**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Rationale**

Research demonstrates that going to school every day is important for a student’s education. Absence from school means that learning opportunities are reduced and this can ultimately lead to poor student achievement. Where this happens, the impact may be felt long after the student has left school.

Absence from school and class clearly affects the absent student, but also impacts on the teacher’s ability to plan and present class work in a sequential and organised way and report on progress. This can affect the progress of all students in the class, not only those missing, and can make classroom management difficult.

Schools report student absence in their annual reports. These figures are used to establish statewide benchmarks of student absences in both primary and secondary schools. During the triennial review, each school’s absence figures are considered against the statewide benchmarks and the schools with ongoing absence rate difficulties are expected to develop strategies in their Strategic Plans to address the problem.

**Guidelines**

* Attendance is fundamental to the role of all teachers, and not seen as the individual responsibility of any one member of the school team.
* The Principal has overall responsibility for student attendance.
* Designated staff may have nominated duties in monitoring attendance.

All staff are actively involved in this area of responsibility. Individual classroom teachers monitor overall attendance records and have responsibility to pursue unexplained absences with the student and his/her family. The Student Welfare Coordinator (Assistant Principal) may become involved when the student’s attendance record is of concern and provide support. Phone calls are made to families on the third day of a student’s absence if there has been no prior communication.

Individual schools maintain their own data relating to student attendance. This is used by schools to identify students with attendance problems so that strategies can be put into place to address the problem.

**Implementation**

* + Regular newsletter articles will be placed reminding families of the educational importance of regular attendance at school.
	+ Prompt identification of non-attendees in need of further support will be made, facilitated by the Computerised Administrative Systems Environment in Schools (C.A.S.E.S.). This provides the school with the capacity to generate attendance data. –Classroom, specialist teachers and/or administrative staff are charged with recording absences on Compass (reflected on each student’s individual file)
	+ Attendance is recorded at twice daily via Compass: start of day (9am session) and lunch session (2:40 session)
	+ Families and/carers are alerted via SMS through Compass if their child/children are not marked present at 9am or 2:40pm when their absence is unexplained on the day of a student’s absence.
	+ Unsatisfactory attendance is monitored by classroom teachers and then the leadership group of the school. In accordance with regional DET best practice, families are alerted to unsatisfactory attendance via:
1. Phone call home
2. Follow up email home and in the case of 5 days in a row of unexplained absence
3. A letter (template supplied by NEVR regional office)
4. Ongoing absence or unsatisfactory attendance will be triaged and handled by classroom, leadership and regional staff as each situation dictates.
	* Student absences (past, present and future) can be entered by parents via the Compass Online Parent Portal, or a written note must be provided to the school. Parents will be electronically notified of unexplained student absence before 10 am.
	* Follow updated School Operations Guide for COVID related attendance policies or see <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/policy>
	* The school policy on attendance will be publicised and promoted.

**Review and Approval**

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| **Policy last reviewed**  | February 2022 |
| **Approved by**  | School Principal: Michael McLeanSchool Council |
| **Next scheduled review date**  | February 2025 |