



SOPHIA  
MUNDI

The Inner City Steiner School P-12

# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Policy

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### 1.1 Background

Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational 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.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* sets out basic legal requirements for attendance. In Victoria, young people between six and 16 years of age (inclusive) must be enrolled in a registered school or registered for home schooling. Compulsory school aged students (six years and up to the age of 16 years) enrolled in a registered school are required to be in attendance at all times that the school is open for students.

While student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents/guardians, the school, in partnership with parents/guardians, students and the wider community, must provide active support for full student attendance and retention until the completion of Class 12 or its equivalent.

### 1.2 Definitions

#### 1.2.1 Educational Instruction

Delivery of appropriate education (programs) both in and beyond the classroom through a variety of contexts including a teacher, computer program etc.

#### 1.2.2 Education Program

An organised set of learning activities designed to enable a student to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes relevant to the student's individual needs.

#### 1.2.3 Parent

Includes guardians and carers and refers to a person who at law has responsibility for the care, welfare and development of a student.

#### 1.2.4 School Activity

An activity that is organised or managed by a staff member as part of his or her duties.

#### 1.2.5 School Community

All members of the school staff – both teaching and non-teaching, all students attending the school and all parents and family members.

#### 1.2.6 Student Engagement Policy

Articulates the school community's shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour. The policy supports the rights and articulates the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment.

#### 1.2.7 Whole School Approach

A whole school approach is cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed to improve student attendance, learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and the conditions that support these.

### 1.3 Relevant Legislation

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*

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## 2. Procedures

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### 2.1 Whole-School Strategies

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the school promotes and maintains high levels of student attendance and participation through:

- articulating high expectations to all members of the school community;
- adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence;
- following up student absences promptly and consistently;
- implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies;
- creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning;
- providing early identification of and supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance;
- linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support; and
- providing a staged response.

Successful whole-school approaches to attendance should identify effective prevention and early intervention strategies such as:

- clear written and verbal statements made regularly to parents/guardians and students about school and community attendance expectations;
- promotion of awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities;
- whole-school modelling of punctuality;
- delegation of responsibilities to all staff, with a key member of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives;
- regular discussions on student attendance in staff meetings and in the staff performance and development review process;
- understanding of the causal factors of absence, and the need for targeted interventions;
- implementation of effective and supportive transition programs, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school and pathways and careers support programs;
- class structures and environments that enable opportunities for increased connectedness to individual teachers and peers;
- Individual Student Learning Plans (Appendix A), including attendance and punctuality goals;
- provision of out-of-school programs including breakfast, homework and walking school bus programs;
- structures and activities encouraging parents/guardians' involvement in the life of the school; and
- collaborative and cooperative programs with other schools, community groups and agencies.

When a more targeted response is required, effective intervention strategies for students with inconsistent attendance or chronic absence patterns include:

- immediate follow up of individual student absences;
- developing collaborative and empowering relationships between teachers, students and parents/guardians;

- inclusive practices, such as the translation of materials, the use of interpreters and flexibility in meeting arrangements;
- organising attendance-focused meetings with parents/guardians and students;
- forming student support groups to enable a coordinated response to support for individual students and parents/guardians;
- individual student attendance goal setting and data-driven improvement plans;
- transparent and immediate follow up of any problems identified by students and parents/guardians;
- formal procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended period;
- positive and flexible support and follow up with students on their return to school, including the use of Return to School Plans (Appendix B) and modification of learning outcomes where required; and
- referring of individual students and parents/guardians to community agencies for additional support.

## 2.2 Shared Expectations for Attendance

Ensuring that students attend school each day is the shared expectation of all parents/guardians, students and the school. This should be underpinned by shared understandings and expectations about the procedures for the promotion, monitoring and follow up of student attendance. Attendance follow up procedures should identify the reason for a student's absence from school, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* describes a reasonable excuse for a student not attending school as being due to:

- illness, accident, an unforeseen event or an unavoidable cause;
- no government school within a prescribed distance of the child's residence and the child receiving a distance education program through a registered school;
- the child undertaking an educational program provided by a registered education and training organisation;
- the child being suspended or expelled and undertaking other educational programs provided by another registered school;
- the child's disobedience, not due to any fault of the parents/guardians;
- the child attending or observing a religious event or obligation as a result of a genuinely held belief of the child or child's parents/guardians; and
- exemption from attendance at school by the Minister for Education.

### 2.2.1 Expectations – Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are required to:

- ensure that their child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction;
- promote and provide organisational support to their child for full attendance and participation at school on all designated school days;
- ensure that their child is on time for school each day;
- notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence;
- notify the school in advance if an absence of any period is planned;
- support their child's learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan (Appendix C);
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school;
- work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence; and

- ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date.

### **2.2.2 Expectations – Students**

Students are expected to:

- attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction;
- arrive on time to school and to every class;
- provide a written explanation from their parents/guardians to their teachers when they have been absent from school;
- ascertain from their teachers what work has been missed during their absence and undertake that work, either at an arranged time or in their own time;
- remain on the school premises during school time unless they have the permission to leave from both the school and their parents/guardians;
- work with their teachers to develop learning activities to be included in the Student Absence Learning Plan and to be completed during a prolonged absence and
- work cooperatively with the school to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent.

### **2.2.3 Expectations – School**

The school is expected to:

- promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures;
- develop and implement rigorous and effective systems to record and monitor attendance;
- ensure that student attendance is recorded twice per day for primary classes and in every class for secondary classes;
- maintain accurate attendance records;
- ensure the prompt processing of student transfers by immediately contacting the student’s transferring school upon the student’s enrolment at their new school;
- monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly for early identification and the provision of timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school;
- monitor and follow up all individual cases of student absence promptly and consistently (the school has a duty of care to ensure that wherever possible, parents/guardians are aware of student absences on the same day of the absence), it is the School Executive Officer’s (SEO) responsibility to keep parents/guardians informed of the absence of post-compulsory age students;
- pursue and record an explanation for every absence;
- work collaboratively with parents/guardians and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time (this process should involve discussion with the parents/guardians about the possible impact of the proposed absence on the student’s learning, and the determination of an appropriate learning plan for the time spent away from school);
- convene a student support group meeting which is attendance focused with parents/guardians and students when a student’s attendance pattern is of concern to the school (the outcome of the meeting should lead to the development of an Individual Learning Plan to improve the student’s attendance); and
- provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/guardians has not been possible or if the student’s attendance pattern continues to be a problem after the initial student support group meeting.

## 2.3 Recording Attendance

The attendance roll is a permanent record of the attendance of all students. Recording student attendance is required by legislation as it is essential to:

- monitor the legal requirement for students between six and 16 years to attend school;
- discharge a school's duty of care for all students, including those over compulsory school age;
- monitor and follow up student absences;
- supply accurate information for the census audit and school funding purposes;
- provide accurate information for reporting; and
- support effective emergency management procedures.

Attendance records may be kept in either written or electronic form, however, if kept in electronic form they must be capable of being reproduced in written form. Attendance records (e.g. attendance registers, class rolls) must be kept for a period of seven years.

The school may use a database tool in order to support the school's management of student attendance by:

- providing the ability to record, manage and report on both half-day and period absences;
- providing access to absence data for follow-up of absences;
- providing attendance information to meet census and benchmark accountability reporting requirements; and
- enabling the school to categorise different reasons for absence.

It is important to accurately identify the reason for a student's absences as this will help shape a targeted response to support the student. Consistent use of absence categories enables the school to generate a range of reports that enables more effective analysis of student absence data. This allows the school to identify absence trends and implement both whole-school strategies and targeted support for individual students.

When students transfer schools, the transfer date to be recorded is the date that the student last attended classes at the transferring school.

It should be noted that there are attendance requirements for inclusion of students in the census count for purposes of calculating the school's funding.

## 2.4 Monitoring Attendance

All information received must be recorded using consistent procedures. Initially when a student absence is identified it should be recorded as unexplained unless an explanation has been provided. This record should be amended when a satisfactory explanation is provided following contact with parents/guardians.

When a student is absent, the parents/guardians are required to provide an explanation of the absence. This explanation should be provided to the Class Teacher/Guardian on the day of the absence and any unexplained absences must be followed up by the Class Teachers/Guardians promptly. Parents/guardians must forward a written explanation to the school when the student returns.

If the parents/guardians explanation for an absence is deemed satisfactory, the cause of absence must be recorded. Schools must take into account that a written excuse offered by parents/guardians is not necessarily a satisfactorily explained absence if the school does not accept the validity of that excuse.

All absence notes and records of communication must be retained and stored at the school for a minimum period of one year.

## 2.5 Attendance Follow-up

If, within three days of the initial absence, the parents/guardians fail to provide a written explanation, or the explanation provided is deemed unsatisfactory by the school, contact must again be made with the parents/guardians requesting a satisfactory explanation.

If, following contact via letter or email, the parents/guardians' explanation is deemed satisfactory, the accurate cause of absence must be recorded. If there has been no response or satisfactory explanation provided within 10 school days of the initial absence, the absence should be recorded as an unexplained absence and must also be **noted in the student's file**.

Attendance meetings with parents/guardians and students should be convened following initial contact with the parents/guardians, when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the school. The purpose of these meetings is to review strategies initiated to support the student's attendance and to examine why non-attendance has not been resolved. The meeting should establish a shared understanding of accountability and strategies for improving the attendance of the student. Ideally, the student should be involved in the process of problem identification and improvement goal setting. Meetings should be supportive rather than disciplinary and should focus on proactive solutions. It is important that transparent and immediate action is taken on any problems identified by the parents/guardians or the student.

For both informal and formal meetings with parents/guardians, the Principal needs to ensure that appropriate supports are provided (e.g. interpreters, advocates) in order to facilitate the involvement of parents/guardians.

### **2.5.1 Student Support Group**

For ongoing intensive support of students, a student support group should be convened by the Principal or representative and attended by relevant teachers, support staff, parents/guardians and the student (if appropriate). Professionals from other agencies (e.g. a youth worker) may also attend as appropriate with the permission of the parents/guardians.

The student support group aims to:

- ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of the absences and fully appreciate the educational implications for the student;
- develop an understanding of the child or young person and identify the reasons for the student's absences;
- utilise data collection and monitoring systems that will inform decision-making;
- identify the child or young person's learning, social, emotional, behavioural and environmental needs and the support or resources the student requires for improvement;
- involve key specialist learning and wellbeing support staff, for example support education staff and/or the school Chaplain;
- develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan and/or an Individual Learning Plan with the student's classroom teachers and ensure support to implement the plan; and
- support referrals to community support agencies for specialist interventions delivered in partnership with the student support group school strategies.

Meetings of student support groups must involve:

- Principal or delegate;
- student (as appropriate);
- student's Class Teacher/Guardian;
- parents/guardians; and
- professionals who have been supporting the student or their family, e.g. school Chaplain, psychologist, youth worker, etc.

Parents/guardians may be accompanied and supported by an advocate at a student support group meeting if they wish. Parents/guardians are required to organise the attendance of this advocate, who cannot act for a fee or reward. The role of the advocate is to provide emotional and moral support to the student and/or their parents/guardians and to act as a witness to the process of the student support group. The advocate should attend only as an observer, and should refrain from directing the process or answering questions on behalf of the student or their parents/guardians. The only circumstances in which the advocate should speak on behalf of or participate in the student support group is when a language or communication barrier has been previously identified by the student, their parents/guardians or the school.

### **2.5.2 Individual Learning Plans and Return to School Plans**

The purpose of an Individual Learning Plan is to develop and monitor an appropriate program of assistance and support for the student, and should include action such as:

- determining agreed expectations;
- establishing personal contact;
- increasing supervision of the student;
- providing personal support and counselling for the student;
- referring the student to support agencies; and
- making return-to-school arrangements and offering support.

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 student and parents/guardians and include information such as:

- the student's timetable;
- important school dates and times, including class commencement times;
- learning outcomes to be completed and due dates;
- the student's personal goals and strategies to improve attendance;
- the names and locations of contact teachers; and
- procedures for notification to the school for future absence.

## **2.6 Analysis of Attendance**

The Registrar is responsible for scrutinising all attendance records on a regular basis in order to identify any emerging or ongoing attendance issues.

Lateness for school, leaving early, skipping classes and truancy (irregular or infrequent attendance) are the most common manifestations of school absence and may be indicators that students are experiencing educational or social difficulties.

## **2.7 Data Collections**

The school is required to comply with requests from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to provide information on attendance.

## Appendix A Individual Learning Plan Template

### Individual Learning Plan Template (Appendix A)

Student name:	Date of birth:
Class:	Date:
<p>Review of progress should be based on collection and analysis of data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formal classroom and broader assessment data such as appropriate observation notes from teacher/s</li> <li>feedback from the student</li> <li>feedback from the parents/guardians</li> </ul> <p>All decisions regarding student learning should be based on a range of data sources. Individual Learning Plans aim to personalise the teaching and learning program, support improvement in identified areas and should be monitored and revised regularly.</p>	
<p>Learning improvement goals -</p> <p>Priority areas for improvement.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engagement</li> <li>attendance</li> <li>behaviour</li> </ul>	<p>Learning outcomes</p> <p>List relevant learning outcomes linked to the learning improvement goals.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engagement</li> <li>attendance</li> <li>behaviour</li> </ul>
<p>School and classroom strategies</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>revised pedagogy</li> <li>classroom learning interventions</li> <li>small group/individual support</li> <li>behaviour expectations</li> </ul>	<p>Parents/carex – expectations/support</p> <p>Identify in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expectations of parents/guardians</li> <li>level of support that can be provided by parents/guardians</li> <li>how the school can support parents/guardians</li> </ul>
<p>Processes for collection of data</p> <p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>data collection methods</li> <li>how progress will be measured</li> </ul> <p>Timeline for review and revision of plan</p> <p>Individual Learning Plans should be measured and modified regularly.</p>	
<p>Student's comments:</p>  <p>Class Teacher/ Guardian comments:</p>  <p>Parent's/guardian's comments:</p>	



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## Appendix B Attendance Improvement Plan or Return to School Plan Template

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### Attendance Improvement Plan or Return to School Plan Template (Appendix B)

Student name	
Class	Date
The work that I have missed and need to complete:	
Insert copy of students' timetable here.	
Goals to improve my attendance so that I achieve a ____ % attendance rate: 1. 2. 3.	
People I will go to when I need help:  Their locations:	
If I am absent for any reason my parent/guardian will contact the school on the first day of my absence  School phone:  If the school does not receive a message then my Class Teacher/Guardian will contact my home to see what has happened.  Parent/guardian phone:	
School Term Dates:  Student Free Days:  School will be closed to students on:	



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## Appendix C Student Absence Learning Plan Template

### Student Absence Learning Plan Template (Appendix C)

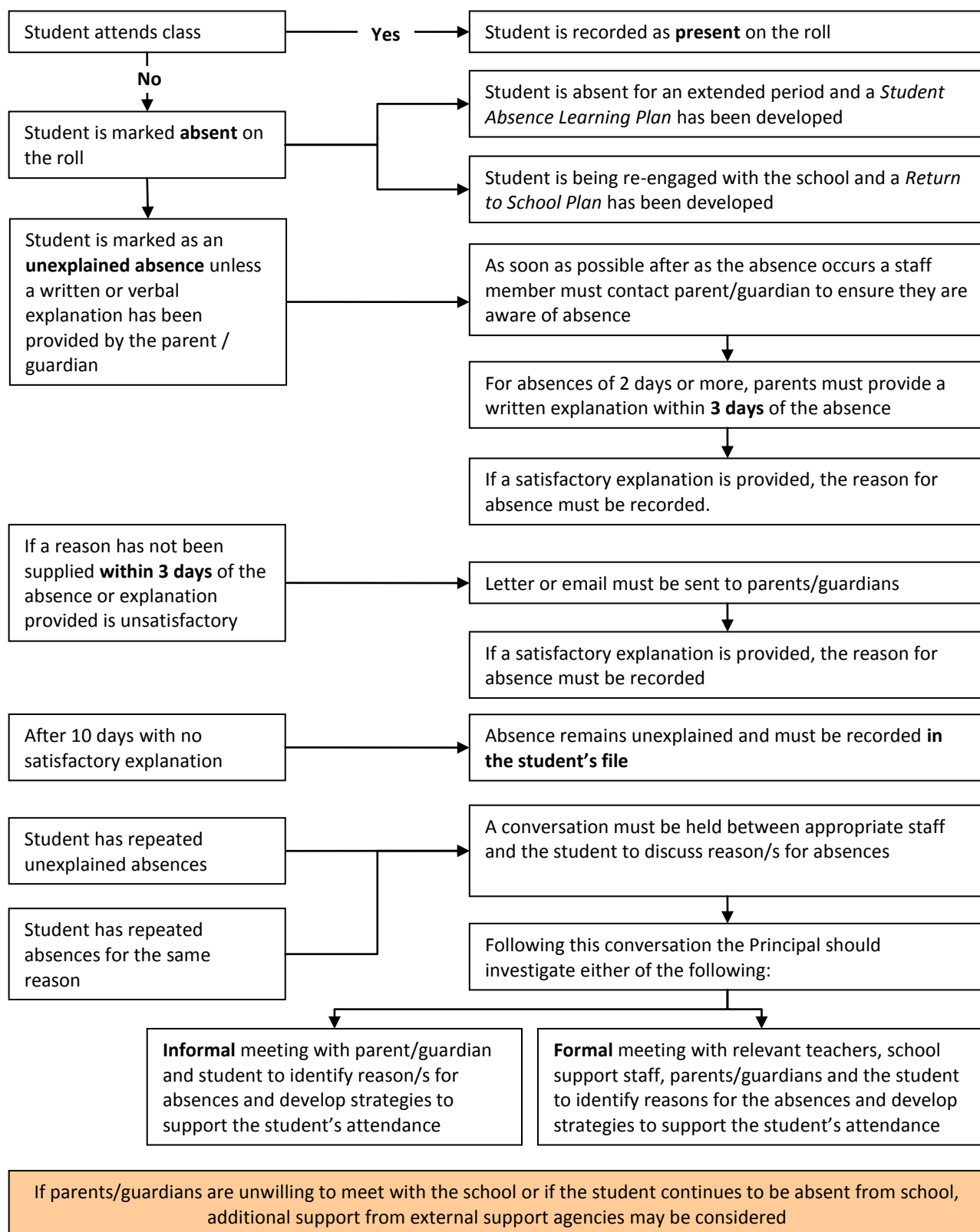
Students who are taking extended absences from school must have a Student Absence Learning Plan to support their education. This form may also be useful to develop a Return to School Plan for students who have been absent for an extended period.

Student name	
Class	Date
Reason for absence:	
Date of last day of school:	Date of return to school:
<p>Description of the educational program:</p> <p>Teachers/year-level coordinators should include elements of the learning program the student will be missing while away. The learning program should enable the student to more easily re-engage in class activities when they return.</p>	
<p>Activities for the student to undertake while away from school:</p> <p>For example, if a student is travelling, what research can they undertake, or what presentations can be prepared?</p>	
Outcomes for the student to achieve:	
Resources that the student may find useful:	
Agreed role of parents/guardians in supporting the absence learning program:	
Contact details for the student to stay in touch:	
Name of school contact person:	School phone number:
Signature of parent/guardian:	Signature of Principal:



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## Appendix D Process Map for Following up Absences



## Appendix E School Attendance Checklist

	Yes	No	Action
Rolls are completed accurately.			
There is effective monitoring of students, including period-by-period tracking where appropriate.			
Data is entered daily on electronic system.			
Absence codes are used accurately and consistently.			
Proper transfer and enrolment procedures are utilised.			
Data is maintained accurately.			
Attendance data is analysed regularly for early identification of non-attending students.			
Attendance is made a clear priority in the <i>School Strategic Plan</i> and the <i>Annual Implementation Plan</i> .			
Clear and achievable improvement strategies and targets are established.			
Data is analysed regularly to inform evaluation and planning of improvement strategies.			
Attendance expectations are clearly stated in the <i>Student Engagement Policy</i> .			
Staff recognise their role and responsibility in promoting and supporting good attendance			
Parents/guardians and students are regularly informed about school and community attendance expectations			
Parents/guardians and the school work in partnership to ensure immediate and apparent follow-up to student absence.			
Attendance meetings are held with parents/guardians and students and involve identification of improvement strategies			
Late arrivals are dealt with consistently.			
Parents/guardians notify the school about forthcoming extended absence.			
Inclusive practices are utilised, including the use of interpreters and provision of relevant documents translated into community languages			
Student support groups are established to enable multi-disciplinary support of individual students and their families.			
Appropriate protocols and procedures are established for outside referrals of students and their families.			
There is positive support for students returning from absence, including the use of Return to School Plans.			

## Appendix F Types of Absences

Code	Description	Counted	Further details of types of absence included
<b>Late arrival/early departure</b>			
111	Late arrival at school	No	Arrived late with parent/guardian approval.**
112	Early departure from school	No	Departed early with parent/guardian approval.**
113	Late arrival unexplained	No	Arrived late without parent/guardian approval.**
114	Early departure unexplained	No	Departed early without parent/guardian approval.**
116	Late arrival to class	No	Late arrival to class with parent/guardian approval.**
117	Early leaver from class	No	Departed early from class with parent/guardian approval.**
118	Late to class unexplained	No	Late arrival to class without parent/guardian approval.**
<b>Educational</b>			
600	Educational	No	Students attending an educational activity organised by the school. Includes alternate setting, language centre, social adjustment centre, Class 12 students attending classes at university, music class, attending a poetry competition, part home schooling and part attendance at school, external examinations, driver education school has organised.
601	Group activity	No	
602	Community service	No	Includes Class 9/10 doing Community Service.
603	Duty student	No	Student provides assistance in school somewhere, for example in office. Includes ground monitors.
604	Excursion	No	Excursion that is curriculum-related.
605	Special event	No	Includes special school students attending a Variety Club event.
606	Camp	No	
607	Other educational activity	No	Includes orientation day (for example, Class 6 students attending secondary school), exchange program/student, transition days.
608	TAFE	No	Includes attendance at TAFE, VET classes at TAFE, VET work placements, school-based apprenticeships, traineeships.
609	Work experience	No	
610	School production	No	Includes school play, school choir.
611	Sports	No	Includes sporting activity out of school, sports day, training for sports day.
612	Study leave	No	Includes VCE students given study leave, spare periods, no timetabled classes and student either stays on school site or leaves, no classes and students are supposed to study, private study, study pass, study periods.
802	Exempt	No	Includes end of year and some students (for example, Classes 11 and 12) permitted to leave school early, Prep attendance not required/Prep transition start, student is part-time and therefore not required to be there some of the time (for example, home schooling, part-time at a special school and part-time at a regular school, dual enrolment, member of school community dies and students stay at home or attend funeral as they wish, transition to adult setting).
<b>School decision</b>			
901	Industrial action	No	
902	Facility damage	No	Includes power going off for a day and students told to stay home.
903	Weather	No	Extreme weather conditions.
904	Staff meeting	No	Includes curriculum day, planning day, student-free day, report writing day, parent–teacher interviews, Prep interviewing/testing day.
<b>Health-related</b>			
200	Medical	Yes	Parent/guardian approved** and gave this health-related reason.
201	Illness	Yes	Parent/guardian approved** and gave this health-related reason.
202	Accident	Yes	Parent/guardian approved** and gave this health-related reason.

			Includes injury at school.
203	Counselling	Yes	Student receiving counselling externally.
204	Sick bay	No	Student in sick bay.
205	Medical appointment	Yes	Parent/guardian approved** and gave this health-related reason. Includes speech pathologist, optometrist.
206	Hospitalised	Yes	Parent/guardian approved** and gave this health-related reason
207	Quarantine	Yes	Parent/guardian approved** and gave this health-related reason. Includes school sores, head lice, chicken pox.
209	Dentist	Yes	Parent/guardian approved** and gave this health-related reason. Includes orthodontist.
210	Medical/welfare	Yes	Includes welfare activities, custody problem, DHS intervention, foster care, court attendance. Note: possible overlap with 200 Medical and 203 Counselling.
211	Bereavement	Yes	Includes funeral, death in family, absence due to a death.
<b>Unapproved absence</b>			
208	Refusal	Yes	Student refuses to attend and parents know and approve.
300	Truancy	Yes	Parents/guardians know about absence but do not approve, parents/guardians do not know about absence.
500	Unexplained	Yes	No parent/carer approval** and no reason from parents/carers or student.
<b>Discipline</b>			
400	Suspension – in-school/internal	No	Suspension that is internal only (usually student is sent out of class but is still at school).
401	Suspension – external	Yes	Suspended and not permitted to attend school. Includes expulsion in progress.
900	School choice	Yes	Asked to stay home for reasons other than suspension or illness and student is responsible as opposed to school (for example, out of uniform, sent home for disciplinary reasons but not suspended, problem with a teacher and parents/guardians can not visit school for a couple of days).
<b>Exited/transferred</b>			
701	Exit	No	Student is exiting, but until paper work is processed any absences recorded under Exit.
702	Transferred	No	Student is transferring to another school, but until paper work is processed any absence is recorded under Transferred. Also student is transferring into school.
<b>Parental choice</b>			
800	Parent choice	Yes	Includes parent/carer approved** but gave no reason, parent approved** and gave a reason but the reason is not health-related or extended family holiday or religious/cultural observance. Includes visiting relatives, going shopping, missed school bus, family matters, family member ill.
804	Extended family holidays	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this reason. Includes student is taken out of school to go on a family holiday.
805	Religious/Cultural observance	Yes	Parent/carer approved** and gave this reason. Includes student kept away from school for a religious or cultural observance reason.

**Student absence fits into the following categories:**

- 1 Illness/injury**
- 2 Truancy**  
Your child is absent from school without your knowledge
- 3 School Refusal**  
Your child does not want to attend school, even though you have tried
- 4 School Withdrawal**  
Your child does not attend school with your permission. For example, family holidays, baby-sitting, helping parents at home, working in the family business.

Parents and caregivers are powerful figures in influencing the behaviour of young people.

You play an important role in supporting your child to be safe and make informed choices.



# IT'S NOT OK TO BE AWAY

For more information schools can contact their DE&T regional office.



[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/welfare/attend.htm](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/welfare/attend.htm)



# IT'S NOT OK TO BE AWAY

**Attendance Information for Parents and Caregivers**

*School can give you a better future*



## Frequently asked questions

### What is my responsibility as a parent/caregiver?

Make sure your child:

- attends school on ALL school days
- is on time every day

Make sure you:

- provide the school with an explanation if your child is away
- contact the school if your child does not want to go to school
- arrange doctor and dentist appointments out of school hours
- arrange personal shopping trips with your son/daughter or birthday celebrations out of school hours
- do not allow your child to stay at home for minor reasons.

### Is regular attendance at school important?

- Yes – from the first day. If your child misses the basic skills in primary school they can experience difficulties with their learning
- Regular attendance is essential to make sure learning is not disrupted. Regular learning provides building blocks for the future
- Schools help children to develop important social skills, such as friendship building, teamwork, communication skills and a healthy self-esteem.

### What can I expect from the school?

- Monitoring of student attendance and review progress on a weekly basis
- Strategies to help you as a parent encourage your child to go to school.

### What help can I get if my child refuses to go to school or is truanting?

The school can offer a range of support options:

- teacher working with the student in a supportive, counselling role
- school student welfare co-ordinator working with the student
- provide a mentor for your child
- home visits to identify the problem and help work it through with parents
- identify reasons why your child doesn't want to go to school
- strategies to help you encourage your child to go to school
- develop an incentive program to encourage your child to attend school
- link with community agencies.

### Must I send my child to school every day?

Yes, unless:

- your child is too sick or injured to go to school
- your child has an infectious disease
- the principal is provided with any other genuine and acceptable reason for absence.

### Will my child be marked absent if they are doing a TAFE, VET or community program?

- No – as long as it is part of the school program.

### What if my child is involved in sport?

- No – as long as it is part of the school program.

### Do I need to let the school know if my child has been away?

- Yes – for the wellbeing of your child, Department of Education & Training has an attendance policy and teachers and schools are required to follow up student absences.



Let's pick up Chloe and hear about her day at school.