

Student Absences Policy

Rationale

By law all children aged between 6 and 17 in Victoria must be enrolled at a registered school or registered for home schooling unless they have a reasonable excuse.

School participation is important as it maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. It also helps children and young people to develop important skills, knowledge and values which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Failure to enrol a child at a registered school, or register them for home schooling, may result in the issue of a School Enrolment Notice, Infringement Notice or court proceedings.

From 1 January 2014, amendments to the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 came into effect in relation to the enforcement of compulsory school enrolment and attendance. This new legislation means that parents could receive an Infringement Notice if their child misses five full days of school in a year without a reasonable excuse. The new legislation has been formally implemented from 1 March 2014.

Guiding Principles

1. Students are expected to attend normal school hours every day of each term.
2. An exemption should be sought if the attendance expectation is reduced for a particular child.
3. A Principal or Regional Director (depending on the circumstances) may authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance to be exempt or reduced to less than full time
4. For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian should provide an explanation on each occasion and the school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.
5. DPS will maintain attendance records and develop policies to support and maintain attendance.

Note: The National Youth Participation Requirement requires that all young people under the age of 17 must complete year 10 and then participate full-time (25 hours per week, or as deemed full-time by the course provider) in approved education, training or employment; or a combination of these activities until they reach 17 years of age.

Attendance Records

DPS will record attendance and absences twice daily (9:00am and 1:00pm) in order to:

- meet legislative requirements
- assist calculation of the school's Student Resource Package (SRP) funding
- enable School Council to report on attendance annually
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements (for VCE students).
- DPS will use Sentral to record student attendance.

- Parents/guardians are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and the teacher or designated staff member will record the reason (if any) given by the parent/guardian.
- DPS will advise parents/guardians promptly of unexplained absences, including for post-compulsory aged students.
- Attendance and absence records will form part of each child's half year and end of year progress report to parents.
- Parents of absent students are required to provide a written, telephone or verbal reason for absence. Notes are to be retained by the class teacher and returned to the office at the end of each year.
- Any student/s, whose attendance falls under 90%, or who do not provide adequately explained absences, or whose absences appear unwarranted, will be flagged as an Attendance Concern on Sentral.
- The Principal will, after consulting with the teacher, attendance records and the student, decide upon a strategy to be employed. As truancy is often indicative of other problems including engagement and family issues, the support strategies employed by the Principal will be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, they may include:
 - Initial telephone contact with parents
 - Counselling sessions for parents and/or students
 - Home visits
 - Formation of an Attendance Support Group
- Ongoing truancy issues will be reported by the Principal to the appropriate welfare and government agencies.

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