

Student Attendance Policy



RATIONALE:

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 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.

This policy provides the framework for a whole-school approach to the engagement of students in their learning and school life.

It is to be read in conjunction with:

- Pakenham Secondary School's [Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy](#).
- [DEECD School Attendance Guidelines 2014](#)
- [DEECD Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014](#)

We understand that sometimes special consideration may need to be given to in-school procedures for students and their families from particular backgrounds or with particular living circumstances.

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Pakenham Secondary College

- Is committed to promoting the key messages of the benefits of regular school attendance.
- Believes all children should attend school all day, every school day.
- Believes successful students are well organised and start the day on time
- Recommends students organise family holidays/shopping trips/medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.
- Believes non-attendance can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- Monitors, communicates and implements whole school strategies to improve regular school attendance

RESPONSIBILITIES

Classroom teacher responsibilities:

- Monitor each student's attendance and punctuality.
- Address concerns early through an attendance/punctuality improvement plan

Team Leader responsibilities:

- Monitor each student's attendance and punctuality, record actions on the Attendance Interview sheet.
- Address attendance/punctuality concerns early through an attendance/punctuality improvement plan
- Determine the appropriate follow up to ensure the student's education and wellbeing are supported following a school absence
- Coordinate Student Absence Learning Plan if absence is planned and approved
- Identify students who are at risk of disengaging from school
- Make DHS/ChildFIRST notifications where appropriate and in consultation with school leadership
- Escalation of attendance concerns as per Staged Response to Non-Attendance

Student responsibilities:

- Attend school every school day
- Arrive at school and classes on time and prepared

- Talk to a teacher if you have issues that might impact on your ability to attend school/class

Parent responsibilities:

- Ensure their child attends school every school.
- Ensure their child arrives at school before 8.45am
- Provide a valid explanation for a student's absence/lateness
- Provide the school with advanced notice if there is a planned up-coming school absence
- Communicate openly with the school about a student's ongoing medical condition that may result in ongoing absence or medical appointments during school hours
- Alert the school early to issues that may impact on a student's attendance
- Work in partnership with the school to address attendance concerns

Principal/School Leadership responsibilities:

- Use CASES21/eCASES21 to record student attendance
- Consider the explanation given for an absence and whether it is reasonable in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- Report the annual rates of student attendance for the year to the school community
- Document non-attendance strategies at whole school level
- Ensure that processes are in place to document non-attendance strategies at individual level e.g. home visits, phone calls, Attendance SSG's, SOCS referrals, DHS/childFIRST notifications
- Make a referral to the School Attendance Officer as required
- Ensure processes are in place to document further enforcement proceedings around non-attendance including, referral to the School Attendance Officer, issuing of a School Attendance Notice, infringement notice (and any appeal), court proceedings

STRATEGIES

At Pakenham Secondary we promote 100% attendance at a whole school level by:

- Regularly communicating with parents about expectations for attendance
- Promoting awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
- Immediately following-up any problems identified by students and parents
- Regularly discussing student attendance records in staff meetings and in the staff Performance and Development review process.
- Focusing on prevention and early intervention by creating a positive school culture
- Intervening and providing targeted responses for individual students

At Pakenham Secondary College we promote 100% attendance at an individual level through:

- Sub school meetings to discuss attendance data and plan strategies to follow up individual students
- Team Leaders develop an improvement plan when:
 - A student falls below 90% and the absence is having a significant impact on a student's educational attainment, achievement and development
 - A student has been truanting (absent without parental consent)
 - A parent reports that a student refuses to attend school
 - There has been no explanation for the student's absence
 - A parent repeatedly fails to provide a reasonable excuse for their child's absence.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

When following up absences, Pakenham Secondary College will:

- Further investigate the reasons for the student's absence (the actual reason may differ to the explanation initially provided)
- Organise a meeting with the parent and a relevant teacher or other staff member at the earliest opportunity to identify the issues related to the non-attendance and to plan for improvement
- Ensure they notify a parent in writing each time the school considers they have not provided a reasonable excuse for the absence.

RESPONSES TO ABSENCES

- Students who fall below 80% attendance in any class will record an 'N' for that subject in the semester report. The report comment will include –“Based on an attendance rate of less than 80%....has not been able to successfully meet the requirements of this subject”
- Students who have 80% to 90% attendance will be required to sit additional work by the class teacher to gain an 'S' for the subject.

Sport and Excursions are not considered to be absences in this instance, but may impact on the student's ability to complete all the required work for success.

Students who attend less than 80% will have an average of 1 day per week absent for the whole year and will not have completed the same learning or have the same level of understanding as a student who has attended 100%. This may impact on their ability to catch up on this work or be successful at the next level of education.

The school will work in partnership with a significant adult to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan. This may include, engaging with the family, meeting with the parents, convening an Attendance Support Group and/or a return to school plan.

If there is deemed to be a behavioural, social or health issue that is impacting on attendance, the student will be referred to the Welfare team which may include an SSO. Referrals to Re-engagement programs, Child First, external welfare agencies or School Attendance Officer are some of the options if the initial intervention strategies are not successful.

REPORTING AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is recorded electronically every lesson by the classroom teacher, this information is collated centrally on the CASEs system.

All teachers are responsible for following up class absenteeism and ensuring the students do not miss learning opportunities.

Parents are encouraged to ring the absence hotline if they know the student is going to be absent (this expectation is communicated in all publications to the College community) or notify the Team Leader in advance. Parents are notified by an SMS system if their child is not at school and the parents have not made prior contact with the school. The PSC attendance officer publishes the list of absences and late students twice daily for Team Leaders and teachers to compare to their class lists.

<i>Ratified by College Council: December 2015</i>	<i>1 year Review Cycle</i>
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