



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

- In accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years unless an exemption has been granted.
- Parents/carers 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 register the student for home schooling.
- Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless there is an approved exemption from school attendance or attendance and enrolment for the student or the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.
- 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.
- For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. 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*.
- Schools must maintain attendance records and develop policies to support and maintain attendance.
- Exemptions from school attendance may be granted in some circumstances. All applications for exemptions are considered on a case by case basis, with the child's best interests as the guiding principle for decision-making. In making a decision the potential benefits or negative consequences of granting the exemption to the child's educational progress, wellbeing and development are also considered.
- Additionally, schools enrolling international children are required to effectively monitor student attendance and implement a documented intervention strategy where attendance is at risk of failing to meet the minimum Student Visa requirement (attendance of a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours during each study period).
- Schools should avoid practices that have the effect of restricting admission.
- Approved tuition options are Distance Education, Registered Home Schooling and the Wannik Education Strategy for Koorie Students.

Purpose

- To ensure all children of compulsory school age who are enrolled at Mackellar Primary School attend school every day the school is open for instruction.
- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.
- To ensure Hillsmeade Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure the school complies with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.
- To discharge the school's duty of care for all children.
- To assist in the calculation of the school's funding.
- To enable the school to report on attendance annually through the Annual Report.

Implementation

- The school has developed mandatory prerequisite Admission and Enrolment Policies.

- Mackellar Primary School strongly believes that attending school every school day for the whole day enables students to participate in the school's educational program as well as develop their social skills. Regular attendance enables the school to:
 - plan an organised educational program that is delivered in a consistent way and has continuity
 - facilitate shared student learning experiences that support the educational program
 - monitor student progress and adjust the educational program to meet student needs.
- The school will record student attendance twice per day and in writing, the reason given for each absence. This is necessary to:
 - meet legislative requirements
 - discharge the schools' duty of care for all students
 - assist in the calculation of the school's funding
 - enable school councils to report on student attendance annually
 - meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements
- The school will advise parents/carers promptly of unexplained absences.
- Parents can leave a phone message to advise of children's absences.
- For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/carer must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. 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*.
- The school will develop policies and programs to support and maintain student attendance including:
 - advising parents/guardians promptly of unexplained absences
 - involving the Student Welfare Officer in establishing a Student Support Group if attendance is irregular.
- If a student is living in an Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) arrangement, a Student Support Group will be established to provide a formal support network at school. The school will develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for every student in OOHC. This plan will describe a set of strategies to address the particular educational needs of the child in care.
- If the school enrolls international students, their attendance will be effectively monitored and the school will implement a documented intervention strategy where attendance is at risk of failing to meet the minimum Student Visa requirement (attendance of a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours during each study period).
- Please refer also to the school's *Admission & Enrolment Policies*, the *Duty of Care Policy*, the *Student Engagement Policy*, the *School Hours Policy*, the *Home Schooling Policy*, the *Out-of-Home Care (Homelessness) Policy* and the *Koorie Students* and the *International Students Policies*.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update late April 2017).

This policy was ratified by School Council on June 2016

Reference:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/attendance.aspx