

# ATTENDANCE POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

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## PURPOSE

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 Seaholme PS has in place to
  - o support, monitor and maintain student attendance
  - o record, monitor and follow up student absences.

## 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 Seaholme PS, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

## DEFINITIONS

**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.

## 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.

At Seaholme 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.

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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.

Seaholme 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.

## EXPECTATIONS

Enrolled students are expected to attend Seaholme 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 Seaholme PS, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Seaholme PS for particular activities.

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

### Process for:

#### 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:

- Clear attendance expectations are evident to students and parents
- A good example is set by all staff with attendance and punctuality
- Oversee the consistent implementation and review of policies and procedures

#### Classroom Teacher

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- 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.

## 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 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.

## 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.

## Recording attendance

Seaholme PS must record student attendance twice per day.

This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge the school'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 if it is an unplanned absence, adding an attendance note via COMPASS, 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

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absence is otherwise unexplained, Seaholme Primary School 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.

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.

Seaholme 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 Seaholme Primary School considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**Parent Choice**'.

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

## 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, Seaholme 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 Seaholme 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 South 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:
  - o the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
  - o measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
  - o the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
  - o no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

## Rewarding Attendance

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- Students with excellent attendance records will receive certificates of achievement.
- Posters encouraging school attendance will feature prominently, as well as newsletter articles.
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website communications platform (COMPASS)
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information sessions
- Discussed at student forums
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Related School Policies

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

### Related DET Resources

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Attendance](#)
- [Exemption from School Attendance or Enrolment](#)
- [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*

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle, and/or if guidelines change.

Policy last reviewed	October 2022
Approved by	Principal
Consultation	Noting at SC October 2022
Next scheduled review date	October 2026