catholic community that is educative and supportive. We have a clear purpose: the development of a person of competence, conscience and compassion formed in the Christian tradition; one who is guided by a sense of hope and self-belief and who will be of service in the world. We recognise God’s presence in our lives by celebrating and pursuing personal excellence and by living courageously with optimism and respect for all.

We cannot teach students who are not at school. Under the Education Act of 1958 and the Community Welfare Services Act of 1970, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure regular school attendance of their children aged between 6 and 15 years. The College Attendance Policy has been developed to:

- maximise learning opportunities
- enable students to strive for excellence
- promote a commitment to education
- facilitate the authentication of students’ work
- enable duty of care by having adequate measures to promote student attendance

LATENESS

Students are expected to be at school in time for the commencement of morning Care Group. Students who arrive late for school must report to Student Reception. They will be issued with a Late Pass in the student diary, on which will be noted the time of arrival and the reason supplied by the student. This Late Pass must be presented to the class teacher on arrival and taken home for a parent/guardian to sign that evening. It should then be given to the Care Group teacher during Care Group the following morning. If a student knows that s/he will be late due to an appointment, a written note of explanation signed by a parent/guardian must be supplied. If a student is recorded as arriving late to school on several occasions in a term with no adequate reason, the student’s House Co-ordinator will organise a meeting with a parent/guardian to discuss concerns and to put in place suitable measures to promote punctuality and to prevent the lateness from re-occurring.

LEAVING COLLEGE GROUNDS

Permission to leave the College grounds during school hours will only be given if a written request from a parent/guardian is presented to the Care Group teacher before the requested absence. This note must then be presented to Student Reception before signing out. As far as possible, parents are encouraged to make appointments for doctors, dentists, etc outside of school hours. Students in Year 12 may leave early provided they have a scheduled study class in Period 4 and sign out at Student Reception.

ABSENCE

If a student is absent from school, a parent/guardian is expected to phone Student Reception by 9.30am and supply a written explanation to the Care Group teacher upon the student’s return to school. The College will send SMS messages to parents if a student is absent for morning roll call.

Amended April, 2009
Absence from school may have a significant effect upon a student’s learning. At the VCE level, the VCAA has clearly stated that ‘where a student has completed work but there has been a substantive breach of class attendance, the student may be awarded N for that study’. With this in mind, the College Attendance Policy for all students distinguishes between two types of absence from school: Approved and Unapproved.

‘Approved Absences’ are those for which a student has a legitimate reason for being absent from school. These include medical reasons (supported by a medical certificate), family emergencies (eg death in the family), school excursions and extraordinary family holidays (approved by the Principal in writing).

‘Unapproved Absences’ are those which do not fit any of the above categories.

The following conditions relating to absence from VCE classes apply:

- Students are permitted 4 days unapproved absence per semester with a note from a parent/guardian detailing the reasons for the absence.
- In the event of a family emergency, parents/guardians should contact the student’s House Co-ordinator or Head of Campus in order to discuss the reasons for the absence.
- Families are discouraged from organising vacations during the school term. Parents/guardians may apply directly in writing to the College Principal for an ‘approved absence’ for short periods of time but do so on the understanding that such absence may seriously compromise the student’s ability to satisfactorily complete a unit or units of work.
- Absence due to an official school activity will not be counted provided subject teachers are informed (by the student) in advance of the activity. This must take place via the permission form prepared by the staff member organising the activity.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and student to be aware of the student’s attendance record.
- If unapproved absences total more than 4 per semester, the student may be awarded an N for that unit. Students may redeem the attendance requirement provided the unapproved absences total no more than 6 per semester. (More than 6 unapproved absences = N)
- Redemption will be available only once per semester per subject. Redemption classes will be arranged as required.
- Any unapproved absence after redemption will mean an automatic N in that subject.
- Any student who receives one or more N results in a semester will have their promotion to the next unit of study / year level reviewed as per the guidelines set out in the Progression Policy.

ABSENCE AND SCHOOL ASSESSED WORK

- Students will be given appropriate notice (usually 2 school weeks) of the periods in which the assessment will take place.
- A student who is absent on the day an assessment task is due to be submitted or undertaken, a suitable note to the subject teacher from a parent/guardian detailing the reason for the absence must be provided.
- In the case of School Assessed Coursework (SACs) and School Assessed Tasks (SATs) at Unit 3/4 level, any absence for a medical reason must be supported by a medical certificate (covering the date of the absence), for the absence to be approved. If the student is absent on the day an outcomes task is due, his/her parent/guardian should telephone the school office before 8.45am and leave a
message for the Director of Learning, who will pass it on to the relevant subject teacher(s). If this does not happen, the student will receive a provisional N.

- If the absence is unapproved, the subject teacher whose assessment was missed will notify the House Co-ordinator (or Director of Learning). If, after appropriate discussion with the student and/or parents, the reason for the absence is deemed to be acceptable, the student will be allowed to do the coursework (either the same task or a similar task with the same constraints) at a suitable time. If the reason for the absence is deemed to be not acceptable, the student will not be allowed to do the coursework and will receive an N for that assessment on the report.

Further details regarding student absence and the VCE can be found in the VCE Handbook supplied to all VCE students and teachers at the commencement of each year.

**PARENT REQUESTS FOR LEAVE DURING TERM**

Adequate time is provided during term breaks for parents to arrange holidays with their children. However, there may arise circumstances which require parents to request leave for their children during the school term (eg. family commitments overseas). In such cases, parents are required to apply for permission to take in-term leave in writing from the Principal (see attached form). It is not our practice to provide school work during such absences. However, where permission is granted, VCE students must make every effort to find out what work will be covered during their absence and to ensure it is completed upon their return. Leave during Year 12 will only be granted in special circumstances, such as bereavement leave.
APPLICATION FOR HOLIDAYS DURING TERM
TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

Students enjoy more than 12 weeks holidays each year and therefore we do not encourage students to miss school unless there are extraordinary circumstances. We also acknowledge that there are occasions when family circumstances prevent attendance. VCE students are subject to regulations set by the VCAA regarding attendance for satisfactory completion of Units of Study. These considerations must be taken into account when arranging holidays.

STUDENT/S:

______________________________ Yr Level _______  House _______  Care Group _______
______________________________ Yr Level _______  House _______  Care Group _______
______________________________ Yr Level _______  House _______  Care Group _______
______________________________ Yr Level _______  House _______  Care Group _______

I/We request permission for students listed above to be absent from school for the following period:

Dates Absent: ____________________________ to ________________________(inclusive)

REASON FOR ABSENCE:

PLEASE NOTE, IF TRAVELLING INTERSTATE OR OVERSEAS PLEASE INDICATE DESTINATION.

______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Parent/Guardian Name: _____________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature: ___________________________
Date: ________________________________________

For Office Use Only:

APPROVED   NOT APPROVED

Amended April, 2009