

# Attendance Policy

## Policy Statement

Ensuring that students attend school each day is the shared expectation of all parents/carers, students and the school. The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 describes a reasonable excuse for non-attendance as being due to:

- Illness, accident, an unforeseen event or an unavoidable cause.
- There is no government school within a prescribed distance of the child's residence and the child is receiving a distance education program through a registered school.
- The child is undertaking an educational program provided by a registered education and training organisation.
- The child being suspended or expelled and undertaking other educational programs provided by the department or another registered school
- The child's disobedience, not due to any fault of the parents/carers
- The child is attending/observing a religious event or obligation as a result of a genuinely held belief of the child's parents/carers.
- Exemption from attendance has been granted by the Minister.

## Expectations

*Parents/carers are required to:*

- Ensure that their child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction. (refer to Education Training and reform act 2006, Section 2.1.1)
- Provide and promote organisational support to their child for full attendance and participation at school on all designated school days.
- Ensure their child is on time for each school day.
- Notify the school of the child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence.
- Notify the school in advance if an absence of any period is planned.
- Support the child's learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of an agreed Student Absence learning Plan available through the school.
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been unsatisfactory.
- Work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school and reintegrate after a period of prolonged absence.
- Ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date
- Where a student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months, the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences and measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and been unsuccessful, or are inappropriate in the circumstances, principals can exercise their discretion to refer the matter to a School Attendance Officer for further action.
- School Attendance Officers can then issue a School Attendance Notice to the parent giving the opportunity to provide a reasonable excuse for the absences or, where necessary, nominate the parent responsible for the absences. Failure to comply with this Notice may result in the issue of an Infringement Notice, which carries with it a penalty of approximately \$70.

***Students are expected to:***

- Attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
- Arrive on time for every class.
- Provide a written explanation from their/parents carers to the attendance officer when they have been absent from school.
- Remain on the school premises during school hours unless they have permission from both the school and parents/carers to leave the school.
- Work with their teachers to develop learning activities to be included in the Student Absence Learning plan to be completed during a prolonged absence.
- Work with the school to adhere to goals and strategies listed as part of the student absence staged response process when absences have been of concern.

***Dandenong Primary School will:***

- Promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures.
- Develop and maintain effective systems to record and monitor attendance.
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded in every class.
- Maintain accurate attendance records on Cases21.
- Ensure prompt processing of student transfers by immediately contacting the students transferring school upon the student's enrolment at their new school.
- Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly to identify students at risk and to enable the provision of prompt targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance in accordance with the schools staged response to absenteeism plan.
- Monitor and follow up all individual cases of student absence promptly and consistently.
- Pursue and record an explanation for every absence.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time.
- Convene where necessary student support meetings in accordance with the schools staged response plans for student absenteeism.
- Provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/carers has not been possible. This may include notification to DHHS/SEVR.

Parents will be provided (with a minimum of 5 days warning) notice of a pending SSG meeting including the agenda/attendance list as well as an invitation to contribute to the agenda. These meetings will not exceed 30 minutes and will not be subject to parental requests to reschedule unless it can be demonstrated that the parent has a legitimate reason for not being able to attend and has shown a preparedness to attend the SSG meeting.

It will also be noted within this document that the meeting will proceed and be minuted irrespective of the parent's attendance. Minutes will be sent home by express post/registered mail and a hard copy retained in the students file.

In the instance of parent/carer non-attendance all parties will discuss and act in the best instance of the child.

The initial notification of the pending SSG will be forwarded to the parent/carer by express post/registered mail with a hard copy retained in the students file.

#### Dandenong Primary School Staged Response to Student Absence

- Telephone/SMS all unexplained whole day absences. (Daily)
- Daily reports of period/s absence generated for individual students. Parents/carers with unexplained student period/s absent contacted. (Daily)
- Monthly absence letters sent home requesting an explanation for student absences still not provided by parent/carer.
- Weekly reports to sub school coordinators for follow up if necessary. Staged response to student absences detailed in table below.

Days Absent	School Response
2 Days	Classroom teacher to phone call home. Conversation details recorded on student file.
5 Days	Support Group Meeting. Parents/Year level coordinator. Meeting minuted and recorded on student file.
10 Days	Notification to DHHS/Centrelink/SEVR