



Somerville Primary School

Attendance Policy

Policy Name:	Attendance	Date of approval:	09/2015
Responsible:	Assistant Principal	Expected review date:	2018

RATIONALE:

- 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 17 years of age must be enrolled in a registered school or registered for home schooling in accordance with the Act and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*.

AIMS:

- To maximise learning opportunities by ensuring student absenteeism is kept to a minimum.
- To put into place agreed processes for managing student absences within the school.
- To create a school culture that views regular school attendance and communicating student absences to the school as important.

SHARED EXPECTATIONS FOR ATTENDANCE:

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected 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.
- 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.
- Ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date.

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/carers to their teachers when they have been absent from school.
- Remain on the school premises during school time unless they are being collected from the school office by their parent/carer.
- Work with their teacher to develop learning activities to be included in the Student Work Pack and to be completed during a prolonged absence.
- Work cooperatively with the school to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent.

School

Schools are 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 daily.
- Maintain accurate attendance records on eCASES21 using appropriate codes.
- 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 and utilise the Student Mapping Tool for early identification and the provision of timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school.
- Pursue and record an explanation for every absence.
- Classroom teachers will contact parents on the student's second consecutive day of absence.
- Classroom teachers will record phone calls on Sentral.
- Classroom teachers will inform the Principal once a student has been absent for 10 days over the school year. The Principal will contact parents to discuss these absences.
- Student absence figures will appear on student mid-year and end of year reports.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and student to develop an agreed plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time. This process should involve discussion with the parents/carers 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/carers and students when a student's attendance pattern is of concern of the school. The outcome of the meeting should lead to the development of an Individual Learning Plan to improve the student's attendance.
- Provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/carers has not been possible or if the student's attendance pattern continues to be a problem after the initial student support group meeting.

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 6 and 17 years to attend school.
- Supply accurate information for the census audit and school funding purposes.
- Provide accurate information for reporting.
- Support effective emergency management procedures.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE:

All information received must be recorded using consistent procedures. Initially when a student absence is identified it should be recorded as unexplained in eCASES21 unless an explanation has been provided. This record should be amended when a satisfactory explanation is provided following contact with parents/carers.

When a student is absent, the parents/carers are required to provide an explanation of the absence. This explanation should be received on the day of the absence. A written explanation must be forwarded to the school when the student returns.

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

ATTENDANCE FOLLOW-UP:

If, within three days of the initial absence, the parents/carers have not provided an explanation contact must be made with the parents/carers requesting an explanation. A letter can be generated using eCASES21 to support this process.

If, following contact via letter or email 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 in eCASES21 and must also be noted in the student's file.

Attendance meetings with parents/carers and students should be convened following initial contact with the parents/carers, 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 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.

For ongoing intensive support of students, a Student Support Group should be convened by the principal and attended by relevant teachers, relevant school student service support staff, parents/carers and the student. Professionals from other agencies may also attend as appropriate with the permission of the parents/carers.

The purpose of this meeting is 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 develop an Individual Learning Plan.

When a school feels that they have exhausted all strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, the regional office should be contacted to provide additional advice and support.

EVALUATION:

- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and Training and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- Department of Education auditors will audit the school's student attendance records each year.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.