Attendance POLICY

Rationale
International research demonstrates a strong correlation between students’ learning, long-term life outcomes, attendance at school and appropriate participation in education programs. For this reason, the Department of Education and Training has very clear policies and guidelines in relation to student attendance at school. These policies are the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 and the Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013.

The Victorian Government’s ‘Every Day Counts’ initiative promotes the fact that regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development. Children with attendance of 80% or less (that is 40 days or more absenteeism) may be significantly disadvantaged in their learning.

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Regional Director.

Aim
• To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

Implementation
• Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find ‘catching up’ difficult.
• Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.
• All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
• Illness, accidents, religious events or obligations and other unforeseeable circumstances are reasonable grounds for an absence - shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.
• Parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
• Parents/guardians have a further responsibility to provide either a written note or medical certificate explaining the reason for the absence upon their child’s return by returning a completed absence form (see Form 1) to the school explaining why the absence has occurred. Alternatively, the school may be contacted by phone (5998 8323) on the day of the absence.
• The school will promote the Department of Education and Training’s initiative of ‘Every Day Counts’.
• As per the ‘Every Day Counts’ initiative and School Attendance Guidelines, students must achieve...
a minimum of 80% attendance for automatic promotion to the next year level.

- Parents/guardians should notify the school in writing prior to any anticipated extended absence.
- Students taking extended absences (more than 5 days) from school must have a Student Absence Plan to support their education, which is prepared by the classroom teacher.
- Parents/guardians will be notified if their child’s extended absence will impact on their ability to be promoted to the next year level.
- Students who are late for school disrupt the class and often miss vital work or instruction at the start of the day.
- The cut off time for late arrivals is **9.10am**. After 9.10am students will be recorded as being late for school.
- The parent/guardian of a student arriving late for school must sign their child in at the Office and their late arrival will be recorded on the daily attendance roll.
- Parents/guardians must provide a reason for their child arriving late to school.
- The class teacher will notify the Principal of students who are consistently late to school. The class teacher will follow up with parents/guardians to seek their support and cooperation. If the lateness continues the school’s Welfare Officer and/or the Principal will follow up with the family.
- Staff will be encouraged to recognise their role and responsibility to follow up absentees in their class and request written notification or explanation from parents/guardians for all student absences.
- On the third day of consecutive unexplained absences, the class teacher will contact the parent/guardian. If unable to do so the teacher will notify the Principal who will endeavour to contact the family. If contact cannot be made after continued absence, the Principal will notify the Regional Office.
- Where no explanation is received from the parents/guardians the school will record an absence as an unexplained absence.
- The Principal/Leadership Team has the responsibility of ensuring that unexplained absences are investigated and high levels of absenteeism are explained by the parent/guardian (see Form 2).
- All absence notes and records of communication must be retained and stored at the school for auditing purposes by the Department of Education and Training.
- All student absences must be recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers and aggregated on the CASES database and communicated to the Department of Education and Training.
- The Department of Education and Training and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- The Principal will ensure parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences are contacted, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance, will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Human Services.
- Students with excellent attendance records (i.e. 5 days or less absence at the end of Semester 1 and 10 days or less absence at the end of Semester 2) will be recognised.
• Posters encouraging school attendance will feature prominently around the school, while regular reminders about the importance of student attendance at school will be included in the school newsletter.

• Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports, as well as the number of days students have arrived late to school.

• Aggregated student attendance data will be reported to the Department of Education and Training and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

References


Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years or as deemed necessary.
Dear .................................................................

As the parent/guardian of ............................................................ in Grade ............

I wish to advise the absence on .................................................................

was due to ..............................................................................................

.............................................................................................................

Parent Signature .................................................................
Date ………………………………………

Dear Parent/Guardian

It has been brought to my attention that your child …………………………………….. has been absent from school recently and has not yet provided a written note explaining the reason for the absence.

The date/s of the absence/s are:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

It is an Education Department requirement that students provide a note from parents explaining all absences. Therefore, you are required to provide a note covering the above absence/s from school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

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Allan Armstrong

Principal