

Student Attendance Policy



INTRODUCTION

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6-17 years unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted.

Regular attendance in the primary school years provides children with the basic skills for learning and educational outcomes, and assists the development of social skills including communication, self-esteem, teamwork and friendship building.

Daily school attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they don't fall behind both socially and developmentally. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age.

Poor patterns of attendance can place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

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 for the student, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.

A student is considered to be in attendance at school when involved in an offsite curriculum program or other activity organised by the school (for example an excursion or camp), or where the student is engaged in a re-engagement program or another school part time to make up full time attendance and the schools or settings have agreed the time fractions and the educational plan for the student.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Victorian schools are required to provide active support (including targeted responses and effective intervention strategies) for full student attendance and retention until the completion of Year 12 or its equivalent and respond to individual student circumstances when regular attendance is not consistent.

Whilst ensuring student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents, supporting students to attend school each day is the shared responsibility of all parents, students, the school and the wider community.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carer's are required to ensure their child attends school and to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and the school must record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent.

The Principal must be able to determine from the records if the excuse given was reasonable in terms of the parent meeting their legal obligations.

Parents/carer's are expected to inform the school their child's absence by no later than 9.15am on the first day their child is away from school. This can be done via email: studentabsence@gsroxburghpark.catholic.edu.au or by telephone 9308 6177.

When notifying the school parents are required to the following details:

- Their child's name
- Their child's Home Group
- Reason for the child's absence
- The expected length of time their child will be away from school.

Where possible, parents should inform the school in advance of upcoming absences.

To ensure a child's education and wellbeing are supported, parents are encouraged to communicate openly with the school where a child has an ongoing medical condition that may result in ongoing absences or medical appointments during school hours.

Students

- Attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
- Arrive on time to school

School

The school will record student attendance twice per day (9.00am and 2.15pm) and record, in writing, the reason given for each absence. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge schools' duty of care for all students
- assist calculation of the school's funding
- enable the school governing body to report on student attendance annually

The school will maintain accurate and comprehensive student attendance records, including the reasons for any absences. This allows the school to monitor the effectiveness of attendance improvement strategies and measure achievement against attendance targets. It also provides evidence for any further enforcement proceedings including issue of an Infringement Notice (and any appeal) and court proceedings if it appears a parent may not have met their legal obligations to ensure their child attends school.

The school will report the annual rates of student attendance for the year to the school community at least once a year. The school is also required to report information about student enrolment and attendance for funding requirements.

Principal

The principal is responsible for determining if the excuse provided for an absence is reasonable for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. A principal should use their discretion in making this decision.

Home Group Teacher

At Good Samaritan the principal has delegated responsibility for recording and monitoring student attendance to each Home Group Teacher. The Home Group Teacher must record:

- each enrolled student's attendance at least twice per day (9.00am and 2.15pm) in the school's attendance register including any reason given or apparent for a student's absence
- whether the reason for the absence is a reasonable excuse for non-attendance within the meaning of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- on the student's file, information about the student's unsatisfactory attendance at school or classes
- an absence as unexplained if no excuse has been given and change the attendance record once an excuse is provided or established
- a student is present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction.

To meet duty of care responsibilities, the school attendance records should indicate whether the student was physically present in a classroom, or not present but attending a school-approved activity. In the latter situation, the teacher or staff member in charge of the activity should record attendance and ensure parents are notified of any absences in the same manner as for regular absences from school.

All students enrolled in the school are required to have their attendance recorded, even if they only attend the school premises part time. Attendance for the times the student is not expected to attend should be recorded so it does not count towards the absences for the school.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

In addition to accurately and consistently recording student attendance and absence, the Principal will ensure school attendance data is regularly monitored and analysed to identify student absence patterns on a school, year level and individual basis.

Reporter Pro is made available to all Home Group Teachers and is to be used for early identification of students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school. Once identified as being at risk of poor attendance, students will be provided with timely targeted support to improve attendance or address underlying issues.

APPROVED ABSENCES

The following are categorised as approved absences:

- Illness
- Medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or not appropriate
- Bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- School refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes
- Unforeseen event
- School Refusal
- Cultural observance, if the parent notifies the school in advance
- Family holidays, where the parent notifies the school in advance and the student completes any Student Absence Learning Plan agreed by the school, student and parent.

Supporting Policies and Procedures

FS2	Designing Learning Partnerships	LT6	Learning Diversity
LT3	Promoting Student Engagement and Positive Behaviour Framework	LE1	Child Safe Policy

Communication and Evaluation

A copy of this policy and the associated procedures will be provided to all staff annually.

The Student Attendance Policy and the associated procedures will be widely promoted to all students, staff, parents/carers via the School website and Newsletter.

This policy will be reviewed biannually.