

Attendance Policy

1. Background

- The Melton Secondary College community believes that students learn best when they attend scheduled classes and school based activities and that persistent absence is a barrier to effective learning. The Victorian Government's *'Everyday Counts'* initiative promotes the fact that regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential by actively participating and engaging in their own learning.
- Regular school attendance is one of the major factors contributing to a child's wellbeing and success. Our vision is for all students to achieve academic excellence, develop positive peer relationships, and reach their potential and their individual pathway. Regular school attendance facilitates these outcomes directly.
- Every student is expected to attend all scheduled classes and school activities, and to attend punctually. The College expects that all students attend 100% of scheduled classes, assemblies and compulsory school activities, unless there are valid reasons for not doing so.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the processes used to encourage, support and effectively monitor student attendance for maximum school participation.

3. Guiding Principles

- Students are required to attend school and all classes, except where compelling, legitimate and serious reason prevent such attendance.
- Education is a partnership between school, home and the community. The Education and Training Act 2006 requires that schooling is compulsory for children aged 6 to 17 years.
- Students are required to attend a minimum of 95% of classes to be considered eligible for satisfactory completion of that year level.
- At Years 7 to 9 the 95% is determined by the total number of periods in each subject.
- At Years 10 to 12 the 95% is determined by the total number of periods in each subject/unit.
- DET School Attendance Guidelines differentiate between Approved and Unapproved Absences. (See appendix 1)
- The policy is to be read in conjunction with the College's other policies, including the Promotion and Assessment Policies.

4. Implementation

- This policy will be advertised via Melton Mail, Melton Secondary College Website and upon Student Enrolment.
- Parents/Guardians are required to provide official notification to the College if their child is absent.
- When a student's absence falls below 95%, strategies and responsibilities for each stakeholder will be implemented by the College.
- The College, at its discretion, and only in exceptional circumstances, may grant exemptions to this policy.
- Office staff and Team Leaders are responsible for maintaining up-to-date attendance data on Compass.
- All student absences are recorded each period by teachers. They are aggregated on our CASES database and reported to the Department of Education.
- The Compass attendance data will be regularly monitored using the School Percentage % Column

Student responsibilities

- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Illness, accidents, religious events or obligation, and other unforeseeable circumstances are reasonable grounds for an absence.
- Any student arriving late to school must sign in at the Main office and their late arrival will be recorded on Compass.

Parent responsibilities

- Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if ill, or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents/Guardians have a further responsibility to provide either a written note or medical certificate explaining the reason for the absence upon their child's return. Alternatively, parents/guardians may contact the school office on the day of the absence or complete the Absence Notification on the school phone system, or Compass.
- Parents/Guardians must provide a reason for their child arriving late to school
- Students and their parents/carers are strongly advised to make all appointments outside of school hours; this includes medical appointments, driving lessons, etc.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to avoid arranging family holidays during school term. If this is unavoidable, the school must be contacted at least one week prior to the absence so that a Student Absence Learning Plan can be completed.
- Keeping the school informed of all current contact details including SMS enabled phone number.

School responsibilities

At Melton SC we promote 100% attendance by:

- Alerting parents every morning via SMS if their child is absent from school through the Compass student management system.
- Following up all unexplained absences within three days.

Specific Procedures related to chronic absenteeism

Each term, Team Leaders will review student attendance rates and students with attendance under 85 per cent will have a letter sent home to the parents/guardians explaining the impact this level of attendance has on their child's education and explaining actions that can be taken to improve attendance levels.

- If attendance does not improve, Student Support meetings are held, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- If deemed appropriate, the Student Wellbeing Team will become involved to further implement intervention strategies.
- Where a student absence has not been explained within three days of the absence, the school will contact the family. If contact cannot be made after continued absence, the Principal will notify the Regional Office of the Department of Education, or the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Ongoing unexplained absences, will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. As per DET School Attendance Guidelines, this may result in notification to the Regional Office and an Infringement Notice being issued.
- All absence notes and records of communication must be retained and stored at the school for auditing purposes by the Department of Education and Training (DET).
- Student attendance is reported to parents via Compass parent portal as well as student mid-year and end of year reports and will affect a students' ability to satisfactorily complete course and promotion requirements.

5. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed in **four years** or as necessitated by changes/developments which may occur through requests by School Council, Parents, Students or Staff within the timeframe stated above.

6. References

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Attendance](#)

Date Reviewed	March 2021
Author	Senior School Principal
Approval required	No
Consultation required	Recommended
School Council approved	NA
School Council noted	April 2021
Mandatory	Yes
VQRA	No
Responsible for Review	Senior School Principal
Review Date	March 2025
Published	Website/Internal Circulation

Appendix 1

Student Absence Guide

Approved reasons for absence	Unapproved reasons for absence
Illness - medical certificate required for more than 3 days and should be provided whenever a student attends the doctor during school time. This is particularly important for senior students who are absent from an organised program.	Driving lessons
Funeral	Personal issues without full explanations
Medical/dental appointments that cannot be arranged for outside of school time	Family commitments
Court appointments	Car or bike breakdowns
Court counselling	Sleeping in (or too tired due to a late night) or missing transport
College/state/national representation in sport	SAC/SAT preparation or completion of work due in other subjects
License testing	Part time work commitments
A family holiday where the school has been notified at least one week prior to the date of departure and a Student Absence Learning plan has been completed.	Supporting upset friends
	Birthday (or other) celebrations
	Staying home with a sick sibling or parent
	Staying away for a whole day when an appointment is only for a short time.
	Reading the Timetable incorrectly
	Weather conditions (too hot, too cold)
	A family holiday that has been taken without informing the school in advance and no Student Absence Learning Plan has been completed