

Student Attendance Policy



**Williamstown
High School**

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AT WILLIAMSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL WE VALUE:

- Excellence and creativity in our achievements and ambitions.
- Integrity and honesty in our actions and relationships.
- Diversity in our curriculum, in each other and in our community.
- Strong and open communication between our school and our homes, and between our teachers, our students and our families.
- A commitment to social justice and a passion to protect and improve our environment and our community.

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 and Training website – 2017)

PURPOSE:

- Students must achieve a 90% attendance rate to satisfy course requirements at all year levels.
- Maximise the attendance of all students to enhance the opportunities for success at school.
- Support families in achieving regular attendance for their children.
- Identify and support all students at risk of non- attendance.
- Ensure the efficiency and accuracy of data collection for school, legal and audit requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- This policy provides clear roles and responsibilities for all students, parents/carers and staff.
- Maximising attendance is dependent upon effective working partnerships between the school, parent/carers and the student.
- The school will work collaboratively with the parent/carer to implement a range of effective attendance strategies to maximise and support opportunities for all students.
- Staff will be responsible for monitoring and investigating student absences.

SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS

- a. Attend and be punctual for all scheduled classes (90% attendance per semester is minimum requirement).
- b. In the case of illness, students are to provide notes and/or medical certificates from parents/carers to the Homegroup Teacher or contact the school's Attendance Officer as required.
- c. Inform the classroom teacher of an upcoming absence prior to the date of an approved school activity.
- d. Students should catch up on missed work in a timely manner, seeking support from teachers as required.
- e. Students should notify the Homegroup Teacher/Student Management Leader about serious family issues.
- f. Sign in at office and provide parent/carer explanation if late to school.

In the event that a student misses a scheduled assessment task, the student must provide a medical certificate or statutory declaration to the Attendance Officer (Pasco), or to the teacher (Bayview), in order to be given an opportunity to complete the task.

PARENTS

- a. Ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day.
- b. Notify the school if student is absent, preferably by 10am on the day.
- c. Provide explanations for all absences. It can be provided via the absence line, in person, by a note or email, or via Compass stating the reason for the absence and a parental contact number.
- d. Contact the Homegroup Teacher or Student Management Leader for assistance if a student is unwilling to attend school.
- e. Notify the Homegroup Teacher or Student Management Leader as soon as possible about serious family or health issues that may affect school attendance.

STAFF

CLASSROOM TEACHER

- a. 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.
- b. Communicate with student and parents when student's attendance rate drops below 90% (including consistent lateness and unexplained absences) and help students catch up on work missed.
 - Liaise with Attendance Officer and/or Student Management Leader and/or Homegroup teacher for any additional information before contacting parent.
- c. Seek support from Homegroup Teacher/Student Management Leader with concerns about student attendance.
- d. Notify the Attendance Officer in advance of students attending excursions.
 - This must be at least 48 hours prior to the excursion.
 - If students do not attend excursion Attendance Officer must be informed on the day of the excursion.

Teachers should initiate the "At Risk" process for students whose attendance rate falls below 90%.

HOMEGROUP TEACHER

- a. Accurately mark and maintain daily Homegroup rolls.
- b. Follow up* with parents/carers all unexplained absences from Homegroup.
 - Liaise with Attendance Officer before contacting parent as it may have already been completed.
- c. Ask for, and pass on, notes to Attendance Officer so absences are explained.
- d. Monitor students' attendance and discuss with individual students when attendance is a concern.
- e. Check the absence activity reports using Compass and follow up any unexplained absences. Seek support from Student Management Leaders if any student's attendance is an ongoing concern.

*Follow up indicates a conversation with student, Student Management Leader, parent or Attendance Officer.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT LEADERS (SML)

- a. Coordinate, monitor and support Homegroup teachers, classroom teachers, students and parents/carers to implement Attendance Procedures and Policy.
- b. 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.
- c. Identify and follow up students who have unexplained absences over 10%. Regularly monitor the year level attendance rates.
- d. Discuss attendance concerns with Homegroup Teachers and initiate meetings with parents/carers in conjunction with Homegroup Teachers to discuss attendance concerns, attendance requirements, and potential consequences of unsatisfactory attendance rates.
 - This would include implementing Attendance Improvement Plans.
- e. Support the progress of students At Risk through liaison with Homegroup Teachers, Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leader, Student Welfare Coordinator and Assistant Campus Principal.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING LEADER

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

STUDENT WELFARE COORDINATOR

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

ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- a. Accurately input daily absences (including school based activities) and absence information on Compass.
- b. Provide attendance summaries to Student Management Leaders at regular intervals to assist them to identify when a student's attendance is close to 90%.
- c. Provide Compass reports to Homegroup Teachers, Student Management Leaders and Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leader on a regular basis.
- d. 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.
- e. Receive emails, phone calls and texts from parents in regards to student absence.
- f. Refer specific attendance issues to Student Management Leaders if concerned about a particular student absence.

ASSISTANT CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

- a. Support the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leader in ensuring there is clarity in the school's Attendance Policy amongst students and parents.
- b. Ensure that a good example is set by all staff with attendance and punctuality.
- c. Oversee the consistent implementation and review of policies and procedures.

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

- a. Encourage the development of policies and culture, which encourage student engagement and attendance.
- b. Ensure that Attendance Policy and Procedures are implemented and reviewed on a regular basis.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW:

As part of an ongoing evaluation process the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team will review the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy at the conclusion of each semester. Improvements to the processes and procedures will be adapted when required.

Once ratified by School Council, this policy will be reviewed in line with the school's Strategic Plan.
This policy was ratified by School Council on 21 August 2018

Appendix One: 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.
- Illness with a note from the parent/carer or parent phone call to the Attendance Officer.
- 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 on the Campus Principal.

All Year 10 to 12 students are specifically required to provide a medical certificate or statutory declaration if absent on the day of a SAC/SAT or VCAL assessment. This needs to be shown to the classroom teacher and passed onto the Attendance Officer by the student.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES:

- All other absences are unapproved.

A student at the Pasco Campus who arrives more than 10 minutes late to a scheduled class may be marked absent.

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

1. 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.
2. Students who undertake extended absences without the appropriate school approval may not complete the units successfully.
3. Where approval is granted, students MUST see their teachers to complete the 'Work to be Completed Form'.

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

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 VCE/VCAL/VET 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.

A VCE/VET/VCAL 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 10 or Year 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 specific study session in the VCE Study Centre.

Appendix Two: Notification of an Extended Absence from School

Extended absences from school can have implications on student learning and connectedness. Of course, some extended absences are unavoidable, such as illness or a serious family situation. However, families should consider the impact of long-term absences that are within their control, such as overseas travel. Extended absences have a particularly serious impact on educational progress in the senior years of schooling and become critical in VCE/VCAL, as there are specific VCAA requirements for attendance.

If you do wish to **apply for approval** for an **extended absence** please complete the form below and submit the request to your Student Management Leader at **least 4 weeks in advance** of the proposed absence dates.

In preparation and planning for your absence:

- Students are asked to see each teacher so that they can fill in a 'Work to be Completed Form'.
- On return from the absence, the student and a parent may be requested to attend a meeting with their Homegroup Teacher or Student Management Leader to support their transition back into classes.

Notification of an extended student absence:

Name of student: _____

Home group: _____

Period of absence: _____

Reason for absence:

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Homegroup Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Management Leader Signature: _____ Date: _____

School use only:

Notification for extended absence granted: YES / NO

Notification processed by: _____ (Student Management Leader)

Date: _____

It is imperative that the Student Management Leader pass this front section of the document onto the Attendance Officer as soon as it is completed.

WORK TO BE COMPLETED FORM – TO BE FILLED IN PRIOR TO ABSENCE



Absence work for _____

Homegroup _____

Teachers please be informed that this student will be absent from your classes for the following time from _____ to _____.

Please include on this sheet the work that you want the student to do during this time. Please state if the student will miss any Common Assessment Tasks, SACs or other significant assessment tasks or learning activities and explain if this absence will affect this student’s overall satisfactory result in your subject.

SUBJECT	WORK TO BE COMPLETED WHILE ABSENT	ABSENCES – total number of periods	TEACHER SIGNATURE

Parent signature _____ Student signature _____ SML signature _____

WORK TO BE DONE TO CATCH UP ON MISSED CURRICULUM– TO BE FILLED IN ON RETURN



Catch Up Work for _____

Homegroup _____

Please include on this sheet the work that the student needs to do to cope with the work missed. In assessing this work needed, ask the student to show you any work they completed while absent. Then make a judgement on the essential work they have still not completed that is necessary for them to cope with the ongoing curriculum.

SUBJECT	WORK FOR CATCH UP	Due Date	TEACHER SIGNATURE

Parent signature _____ Student signature _____ SML signature _____