

ATTENDANCE

Rationale

- Parents/guardians must enroll a child of compulsory school-age at a school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction or seek enrolment for other approved tuition.
- School participation helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values, which set them up for further learning and participation in their community. Regular school attendance enables students to maximize their full educational potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. Frequent lateness also has a major impact on students' learning and on the learning of others within each learning community. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development.
- Students are expected to attend normal school hours every day of each term. A Principal or Regional Director (depending on the circumstances) may authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.
- For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent / guardian should provide an explanation on each occasion and the school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.
- Schools must maintain attendance records and develop policies/protocols to support and maintain attendance.
- Exemptions from school attendance may be granted in some circumstances. All applications for exemptions are considered on a case by case basis, with the child's best interests as the guiding principle for decision-making. In making a decision the potential benefits or negative consequences of granting the exemption to the child's educational progress, wellbeing and development are also considered.

Purpose

- To ensure students of school age are enrolled and attend every day the school is open for instruction.
- To ensure Newport Gardens Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure the school complies with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.
- To discharge the school's duty of care for all students.
- To assist in the calculation of the school's Student Resource Package (SRP) funding.
- To enable the school to report on attendance annually through the Annual Report.

Implementation

School Information

- Students are expected to attend school every day during normal school hours unless there is an approved exemption.
- The school will record attendance of secondary students every period and attendance of primary students twice daily.
- The school will use the school's Student Management System Compass to record student attendance; this information will be forwarded to the DET through CASES21 and eCASES21. Available Compass features will be used to track, monitor and alert parents of issues pertaining to attendance.
- The school will record the reason (if any) given by the parent/guardian. The school will determine if the explanation provided is reasonable.
- The school will develop a strategy for following up immediately when unexplained absences exceed a set number of days.
- Poor or irregular attendance will be a matter for the Student Welfare Officer or similar senior person in the school.
- In the event that parents' cooperation with the school regarding significant absences is not evident, the school will refer the matter to the Student Attendance Officer of the Department of Education.
- The student's absences will be recorded on the Student Report Card.
- Please refer also to the school's Student Engagement Policy, Admission Policy, Enrolment, Promotion of Students, School Hours Policy, the Parental Responsibilities (Decisions about Children), the Home Schooling Policy and the Reporting to Parents Policy.
- Please refer also to DET's webpage regarding exemption from attendance.

Parent Information

Parents/guardians are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school.

What to do for late arrivals/early departures

All students who arrive after 8:50am must report to the front office, sign in with a parent/carer via the Compass Kiosk and collect a late arrival slip. Students leaving school early must be collected by a parent or nominated adult. The person collecting the child/ren reports to the main office to sign the child/ren out and collects an Early Departures Pass that is handed to the class

teacher.

What to do if your child is absent

If your child is ill and unable to attend school, please notify the school of their absence by one of the following methods, in preferred order:

- Logging your child's absence via the student management system Compass.
- Calling the school
- Providing (upon the child's return to school and within 3 days of the absence) a written note or email explaining why an absence has occurred.
- Completing, signing and returning unexplained absence letters as received.

How many days has your child missed this semester?

0 – 6: This is within normal range.

A child with this attendance rate is able to take full advantage of the teaching and learning opportunities available to them.

7 – 10: This attendance rate is below average.

A child with this attendance rate could miss over 1 year of schooling between Prep and Year 10.

11 – 20: This is a poor attendance rate.

A child with this attendance rate could miss out on up to 2 years of schooling between Prep and Year 10.

20+: This is a very poor attendance rate.

A child with this attendance rate could miss over 2.5 years of schooling between Prep and Year 10.

- Remember:**
- Students need to attend school regularly to make the most of educational opportunities.
 - There is a direct link between school attendance and achievement later in life.
 - Poor patterns of attendance in the early years lead to poor patterns of attendance throughout the school years.
 - Poor attendance makes it difficult to form positive relationships with their peers.

Student Information

Remember Every day counts ... School is better when you are here! ☺=

Do I have to go to school?

Yes, in Victoria everyone aged from 6 – 17 has to go to school.

Missing one day a fortnight is the same as missing 4 whole weeks of school a year. From prep to Year 12 that adds up to 1.5 years of school!

School is better when you attend. Your friends and your teachers notice that you're away and wonder if you're OK.

Why is regular attendance at school important?

Right now, being at school is the most important thing you need to do for your future. School helps you build good habits for later on in life. You might think school is just about Maths and English but you're also learning about how to work with other people and how to solve problems.

Being at school every day also means you are becoming more independent as a learner and interacting with your friends and teachers. If you're at school you can get help from your teachers and friends and won't have to try to learn things in your own time.

Being an adult probably seems far away but we know that young people who attend school more frequently have better outcomes after school too. This means they earn more money, have better job opportunities and are generally healthier. So being at school really does make a difference!

Do my parents need to let the school know if I'm going to be away?

Yes. Your parents need to notify the school within **three days** of your absence.

If you're away from school too much and don't have a reasonable excuse like a serious illness, your parents can also get in trouble.

Are there any good reasons to be away from school?

No. Unless you are so sick you can't get out of bed or there is an event like a funeral, you should be at school. Every day you are away is a day of classes and social connection you miss out on. Taking a day off for your birthday or go shopping isn't a good reason to miss school.

Even medical and health appointments should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays. This includes

family holidays. Your parents are encouraged not to plan holidays during the term but to organise these during the school holidays.

If you do have to be away for some reason, your parents need to contact the school and let them know what's going on. Depending on the situation, the school might provide schoolwork for you to complete.

What do I miss out on if I'm not at school?

You miss out on all the big stuff – class discussions and all the interaction that happens in a classroom, the chance to get help from teachers and the opportunity to practice skills and gain knowledge. Being away means you might miss out on a lot of learning or that you need to catch up in your time.

If all of that isn't enough to convince you to be at school every day, being away also means you also miss out on playing with your friends. Being away from school a lot can be lonely. It has a big impact on relationships and social connections. Believe it or not, everyone wants you at school and it really is better when you attend.

What if I'm having problems getting to school?

Getting to school on time everyday can be about having a good routine. If you find yourself running late or missing school because you're disorganised, try:

- Asking your parents for help getting ready
- Having a set time to go to bed
- Leaving all technology out of your bedroom
- Packing your school bag the night before with everything you need
- Having a set time for breakfast
- Planning to meet up with a friend so you can travel to school together.

Sometimes though it can just be hard to go to school. You might feel overwhelmed by the work or things might be tough with your friends. Maybe don't feel safe at school or you really dislike a teacher or things at home aren't great. Perhaps you're feeling down or anxious and don't even really know why.

Whatever the situation is, staying away from school isn't the answer. There are lots of people who want to help. Try talking to:

- Your parents or another adult family member
- A trusted teacher
- Wellbeing Coordinator or the school counsellor
- Another trusted adult like your coach

Useful websites/contacts

Kids Matter - www.kidsmatter.edu.au

Youth Beyond Blue - www.youthbeyondblue.com.au

Headspace - www.headspace.org.au or e-headspace www.eheadspace.org.au/ for online counselling & support

Reach Out – www.reachout.com

Kids helpline - 1800 55 1800 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or [web counselling](#)

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest update mid-April 2015).

This update was ratified by School Council on November 21st 2017

Reference:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/attendance.aspx

