



# ATTENDANCE

School Policy and Advisory Guide Reference: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/spag.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/spag.aspx</a>	Last updated 8/6/2023
Endorsed by Wodonga Primary School Council	
Origin	DET
Line Manager	D. Duncan
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## Introduction

Wodonga Primary School is committed to promoting and maintaining a high level of student attendance and engagement in school.

Regular attendance at school is essential for students to achieve quality education and quality life outcomes. Ensuring regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between parents/caregivers, students and schools.

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 obligation of Wodonga Primary School's parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Maximise learning opportunities by ensuring student absenteeism is kept to a minimum
- Articulate agreed processes for managing student absences
- Create a parent culture that views regular school attendance and communication of student absences as important.

## Definition

Term	Definition
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

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people to develop skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend the school they are enrolled in 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 a Federation member school, or
- The student is registered for homeschooling and has only a partial enrolment in a Federation member school for particular activities.

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

Wodonga Primary School believes that all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for teaching and learning. Wodonga Primary School is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

Wodonga Primary School will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Wodonga Primary School parents/carers are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when teaching and learning is offered and to communicating openly with the school including providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Wodonga Primary School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.

## Supporting and Promoting Attendance

Wodonga Primary School has a Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy which supports student attendance.

Our member schools may promote student attendance by:

- Promoting the importance of attendance in the school newsletters
- Developing strategies as required

## Recording Attendance

At Wodonga Primary School student attendance is recorded twice per day using Compass to:

- Meet legislative requirements
- Discharge the school's duty of care for all students

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



## Recording Absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent/carer must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents and carers should notify their child's school of their absence by:

- Logging the absence on Compass, or
- Contacting the school's office

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent/carer, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, the school will notify parents/carers by sending a notification message through the school's Student Information Management System at 10.00am.

If contact cannot be made with the parents (due to incorrect 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, to explain an ongoing absence.

Wodonga Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal or delegate will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purposes of the parent/carer meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If the principal or delegate considers that the parent/carer has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence, the absence will be marked as **'approved absence'**.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse or no notification has been provided, the absence will be marked as **'unapproved 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
- Bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friends of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- School refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent/carer to address causes and support the student's return to school
- Cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- A family holiday where the parent notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file and then updated when notified.

### 1. 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 three days, Wodonga Primary School will work collaboratively with parents/carers, 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 relevant Wellbeing staff.



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We understand from time to time that some students will need additional support and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, the school will endeavour to provide this support when it is required.

### **2. Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement**

If Wodonga Primary School 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 North Eastern Regional Office for further action. If from multiple attempts to contact a parent/carer, 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.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more often if necessary due to changes in legislation or circumstances.

#### **Victorian Department of Education and Training**

- School Attendance Guidelines
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: Attendance

This policy was last updated on **27 July 2020** and is scheduled for review in **July 2023**.