

ATTENDANCE POLICY



PURPOSE

At Eltham Primary School we believe that student success is determined by regular attendance at school. Students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from their schooling. Regular attendance enables students to access a full education, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Student attendance is dependent on a supportive school environment, a curriculum that provides for all students and structures and approaches that facilitate the success of all students.

We acknowledge that monitoring of student attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies.

We also acknowledge our obligation to monitor the legal requirement for all students under fifteen years to attend school, and that we have a duty of care for all students including those over the compulsory school age.

School staff should set an example for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction
- ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Eltham PS has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

DEFINITION

Parent – includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

SCOPE

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Eltham PS, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Eltham Primary School will:

- Ensure strategies are in place to maximise the attendance of all students
- Support families in achieving regular attendance for their children
- Provide organisational structures which support the early detection and identification of causes of student non- attendance
- Identify and support all students at risk of non- attendance
- Support staff in monitoring and following up all absences
- Ensure the efficiency and accuracy of data collection for school, legal and audit requirements

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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

Attendance depends on active cooperation between the school, parent/carers and the student. Whilst the primary responsibility for meeting the legal requirement for student attendance rests with the parent/ carer, the school has the responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non- attendance.

Within the school the principal has the overall responsibility for student attendance, and certain staff have particular designated duties in monitoring student welfare and attendance. As student attendance is fundamental to the role of teachers, all staff need to be actively and cooperatively involved in its maintenance.

EXPECTATIONS

Enrolled students are expected to attend Eltham PS during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Eltham PS, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Eltham PS for particular activities.

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

Process for:

Students

- Attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes
- Provide a medical certificate/written note to classroom teacher on return to school
- Sign in at office using VPASS and provide explanation if late for school
- Discuss with each teacher procedures for catching up on any work missed through lateness or absence

Parents

- Ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day
- Notify the school (preferably in advance) if a student is to be absent, using COMPASS (see school website for COMPASS log-in and instructions)
- Provide written explanation to the school for each student absence

- Contact the classroom teacher for assistance if a student is resistant to attending school

Classroom Teacher

- Accurately and consistently mark the roll using the COMPASS platform and maintain class attendance roll
- Follow up consistent lateness
- Monitor students and seek support from principal with concerns
- Show concern for students who are absent and supply work missed
- Notify the office in advance of students attending excursions.
- Develop and implement a program which is challenging and engaging to students
- Regularly monitor percentage student attendance rates

CASES 21 Operator

- Generate and maintain class rolls
- Accurately input daily absences and absence information on CASES 21
- Facilitate the tracking of student lateness
- Provide CASES 21 reports to classroom teachers on request

Principal

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or 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 and support the student's return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

The principal will ensure:

- Ensure that very clear attendance expectations are evident to students and parents
- Ensure that a good example is set by all staff with attendance and punctuality
- Oversee the consistent implementation and review of policies and procedures

Recording attendance

Eltham PS must record student attendance twice per day.

This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Eltham's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers at start of the school day and after lunch using the COMPASS portal. Attendance data is imported to CASES21/eCASES monthly.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify the school of absences by:

- contacting reception through phone call/SMS if it is an unplanned absence, and/or informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned absence

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Eltham PS will notify parents by SMS through COMPASS, and/or by phone and attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the **same day** of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to no response or incorrect contact details), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school, where possible, **on the day** of the unexplained absence. If a student is absent on a particular day, and the parents/guardian have not contacted the school, and if the school has made every attempt to contact the parents/guardian with no response, the absence is marked as unexplained.

Eltham PS will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Eltham PS considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexcused absence**'.

Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, Eltham PS will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, which may include:

- establishing an Attendance Student Support Group
- implementing a Return to School Plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from wellbeing team

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, will endeavour to provide this support when it is required,

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Eltham PS decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the Vic North Western Regional Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
 - measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
 - the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related School Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Working with Children Policy
- Child Safe Policy

Related DET Resources

[School Attendance Guidelines \(docx - 148.04kb\)](#)

[Out-of-Home Care and Homelessness - Supporting Children, Young People and their Families](#)

[Affected by Homelessness – Guidelines for Victorian Schools](#)

Legislation - *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

REVIEW CYCLE

| THIS VERSION FIRST ISSUED | LAST UPDATED | STATUS | DUE FOR REVIEW |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|----------------|
| 2015 | 2019 | This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or as necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances | 2022 |