

**Student Attendance Policy**

**Philosophical Basis**

All children of school age must be enrolled at a registered school and attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction or seek enrolment for other approved tuition.

Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning.

**Purpose**

* To promote in partnership with parents the regular attendance of students
* To ensure that school staff are provided with information on attendance requirements and their obligation to monitor and promote regular attendance at school.
* To provide processes to actively support full student attendance.

**Guidelines**

* Ensuring that students attend school each day is the shared expectation of all parents/carers and the school.
* Students are expected to attend normal school hours every day of each term.
* The school must maintain attendance records and develop processes to support and maintain attendance.
* Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their education and social development.

**Implementation**

***Whole-school strategies***

* Articulate high expectations to all members of the school community
* Adopt consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence
* Send a notification on the day to all parents if their child is recorded absent without explanation
* Support parents to access the Sentral system to record upcoming absences and provide reasons
* Follow up student absences promptly and consistently
* Implement data driven attendance improvement strategies
* Create safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
* Provide early identification of, and supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance
* Link with local community groups and agencies to maximize program and individual support
* Provide a staged response to student absence
* Whole school modeling of punctuality
* Discussions on student attendance in staff meetings where required
* Implementation of effective transition programs including transitions within the school
* Individual Student Learning Plans (when appropriate) including attendance and punctuality and attendance goals
* Structures and activities encouraging parents/carers’ involvement in the life of the school
* Collaboration with other schools, community groups and agencies

***Intervention strategies for students with inconsistent attendance or chronic absence patterns***

* The follow up of individual student absences
* The development of collaborative relationships between teachers, students and parents/carers
* Inclusive practices such as the translation of materials, the use of interpreters and flexibility in meeting arrangements
* Organising attendance focused meetings with parents/carers and students
* Forming student support groups (when appropriate) to enable a coordinated response to support individual students and parents
* Individual student goal setting and data-driven improvement plans
* Formal procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended illness
* Positive and flexible support and follow-up with students on their return to school including the modification of learning outcomes where required
* Referring individual students and parents/carers to community agencies for additional support

***Family Holidays***

The school encourages families to take holidays within the school holiday periods. If students are absent for significant periods of time whilst on holiday with their family the teacher will provide guidance around educational tasks and activities the student can complete however the teacher will not be required to provide a formal structured curriculum program for the student.

***Monitoring Attendance***

The school must monitor attendance and absences at least half daily in order to:

* Meet legislative requirements
* Discharge the school’s Duty of Care for all students
* Assist calculation of the schools’ Student Resource Package (SRP) funding
* Enable School Councils to report on attendance annually

The school will use CASES21 to record student attendance.

Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation for their child’s absence from school and this must be recorded into the Sentral system with the reason (if any) given by the parent/guardian/carer.

The school must advise parents/carers on the day of any unexplained absences.

***Attendance follow up***

* If **within three days** of the initial absence, the parents/carers fail to provide an explanation, or the explanation is deemed unsatisfactory by the school, contact must be made with the parents/carers requesting a satisfactory explanation. A letter can be generated using CASES21 to support this process.
* If following contact via letter or email, the parents/carers’ explanation is deemed satisfactory the accurate cause of absence must be recorded and entered into CASES21
* Of **within10 days** of the initial absence there has been no satisfactory explanation provided, the absence should be recorded as an unexplained absence in CASES21 and must also be noted in the student’s file.
* Attendance meetings with parents should be convened following initial contact with the parents/carers, when a student’s attendance pattern is of concern to the school.

***Attendance meetings with students, parents/carers*** – are intended to:

* Review strategies initiated to support the student’s attendance and examine why non-attendance has not been resolved.
* Establish a shared understanding of accountability and strategies for improving the attendance of the student.
* Focus on proactive solutions (rather than disciplinary)
* Initiate transparent and immediate action (if appropriate) in response to any problems identified by the parents/carers, or the student.

***Student Support Group***

For on-going intensive support of students a student support group should be convened by the Principal (or nominee) and attended by relevant school support staff, relevant teachers, relevant school student service support staff, parents/carers and the student if appropriate.

Professionals from other agencies may also attend as appropriate with the permission of the parents/carers.

The purposes of this meeting are to:

* Ensure that the parents/carers are aware of the absences and fully appreciate the educational implications for the student
* Identify the reasons for the student’s absences and fully appreciate the educational implications for the student
* Develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan and/or Individual Learning Plan

The Student Support Group may also initiate referrals to community support agencies for specialist interventions delivered in partnership with the Student Support Group

A Return to School Plan can be implemented to assist in the reintegration of the student after a prolonged absence. This plan should be developed with the parents/carers and student (if appropriate)

***Student Attendance Exemptions***

Exemptions from school attendance may be granted in some circumstances. All applications for exemptions to the Department of Education and Training (DET) are granted on a case by case basis with the child’s best interests as the guiding principle.

***Home Schooling***

Home schooling in Victoria is a legally recognized alternative to attending a registered school during the compulsory years of schooling. Parents/carers who decide to educate their child from a home base assume overall responsibility for their child’s educational program.

Principals should inform parents/carers in such situations of their legal responsibilities and ensure that the information about the child/children is recorded on CASES21 as an exit destination.

***School Policies which underpin this policy:***

* Behaviour Management Policy
* Duty of Care Policy
* Mandatory Reporting Policy
* Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

***Date approved by School Council: 2018***