

Student Attendance Policy

Background

It is crucial that children develop habits of regular school attendance from an early age. International studies have found a strong correlation between students learning, longer-term life outcomes, attendance at school and appropriate participation in education programs.

Poor patterns of attendance place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential and render them disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations.

Purpose

To:

- Ensure all enrolled children attend school.
- Maximise learning opportunities by ensuring absenteeism of students is kept to a minimum at Huntingdale Primary School.
- Ensure Huntingdale Primary School has effective processes for managing student attendance.
- Comply with the Department of Education and Training (DET) policies and procedures.
- Maintain the DET values of leadership, respect, responsiveness, human rights, integrity, impartiality and accountability.

Implementation

- The Principal has the overall responsibility of implementing this policy, but may delegate certain roles to suitably qualified staff.

Attendance at school setting

- All students must attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction.
- If a student requires exemption from school attendance for a longer period of time (e.g. short term entertainment industry employment, for example acting) or a reduction in school attendance hours, this must be approved by the Regional Director. The following link outlines exemption categories and processes:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/attendanceexemption.aspx>
- Students do not have to attend school if participating in an agreed Home Schooling or Distance Education arrangement. The following links outlines the Home Schooling registration process:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/homeschool.aspx>
The following link outlines the Distance Education protocols: <http://www.distance.vic.edu.au/>



Marking Attendance, Advance notice of absence and Parent Notifications

- The school will use Grade Xpert to mark student attendance. A paper copy of the roll will also be available in the classroom folder in case of a computer malfunction or power outage.
- Each classroom will have a dedicated netbook to mark the attendance roll.
- Teachers must mark the roll by 9.10am and 2.40pm each day. This is a legal requirement.
- Students who are late must go to the Office to receive a blue slip to give to their classroom teacher. The Office Manager will access Grade Xpert to ensure the child's attendance has been marked correctly.
- The Office Manager will notify parents as soon as practical that their child is absent from school without reason. This will be done by SMS and if required a follow up telephone call or email.
- If parents know in advance that their child will be absent they are strongly urged to email the school via the Flexi Buzz APP, so this can be recorded.
- Any child who needs to leave the school early must come to the office to wait for their parents to sign them out using the online system.

Monitoring Attendance

- Each month the Office Manager will download CASES Reports on student attendance for the Leadership Team to peruse.
- Any concerns about student attendance will be raised with the classroom teacher.

Attendance Concerns

- If a child's attendance is of concern the Principal or Assistant Principal and classroom teacher should initially meet with the parents/caregivers to discuss the reasons for being absent.
- If attendance issues continue to be of concern, a student support group may be formed including the child's teacher, outside agencies, the child, the parents/care givers and Principal/Principal's Nominee to devise an Individual Education Plan focused on and/or attendance/return to school plan. Further details of this process can be found at:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/improvementstrategies.aspx>
- For instances of severe attendance concerns, the school may refer to an attendance officer. More information can be found at:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/attendanceofficers.aspx>

Roles and Responsibilities in School Attendance

At Huntingdale Primary School it is recognised that the school, teachers, parents, administration staff and students have a role in ensuring maximum student attendance and have the following responsibilities:

School

The school will:

- Develop policies and procedures to support student attendance.
- Maintain attendance records. (e.g. CASES21, Grade Xpert)
- Ensure attendance data forms part of each child's half year and end of year progress reports to parents.
- Communicate clearly to parents attendance expectations (including being punctual to school) in the newsletter.



- Sending out DET brochures about attendance
- Awarding classes with low absences and late arrivals at assembly.

Administration Staff

Administration staff will:

- Monitor late arrivals at school and enter this data on Grade Xpert.
- Notify parents as soon as possible on the day of their child's unexplained absence.
- Record any notifications of student absence via the school email onto Grade Xpert.
- Generate Grade Xpert absence letters each month to ask parents/guardians to explain absences that have not been reported to the school.
- Archive all student absence notes.
- Monitor that all attendance data has been exported into the CASES21 system.
- Print monthly attendance reports for the Leadership Team.

Teachers

Classroom teachers will:

- Mark the attendance roll by 9.10am and 2.40pm each day using Grade Xpert.
- Ensure that student absences are recorded using the correct codes.
- Ensure the roll is available in the classroom for casual replacement teachers to use in the event of teacher absence.
- Promote the importance of attendance in their grade.
- Closely monitor student attendance in their grade.
- Acknowledge students with excellent attendance.
- Follow up with parents (e.g. phone call) on students who have been absent for more than 3 days.
- Pass on absent notes to administration staff to be archived.
- Report to the Principal/Assistant Principal concerns about a student's high absenteeism.
- Actively participate in support group meetings for students with high absenteeism.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians must:

- Enrol a child of compulsory school-age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction or seek enrolment for approved tuition.
- Provide a written note, detailing the reason/s for their child's absence. These notes are to be given to the classroom teacher.
- Inform the school ahead of time of planned absences (e.g. family holiday) either using Flexi Buzz, an email or a note to the office.
- As much as possible schedule appointments outside of school time and not have days off for unnecessary events such as shopping or birthdays.
- Encourage their child to attend school and outline the benefits in doing so.
- Inform the school immediately of any attendance issues with their child.
- Work with the school to rectify any attendance issues with their child.



Students

Students should:

- Attend school every day.
- Inform their teacher/parents of any issues which may compromise their attendance at school.

Evaluation

CASES21 enrolment data and Attendance trends in the School Level Report will be used to monitor this policy.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 3 year cycle or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.

Document Status

Reviewed	School Council Ratification	Next Review
July 2018	August 14 th 2018	14 th August 2021