



Essendon Keilor College

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

In Victoria, education is compulsory for children aged between 6 and 17 years unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted.

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. (Department of Education website – 2017)

PURPOSE:

- Students must achieve a minimum of a 90% attendance rate to satisfy course requirements in each subject at all year levels.
- Ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction to enhance the opportunities for success at school.
- Support families in achieving regular attendance for their children.
- Ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.
- Identify and support all students at risk of non – attendance. Parents, Teachers, Year Level Co-ordinators.
- Explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Essendon Keilor College has in place to ensure the efficiency and accuracy of data collection for school, legal and audit requirements.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Essendon Keilor College.

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 Essendon Keilor College, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Essendon Keilor College *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- keeping accurate records supporting the implementation of programs that engage and support students such as 'Time Counts'
- monitoring student attendance and supporting students to understand their attendance percentage
- facilitating and communicating within each campus and between home and school in regards to student absences

- providing appropriate work when a student is unable to attend for legitimate reasons (such as bereavement or illness)
- ensuring that appropriate catch up sessions are set up when the student returns to school

Recording attendance

Essendon Keilor College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Essendon Keilor College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each period] using Compass

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

Students are expected to attend Essendon Keilor College 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 another school, or
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Essendon Keilor College for particular activities.

International Students

International student attendance must meet the requirements of their visas and the regulations of the Department of Immigration and Border Patrol. Medical certificates don't count for attendance for DHA purposes. Compassionate leave should be verified with official documentation whenever possible.

SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS MUST

- Attend and be punctual for all scheduled classes (90% attendance per semester is the minimum requirement).
- In the case of illness, students are to provide notes and/or medical certificates from parents/carers to their Campus Administration Office as required.
- Inform the Classroom Teacher/Student Management Leader of an upcoming absence prior to the date of an approved school activity.
- Students should catch up on missed work in a timely manner, seeking support from teachers as required.
- Students should notify their Year Level Co-ordinator about serious family issues.
- Sign in at office and provide parent/carer explanation if late to school.
- Remain on the school premises during school time unless permission has been given by a Parent/Guardians or a Teacher.

In the event that a student misses a scheduled assessment task, the student must provide a medical certificate or statutory declaration to the Campus Office Staff or to their Teacher in order to be given the opportunity to complete the task.

PARENTS SHOULD

- Ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day.
- Notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence. using the absences lines at each Campus
 - Essendon 93191305
 - East Keilor 83310108
 - Niddrie 9375805

- Support their child's learning and work collaboratively with the school and their child to develop and implement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to the student being unwilling to attend school.
- Work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school.
- Notify the Year Level Co-ordinator as soon as possible about serious family or health issues that may affect school attendance.
- Ensure that contact details for their child and family are correct and up-to-date.

STAFF / CLASSROOM TEACHER WILL

- Monitor and maintain accurate and up to date records of student attendance of all timetabled classes and school activities. Accurate individual rolls must be kept in addition to using the school's roll marking system, Compass.
- Communicate with the student and their parents when students' attendance rate falls below 90% (including consistent lateness and unexplained absences) and help students catch up on work missed.
- Liaise with Campus Office Staff and/or Year Level Co-ordinator and/or Focus Group teacher for any additional information before contacting parents.
- Seek support from Focus Group Teacher/Year Level Co-ordinator with concerns about student attendance.
- Notify the Campus Office Staff in advance of students attending excursions. If students do not attend excursions, Campus Office Staff must be informed on the day of the excursion.
- Provide appropriate work when a student is unable to attend or ensure that appropriate redemption sessions are set up when the student returns.

Campus Leadership in partnership with teachers should initiate the "At Risk" process for students whose attendance rate falls below 90%.

FOCUS GROUP/MENTOR TEACHER WILL

- Accurately mark and maintain daily rolls.
- Follow up with parents/carers on all unexplained absences from Focus Group.* Liaise with Campus Office Staff before contacting parents, as it may have already been completed.
- Ask for, and pass on, notes to Campus Office Staff so absences are explained.
- Monitor students' attendance and discuss with individual students when attendance is a concern.
- Check the absence activity reports using Compass and follow up any unexplained absences. Seek support from Year Level Co-ordinators if any student's attendance is an ongoing concern.

*Follow up indicates a conversation with student, Year Level Co-ordinator, parent or Campus Office Staff.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT LEADERS WILL

- Coordinate, monitor and support Focus Group teachers, classroom teachers, students and parents/carers to implement Attendance Procedures and Policy.
- Identify and follow up when a student has been absent more than five days in a term for any reason (indicating attendance falling below 90 per cent), even for parent approved health-related absences.
- Identify and follow up students who have unexplained absences over 10%. Regularly monitor the year level attendance rates.
- Establish goals and strategies to support improved student attendance at school.
- Refer students to internal and external support services when needed.
- Discuss attendance concerns with Focus Group Teachers and initiate meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns, attendance requirements, and potential consequences of unsatisfactory attendance rates, in conjunction with the Satisfactory Completion Policy. This would include implementing Attendance Improvement Plans.

- Support the progress of students At Risk through liaison with Focus Group Teachers, Campus Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator and Campus Principal/Assistant Principal.

CAMPUS COORDINATOR

- Ensure that the Attendance Policy is evident and understood by students and parents.
- Support Student Management Leaders in monitoring student attendance data at each year level through examination and analysis of attendance reports.
- Work with Student Management Leaders to implement Attendance Improvement Plans for students who fall below the 90% attendance requirements.
- Support teachers and Student Management Leaders in the implementation of the Attendance Policy and Procedures.
- Communicate to staff specific absences (explained) such as internal or external suspension.

STUDENT WELFARE COORDINATOR

- Support of all staff in early intervention of all At Risk students.
- Regularly support students who are At Risk and implement strategies and programs to reengage students with their schooling.
- Seek the support of the appropriate outside agencies to support students who are At Risk with attendance.

CAMPUS OFFICE STAFF

- Accurately input daily absences (including school based activities) and absence information on Compass.
- Facilitate the communication within each campus and between home and school with regards to student absences.
- Send an automated SMS to parents if a student is absent. This will be sent at 11:00am once the data has been generated from period 1 and 2 classes. Then again by 4pm for data generated from periods 3 to 6.
- Receive emails, phone calls and texts from parents in regards to student absence.
- Refer specific attendance issues to Year Level Co-ordinators if concerned about a particular student absence.

PRINCIPAL CLASS

- Monitor attendance through collection, analysis and evaluation of data against set goals and targets.
- Encourage the development of policies and culture, which encourage student engagement and attendance.
- Ensure that Attendance Policy and Procedures are implemented and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Support the Campus Coordinators in ensuring there is clarity in the school's Attendance Policy amongst 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.

Essendon Keilor College 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 Essendon Keilor College 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**'.

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 (Except for International Students)

- 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.

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, Essendon Keilor College will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- 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 relevant student wellbeing staff such as the level coordinator, student welfare coordinator or College Social worker.

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 Office

If Essendon Keilor College 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 South Western Region 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.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [Appendix Two: Notification of an Extended Absence from School.](#)
- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- School Website

DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES

EXPLAINED AND UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

Absences are classified as either explained or unexplained.

EXPLAINED ABSENCES INCLUDE:

- Illness with a medical certificate or statutory declaration for all students, except International students
- Attendance at an approved school activity (e.g. meeting with a teacher or welfare staff, instrumental music or drama production, camp, excursion or school sporting event).
- Suspension from school (internal or external).
- Exceptional personal or family circumstances (e.g. funeral, family illness of parent, sibling). This will be at the discretion of the Campus Principal.

All students are specifically required to provide a medical certificate or statutory declaration if absent on the day of a CAT SAC/SAT or VCE-VM assessment.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES:

- All other absences are unapproved.
- A student who arrives late to a scheduled class may be marked late, if a student is late and misses the equivalent of one period of a double class, the student will be marked absent for the first period.

REQUEST FOR EXTENDED ABSENCE (DUE TO TRAVEL/OTHER ACTIVITIES):

- Parents and students must complete the 'Extended Absence from School Form' at least 4 weeks in advance for the absence to be considered for approval.
- Students who undertake extended absences without the appropriate school approval may not complete the units successfully.
- Where approval is granted, students MUST see their teachers to complete the 'Work to be Completed Form'.

ATTENDANCE RATES

Attendance rates will be calculated as a percentage:

The number of classes attended divided by the total number of classes. This will take into consideration the total number of explained absences. Therefore, only unexplained absences will decrease rates.

A large number of explained absences may still result in non-completion of a unit or unsatisfactory completion of a year of study e.g. long period of illness or travel.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE RATES

Students not achieving the attendance rate of 90% will be closely monitored by specific support structures in the school. Action will be taken in line with the schools at risk procedures.

Students doing VCE or VCE-VM units are unlikely to be granted this due to VCAA requirements for 90% attendance

A VCE/VET/VCE-VM student not achieving an attendance rate of 90% for a subject will receive an N for that unit. The outcome and communication of this result will be made in conjunction with the student, teacher, parent and Student Management Leader.

The Year 7-11 student will remain in the subject until the end of semester and may be recommended to repeat the unit or have consideration for Redemption.

A Year 12 student will be immediately removed from the subject and be allocated to a timetabled study session. If more than one subject at risk, pathway options will be discussed