



Wednesday 20 March 2024

Dear Families;

As a Dominican community, St Dominic's Priory College respects the sanctity of family. We support our students in the pursuit of opportunities that inspire confidence, celebrate togetherness, and provide experiences that expand horizons either inside or outside of the classroom. We understand that it is not always possible to confine these special moments within the dates of scheduled school holiday breaks.

However, as educators, we are legally obliged to remind our Community of the academic commitment to which school-aged children are expected to adhere. These parameters are set by the Department of Education and supported by non-government schools in compliance with the *Education and Children's Services Act 2019*, and associated *Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020*. In summary:

- Children must be continuously enrolled in a school or approved learning program from the age of 6 years until they turn 17 years of age.
- The College is legally required to maintain accurate attendance records, and report unexplained absences or habitual non-attendees.

To help achieve a healthy balance between the value of family time, with academic commitments, we encourage families to schedule their travel and special commitments outside of school term times, as much as possible. There are 14 weeks of holidays available to students each year. This includes an extended three-week break during the July school holidays.

A full Absentee Policy, as adapted from the SA Department of Education's Attendance Policy, was published in the 2024 College Planner, and can be accessed on our website [here](#).

Page 4-5 of the College Planner, further outline the process for reporting absences from school. In specific regard to **planned absences of three days or longer**, we remind families that an 'Approved Exemption Request' from the College Principal, is required. This request should be submitted:

- At least three weeks in advance.
- Via a letter or email, marked to the attention of the Principal, and submitted to:
 - vsinicropi@stdominics.sa.edu.au
 - OR; handed in to the College Office in a sealed envelope labelled "Attendance Exemption Request."

When considering an Approved Exemption to excuse your daughter/s from class for a length of time during term, we ask that you remain mindful of the following practicalities:

- The potential social and academic disadvantage of missing lessons.
- Teachers are not readily equipped, nor are they obligated, to provide schoolwork for students to take away, or engage with students remotely.
- Families remain responsible for the payment of School Fees during periods of absence.

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Where members of our Community have cause to engage with College Staff, or indeed each other - on matters of student attendance or otherwise - we encourage you to remain familiar with the College's suite of Community, and Student Wellbeing policies. These are indexed on our College website [here](#), and include a Code of Conduct for both Staff, and Parents.

I trust that families will find this information helpful, and invite feedback, or enquires, to be sent to the Principal's Assistant, Mrs Vanda Sinicropi via vsinicropi@stdominics.sa.edu.au; who will collate any concerns for the Leadership Team to review. I also personally invite you to consider coming along to a future Parents & Friends gathering, where you can have the opportunity to engage with College Leadership, as well as other parents, in an informal, yet informative and collaborative, setting. Meetings take place in the Adams Mayo Library between 7:30-9:00pm, twice per term. Upcoming dates include:

- Thursday 16 May (Week 3 of Term 2)
- Thursday 13 June (Week 7 of Term 2)
- Thursday 8 August (Week 3 of Term 3)
- Thursday 5 September (Week 7 of Term 3)

On behalf of the College's teaching staff, thank you for your commitment to your daughter's learning, and for the trust you have placed in St Dominic's to help prepare her for her future. May the last four weeks of term unfold kindly, and coming April holidays be a time for family and fun.

Kind regards,

Helen

Dr Helen Steele
COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

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