

Student Attendance Policy

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 Wantirna College has in place to:
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Wantirna 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 Wantirna College, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

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 important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Wantirna 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 Wantirna College or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Wantirna College for particular activities.

Regular attendance is also imperative to satisfy the conditions of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Vocational Education and Training Courses (VET) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

This policy refers directly to the roll marking system provided by Compass and the DET attendance package CASES.

Guidelines

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

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2.1 Wantirna College believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction. We are committed to working with our school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

2.1.1 Our 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 (see Guideline 1.7).

2.1.2 Parents will communicate with the General Office or their child's Transition Support/Explore Group teacher about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

2.1.3 Parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to

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- communicating openly with the school and provide valid explanations for any absence (see Guideline 1.5).
- 2.1.4 Parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school in a timely manner (see Guideline 1.5) and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.
- 1.2 An accurate register of student attendance will be maintained.
- 2.2 The General Office Team will ensure that an accurate register of student attendance is maintained.
- 2.2.1 Classroom Teachers will ensure students who arrive late at the College are marked present (late) upon their arrival to class to ensure that they are included on the daily attendance register.
- 2.2.2 Students who must leave the College before the end of the day are required to notify the school.
- Prior to the day, parents will update their child's attendance on Compass to indicate that the student is leaving school early.
 - Alternatively, parents will provide a written explanation to the General Office on the morning of the early departure. The General Office will then update Compass accordingly.
 - Students will not be excused from class without approval shown on Compass.
- 2.2.3 Teachers must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:
- meet legislative requirements
 - discharge Wantirna College's duty of care for all students
 - meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students
- 2.2.4 Attendance will be recorded by every class teacher within the first 10 minutes of each lesson using Compass.
- 2.2.5 If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.
- 2.2.6 Classroom teachers will follow up irregular attendance during the day and notify the relevant Year Level Leader should the student appear to have been truant.
- 2.2.7 The General Office Team will ensure the daily automated upload of attendance data into the Department of Education and Training's (DET) Computer Administration Student Enrolment (CASES) Program is successful.
- 2.2.8 The General Office Team will promptly update the Computer Administration Student Enrolment (CASES) Program and Compass when a student is formally enrolled, transfers or exits to maintain a correct record of students.
- 1.3 Processes will be in place to monitor student attendance and ensure parents, Year Level Leaders and teachers are aware of student absence.
- 2.3 If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, the General Office will notify parents by SMS. Wantirna College will attempt to make this contact with parents

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1.4 The College has a responsibility to monitor student attendance as required by the Education Act and Department of Education and Training (DET) Guidelines and in order to comply with the conditions pertaining to the Youth Allowance and Abstudy for the post-compulsory years.

1.5 Student's absence and lateness must be approved by the College. This includes full or part day absences.

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as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

2.3.1 If a student is absent for 3 days as identified via the Compass chronicle digest the Sub School Education Support (ES) Staff will contact parents/carers to raise concerns for the students non-attendance.

Contact with families will be recorded on Compass as a Chronicle Post. When contact is made with families, Compass attendance will be updated accordingly.

2.3.2 If there are:

- concerns regarding ongoing attendance issues
- if the parents are unaware of the student absence
- if the General Office is unable to make contact with the parents/carer after several attempts

the Sub School ES staff will refer the matter to the relevant Year Level Leaders for follow up via a chronicle post on Compass.

2.3.3 If contact cannot be made with a parent regarding ongoing attendance concerns or due to incorrect contact details, the school may attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school.

2.3.4 The Sub School ES staff and/or classroom teachers will liaise directly with the Sub School team when parents are unaware of a student absence.

2.4 On request from the relevant government agencies, the General Office will identify the number of student absences for students receiving Government assistance through Youth Allowance and Abstudy.

2.5 Parents/guardians will be required to provide information satisfactorily explaining a student's absence (approved absence). An absence that is without satisfactory explanation from a parent/guardian will be deemed to be an unapproved absence. Student's absence and lateness must be approved by the College. This includes full or part day absences.

2.5.1 For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. Parents should notify Wantirna College of absences by adding an 'Attendance note' for their child via the attendance section on Compass.

2.5.2 If parents are unable to add an 'Attendance note' to their child's Compass, parents are to provide verbal or written explanation (handwritten or email) and/or a medical certificate regarding student absences on the day the student returns to the College. Any written/signed absence notes should be handed to the General Office before school or at recess, and will be entered into Compass.

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1.6 Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn.

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- 2.5.3 Where a written note does not satisfactorily explain an absence, the following may occur:
- parent/guardian contact by the Sub School Team
 - parent/guardian and student meeting with the relevant Year Level Leader to discuss the student's absence
 - referral to the Student Wellbeing Team
- 2.5.4 Wantirna 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.
- 2.5.5 If Wantirna 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**'.
- 2.5.6 The Principal has the discretion to accept an explanation 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
- Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.
- 2.5.7 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.
- 2.6 Students who arrive at school after 8.45am must ensure that the reason for their lateness is explained to the College via Compass or a note/phone call/email from their parent/guardian. If no written explanation is provided on arrival or via Compass one must be provided within 24 hours. Parents can approve the late arrival as per Guideline 2.5.1 and 2.5.2. If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days, the lateness will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' as per 2.5.7.
- 2.6.1 A students' late arrival to school will be recorded on Compass by the classroom teacher.
- 2.6.2 Students who arrive late to class, but not late to school, will undertake 'Time in' with the classroom teacher at recess, lunch or after school.
- 2.6.3 Any student who leaves the College before their last class of the day must sign out at the General Office even if they are intending to return. Students who do return to school can report to their

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

1.8 If Wantirna 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 North Eastern Regional Office for further action.

1.9 The College will provide information to educate parents/guardians and students about the importance of school attendance in line with DET Guidelines.

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next class and their classroom teacher will record their attendance on Compass. Parents must have approved the students part day absence as per Guideline 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.

2.6.4 Students with unapproved absences, all day or part, may be required to make up the lost time in a number of ways which could include the following:

- 45 minute detention
- attendance subsequent to the last school day for any given year level

2.7 Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance. Students are also able to approach a member of their Sub School Team or the Wellbeing Team for support.

2.7.1 Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, Wantirna 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 the Student Wellbeing Team.

2.8 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 the Regional 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.

2.9 Regular information will be provided on the College Newsletter and/or via Compass to inform the school community of the importance of school attendance and the related processes and procedures.

2.9.1 Wantirna College's *Student Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

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MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Attendance](#)
- [School intranet](#)

ORIGINAL POLICY DRAFTED BY:	R. Spina, D. Kotsikas and Student Services Committee
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MAJOR REVIEW BY:	D.Tyson, C.Horvath and S.Wettenhall (Student Services)
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