



Attendance Policy

Rationale:

- The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless formally exempt.

Aim:

- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unreasonable absences.

Implementation:

- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.
- Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Under DET requirements the following are reasonable grounds for absence:
 - illness, accident, an unforeseen event or an unavoidable cause; or
 - a requirement to comply with another law; or
 - the absence from school was because of the child's disobedience and was not due to any fault of the parent ; or
 - the child is attending or observing a religious event or obligation as a result of a genuinely held belief of the child or a parent of the child ; or
 - the parent of the child has provided another excuse for the failure to attend and the principal of the school accepts the excuse as a reasonable excuse.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary. Parents have a further responsibility to communicate with the school verifying why an absence has occurred.
- Parents of students who are to be absent are required to telephone the school before 9:00am to report the absence. Absences may also be forward notified via email to ballarat.hs@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Independent students not living with parents or guardians are also required to provide communication and verification of absences.
- After an absence has occurred parents/carers must communicate with the school to verify why an absence has occurred. This can be done via any of the following ways.
 - A written note handed to the General Office on the student's return
 - A phone call to the General Office/Attendance line
 - Providing details via the Edumate parent portal
- Family holidays during school time.

No student completing a Unit 3-4 subject should take holidays during school time. Holidays during school time will be considered unapproved absences for those students.

If a student is completing year 7 – 11 studies it is still advised not to be absent due to holidays as it will have a negative impact on learning. However, if the school is notified well in advance, (at least one month) the school will set up a Student Absence Learning Plan for the student to complete whilst away and the Principal will approve the absence. If the school is not given sufficient time to assess the validity of the absence and a detailed absence learning plan cannot be prepared it will be an unapproved/unreasonable absence.

Attendance Tracking: Years 7 – 9

- Team Leaders and Learning Mentors will track student attendance.
- Parents with concerns about their child's attendance and associated issues should make contact with their Team Leader to discuss the issue and develop strategies to support the child.
- In years 7 – 9 medical certificates are not required for medical/illness absences but information should be provided about the nature of the condition if it is likely to impact on the child's education.
- Team Leaders will follow up absences that receive no verification from parents.

Attendance Tracking: Years 10 – 12

- Learning Leaders, Classroom Teachers and Learning Mentors will track student attendance.
- Parents with concerns about their child's attendance and associated issues should make contact with their Learning Leader to discuss the issue and develop strategies to support the child.
- Learning Leaders will follow up absences that receive no verification from parents.
- Absences for years 10 – 12 are designated to be either "approved" or "unapproved" for the purposes of successful completion of senior studies.

"Approved" absences are those which are verified by a medical certificate covering the time absent. Also, if there is a legitimate reason why the student cannot attend school e.g. Family emergency, a parent can apply to the VCE Coordinator for an approved absence, which is regarded in the same manner as a medical certificate. This application may be in the form of a phone call, email or meeting. Medical certificates need to be provided to the General Office within 3 days of the absence. All absences due to participation in events related to the school are also approved absences.

"Unapproved" absences are those that are unverified by parents or which are covered by a parent or guardian note, but without a medical certificate

They include:

- Holidays taken during school time (unless approved by the Principal)
- An absence for a non-medical appointment
- Lateness to class. A student who is late will be recorded as 'late' and this lateness will be counted as an unapproved absence for the time missed

Students can only have 8 unapproved absences from a class before an 'N' will be recorded for that unit. The student will be notified by the Learning Leader and the parent notified by the Assistant Principal of the Senior School or the VCE coordinator. The parent may appeal the 'N' to the Principal by writing a letter outlining the reasons for the appeal. It is up to the Principal whether to hear the appeal.

Further information about the VCE absence processes is distributed to parents/students at the beginning of each year.

- The Principal will ensure all student absences are recorded on Edumate each period by teachers, that data is then communicated to the Department of Education.
- Absences are reported to the Department of Education as either having a reasonable excuse or not having a reasonable excuse. Continued unreasonable absences may result in the further involvement of Department of Education attendance staff.
- The Department of Education and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

APPROVAL:

This policy was approved by School Council on the

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.