



Attendance

POLICY

Rationale

In Victoria, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance at school is important for all children and young people to allow them to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Aim

- To ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction.
- To ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.
- To explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Cardinia Primary School has in place to:
 - * support, monitor and maintain student attendance.
 - * record, monitor and follow up student absences.

Scope

- This policy applies to all students at Cardinia Primary School.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's School Attendance Guidelines. It does not replace or change the obligations of Cardinia Primary School, parents, School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Definition

Parent includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parent responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

Implementation

- Students are expected to attend Cardinia Primary School during normal school hours every day of each term unless:
 - * there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student;
 - * the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment at Cardinia Primary School;
 - * the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Cardinia Primary School for particular activities.

- Both the school and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.
- Cardinia Primary School believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance.
- Our school will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.
- Students at Cardinia Primary School are encouraged to attend school every day, arrive on time and be prepared to learn. Students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues affecting their attendance.
- Parents at Cardinia Primary School are encouraged to ensure their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicate openly with the school and provide valid explanations for any absence.
- The school encourages parents to communicate with the relevant staff at Cardinia Primary School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- Parents will provide a reasonable excuse for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.

Supporting and promoting attendance

- Cardinia Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.
- Our school promotes student attendance through the use of reward programs and by placing items regularly in the school's newsletter.

Recording attendance

- Cardinia Primary School will record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:
 - * meet legislative requirements;
 - * discharge Cardinia Primary School's duty of care for all students.
- Attendance will be recorded in accordance with the school's *Attendance Management Procedures*.

Recording absences

- For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.
- Parents should notify Cardinia Primary School of absences by sending an email to the school's email address – cardinia.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au .
- If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, the school's *Attendance Management Procedures* will be followed.
- Cardinia Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The Principal will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purpose of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.
- The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:
 - * medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or

appropriate;

- * bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business;
 - * school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes and support the student's return to school;
 - * cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance; and
 - * family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance.
- Parents will be notified if the reason for the absence has not been excused.

Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

- Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than 5 days, Cardinia Primary School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:
 - * establishing an Attendance Student Support Group;
 - * implementing a Return to School Plan;
 - * implementing an Individual Education Plan;
 - * implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period; and
 - * arranging for assistance from external agencies if required.
- We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, will endeavour to provide this support when it is required.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

- If Cardinia Primary School decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the Southern Regional Office for further action.
- If, from multiple attempts to make contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the Principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:
 - * the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences and measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful;
 - * the student's whereabouts are unknown and the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days, or no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

References

- School Attendance Guidelines
- School Policy and Advisory Guide
Attendance

Evaluation

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

Ratified

As this is an operational policy it is not required to be ratified by School Council.