

## *Attendance Policy*

### **Definition:**

As attendance is intrinsic to educational opportunity, the Department of Education and Training (DET) policy is that all students enrolled in government schools must attend on a full-time basis unless absent with the authority of the school. This policy acknowledges that attendance depends on active cooperation between the school, parents/caregivers and the student.

### **Aims:**

Research into school attendance has identified factors that facilitate effectiveness in this area and we aim to provide:

- a supportive school environment
- a curriculum that provides for all students
- structures and approaches that facilitate the success of all students
- effective record keeping
- prompt follow-up of absences
- close liaison with parents/caregivers
- guidance and support for those with attendance problems
- a cooperative community/interagency approach to the area

### **Implementation:**

#### **Parents:**

Information will be clearly conveyed to parents that it is their obligation to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence. Parents will be encouraged to notify the school in advance of any absence, where practicable. Where there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a student, prompt communication will occur with the parents/guardians/caregivers. Parents of students will contact the school via the absence phone line on 9366 4322. Legislation in Victoria allows for the prosecution of parents for the regular truancy of their children.

#### **Teachers:**

Will accurately mark rolls twice daily using e-cases and keep records (notes) of all absences. Both the roll and notes are legal documents. Teachers to encourage students to bring notes to school explaining absences.

Teachers will identify if students are absent for a period of 3 consecutive days. Teachers will discuss with their immediate leader an appropriate action. This may be phone contact, letter home or referral to the Enrolment Co-ordinator and Assistant Principal of Wellbeing

#### Procedures:

- The data is collected and collated in CASES 21.
- At the end of each week, the Enrolment Co-ordinator will print a weekly summary report for the previous week of each class.
- The Enrolment Co-ordinator highlights the names of students who have been late or did not attend school for three or more days during the previous week without reason.
- The Enrolment Co-ordinator will attempt to contact parents /carers to clarify student absence.
- The Enrolment Co-ordinator will liaise with the Assistant Principals / Wellbeing AP to discuss and follow up attendance concerns.
- All notes held by classroom teachers will be collected at the end of the school year and stored for 12 months.

#### School:

- The importance of regular attendance is included in the newsletter
- Individual attendance is recorded in school reports
- Classroom programs are used to reinforce the importance of attendance
- Student prizes are awarded at the end of each term for 100% attendance
- Roll is to be marked twice daily both am and pm.

The following steps are to be followed if no reason is given for absence:

Contact with parents /carer within 1 week of unexplained absences. (Phone or personal contact is acceptable.)

If communication with parents/guardians has not been possible or the student continues to be absent the Enrolment Coordinator will liaise a meeting with the Wellbeing AP to discuss further action.

If required the AP will coordinate a meeting to resolve the attendance problem by developing a re-engagement plan. The meeting will involve the family, the Wellbeing AP and appropriate external agencies.

The school may also seek support from regional student service support staff, community or other government agencies.

The school plan should result in the establishment of an ongoing attendance support process. This should develop and monitor an appropriate program of assistance and support for the student. It will draw upon any special skills and resources needed, for example from external support personnel.

**The plan could involve such action as:**

- modification of the curriculum
- increased supervision of the student
- personal support and counselling for the student
- referral to other support agencies.

It is important that wherever possible, the plan is developed in consultation with the parents/guardians and the student to ensure their active cooperation. The plan should be documented to confirm arrangements to assist the student.

Where the action taken through the school plan does not lead to a resumption of satisfactory attendance, the principal should determine if it is necessary to convene an attendance conference in the interest of the education of the student.

### Attendance Conference

The purpose of the attendance conference is to:

- review strategies initiated to support the attendance of the student
- examine why resolution of the non-attendance has not been possible
- make recommendations to the school and parents/guardians on further action.

The attendance conference has no disciplinary connotations but rather aims at effectively retaining the student at school. Action considered at the attendance conference can include:

- the use of wider resources and expertise available in the Department of Education and elsewhere.
- transfer to another educational setting.

The attendance conference should be convened by the principal or nominee. Participants should include:

- principal or nominee
- parents/guardians
- the student (if appropriate)
- parent advocate (if required by the parent)
- appropriate staff member
- consultants as required.

### Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Ratified by School Council: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Council President

Jackson School Principal