



ATTENDANCE POLICY



What is the aim of this policy?

The aim of the policy is to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

Why is this policy important?

The Education Act requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Regional Director.

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.

School participation is important as it maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Conversely, limited school participation is associated with a greater chance of dropping out of school, disruptive and delinquent behaviour and may lead to a cycle of rebellion against authority. These outcomes have later implications for employment, a range of health risk behaviours (drug and alcohol abuse), homelessness, poverty, welfare dependence, and involvement in the justice system. For more information, see: [Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts](#)

What is the responsibility of parents?

Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school 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.

Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note or return a completed absence form (See Form 1 below) to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.

What type of absences will be approved?

- Absences **that will** receive approval include illness, medical appointments (which should be arranged outside school hours if possible) family issues, bereavement and school refusal if there is a return to school plan in place.
- Absences **that will not** receive approval include shopping, birthdays or other activities that are generally part of weekend and school holiday activities.
- Children are encouraged to return to school after a medical or dental appointment if they are fit and well to do so. If they are sent home with head lice they are encouraged to return to school once treatment has been completed.
- Extended family holidays will be approved if there is an education plan in place. These plans are to be agreed between the parent and child's teacher.

What is the responsibility of the school?

Principal and Classroom Teachers

- It is the responsibility of the Principal to approve all absences.
- The Principal will ensure parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences are contacted, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Classroom teachers will also contact parents to discuss irregular attendance patterns or frequent late arrival and work with parents to develop strategies to ensure more regular, punctual attendance.
- Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of co-operation regarding student attendance may result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported to the Department of Human Services.

Promoting and celebrating attendance

- Improved attendance will be acknowledged and celebrated through class and individual student recognition.
- Alternative programs will be arranged for students who do not attend School Camps and Excursions, as these students are required to attend school on those days.
- Posters encouraging school attendance will feature prominently, as well as newsletter articles.

Record Keeping

- The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school. All student absences will be recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers (including late arrivals and early departures), and aggregated on our CASES database and communicated to the Department of Education and Training (DET). This data is reported to the DET and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- The School will maintain documentation of all attempted and implemented intervention strategies aimed at restoring a student's attendance.
- Half Year and End of Year attendance reports will be sent home with all students.
- The School will ensure attendance records (electronic and hardcopy) are managed in accordance with standards set by the Public Record Office Victoria and guidelines issued by DET, or relevant Commonwealth privacy legislation (non-government schools).

Action that can be taken in cases of repeated absenteeism

- The Principal may refer a child to a School Attendance Officer as listed below.

School Attendance Officers (Regional Directors) are empowered by the Education and Training Reform Act to issue School Attendance Notices if they have reasonable grounds to believe:

- *a child who is enrolled at a registered school has been absent from the school on at least 5 separate days in the previous 12 months; and*
- *no reasonable excuse has been given for the absences; and*
- *measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken in accordance with any guidelines issued by the Minister and have been unsuccessful; or are considered to be inappropriate in the circumstances.*

School Attendance Officers have the authority to issue an Infringement notice.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council

March, 2015

Winters Flat Primary School
ABSENCE NOTE



Student's Name: _____

Grade: _____

This student was absent on (insert dates):

Tick Applicable Box	Reason
<input type="checkbox"/>	Illness, Medical, Dental, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extended Family Holiday
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent Choice
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bereavement

Additional Comment (if required)

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

***ALL ABSENCES SHOULD BE REPORTED ON THIS STANDARD FORM.**

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