



RESPECT – RESPONSIBILITY – RESILIENCE – DOING YOUR BEST



WILLIAMSTOWN NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL No 1409

Student Attendance Policy

Date: October 2017

1. Rationale

At Williamstown North Primary School it is expected that all children will regularly attend school. Learning extends beyond the classroom and it is important for families and the school to collaborate to maximise all opportunities to develop the child's academic, social and emotional learning. Research on resilience has indicated that regular attendance is a protective factor for children and frequent, or prolonged absences from school may indicate a child and/or family are at risk.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- further develop a whole school approach for the support and maintenance of student attendance to enhance student learning and engagement
- provide effective strategies, processes and procedures for the support and maintenance of student attendance
- clearly communicate with parents/guardians their obligation to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence and to inform parents of the processes that will be followed where an absence occurs.

3. Policy Context

School Councils are required to develop a local policy on the support and maintenance of student attendance as part of their School Accountability and Improvement Framework. They are accountable to their community and the Minister for Education, within their annual reporting process.

Records of student attendance are a legal requirement for all schools. The records: -

- Monitor the daily attendance for students under 16,
- Supply accurate information for DET Attendance audits,
- Are a part of the school's duty of care requirements

Legislation in Victoria allows for the prosecution of parents/guardians for the regular truancy of their child/ren.

4. Implementation

In support of student attendance, the school will liaise with and use the expertise of:

- Student Support Service staff,
- Regional and Central Office staff,

- Locally based Support Agencies.

In recognition of the fact that late attendance and/or early departure may impact on each student's learning, the school will:

- Develop and implement specific strategies and education programs to support students and their families to arrive at school by the commencement time each school day i.e. 'It's Cool to be On Time for School', (Student Attendance Support Kit-DET) and other classroom incentive systems.
- Students are expected to be at school and to be on time. 'It's not okay to be away', (Student Attendance Support Kit-DET)

4.1 Monitoring Student Attendance

- The Attendance Roll is a permanent record of the attendance of students and is marked twice a day, **9.05am each morning and 2.35pm each afternoon** on the COMPASS platform
- Attendance records are entered electronically into CASES (DET computer system) weekly. A COMPASS alert will be sent to Parents if student attendance is not logged.
- Attendance records will be carefully monitored by the Class Teacher and Assistant Principals/Principal to identify any educational and social difficulties and to identify and implement any appropriate action or required support.
- Parents/guardians are required to notify the school of a student's absence, preferably in advance. This can be done by entering into COMPASS, verbally, by phone, a written note or by email. Parents/Guardians will be informed of this process on enrolment and information on processes are also included in the Community Information Booklet. Reminders will also be placed in the school Newsletter at the start of each Term.
- Written notification must be named and dated and the period and reason for the absence stipulated. Parents/Guardians can also directly log enter a reason for the absence in COMPASS.
- In the event that no written documentation is provided to the school pertaining to the student's absenteeism, an explanation will be sought from the parent/guardian.
- Invalid reasons for student absence may require action by the school under the School Support and Attendance Plan.
- Where there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a student, prompt communication will be made with the parent/guardian.
- When a child is genuinely ill and unable to participate in the daily learning, parents/guardians are required to make arrangements to keep their child/ren home.
- Where parents are aware of a 'planned' absence of any length, they are required to contact the school to determine a support plan.

4.2 Lateness

At Williamstown North Primary School children are required to be at school by 8.55am to ensure they are not interrupting their learning and that of their peers by arriving late.

- Students arriving at school after 9.00am will be issued with a 'Late Pass' from the General Office and given to the supervising teacher.
- 'Late Pass' details will be analysed regularly by the Classroom Teacher, Assistant Principal(s)/Principal and appropriate action, as deemed necessary will be taken

4.3 Early Departure (other than due to illness)

- Parents/Guardians collecting students before the end of the school day are required to complete an 'Early Leavers Pass', At the general office, staff will record this early leaver on COMPASS if parents have not have already done so prior to collecting their child.
- The 'Early Leavers Pass' must be presented to the supervising teacher before any child/ren can be collected.
- Use of the 'Early Leavers Pass' will be maintained regularly by the Assistant Principal(s)/Principal and appropriate action, as deemed necessary (as outlined in Section 4) taken.

5. School Plan to Support Attendance

Following an unexplained absence of **3 days** (consecutive and non- consecutive) in any one-week, the class teacher will contact the Principal/Assistant Principal and the Principal/Assistant Principal will make verbal contact with the parent/guardian.

If the problem with a student's attendance persists, a meeting with the parent/guardian will be convened. The meeting will include the parent/guardian, the Principal/Assistant Principal(s) and class teacher. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the absence and fully appreciate its implications,
- examine the reasons for non-attendance,
- identify whether further support and assistance is required to re-establish regular attendance.

If the informal arrangements of such a meeting do not result in an improvement to the student's attendance, the school will establish an on-going attendance support process to develop and monitor an appropriate program of assistance and support for the student. The plan could involve such action as: -

- modification of the curriculum,
- increased supervision of the student,
- personal support and counselling for the student,
- referral to other support agencies,
- counseling and support as required for the parent/guardian or student.

Where the action taken through the school plan does not lead to a resumption of satisfactory attendance, the Principal/Assistant Principal should determine if it is necessary to convene an Attendance Conference in the interest of the education of the student.

The purpose of an 'Attendance Conference' is to: -

- review strategies initiated to support the attendance of the student,
- examine why resolution of the non-attendance has not been possible,
- make recommendations to the school and parents/guardians on further action (note: the Attendance Conference does not have any disciplinary connotations, but rather aims at effectively retaining the student at school).

Action considered at an Attendance Conference may include: -

- use of wider resources and expertise available in the Department of Education

and Training (DET), the Department of Human Services, or other supporting agencies,

- transfer to another educational setting.

The Principal/Assistant Principals or nominee should convene the Attendance Conference. Participants should include: -

- Principal/Assistant Principal(s) or Nominee,
- Parent/guardian,
- The student (if appropriate),
- Parents advocate (if requested by parents),
- The class teacher or appropriate staff member,
- Consultant/Regional personnel (as appropriate).
- DET Student Attendance Officer

Where a student is in 'out of home care' or where someone other than the parent has guardianship, the Principal/ Assistant Principal should ascertain who has the legal responsibility for the student when considering action to be taken in relation to attendance problems.

6. School Plan to Support Late Arrival/Early Departure (other than due to illness)

Following a pattern of late arrival/early departure over an extended period, the class teacher will notify the Assistant Principal and the Assistant Principal will make contact with the parent/guardian.

If the problem persists, a meeting with the parents/guardians will be convened. The meeting will include parents/guardians, Principal/Assistant Principal(s) and class teacher (as appropriate).

The purpose of the meeting is to: -

- ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of and fully appreciate, the implications of late arrival/early departure,
- examine the reasons for late arrival/early departure,
- identify whether further assistance is required to support prompt arrival and student attendance until the end of the educational day.

If the informal arrangements of such a meeting do not result in an improvement to the student's attendance, the school will establish an on- going "Attendance Support" process to develop and monitor an appropriate program of assistance and support for the student and family.

7. Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as a part of the School Policy review process and any changes will be endorsed by School Council.

This Policy has been ratified by School Council on October 2017