



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 our school 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 Apollo Bay P-12 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 Apollo Bay P-12 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 Apollo bay P-12 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 our school, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in our school for particular activities.

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

Apollo Bay P-12 College believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

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.

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.

Apollo bay P-12 College parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff about any issues affecting their child's attendance and will 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

Apollo bay P-12 College *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Apollo Bay P-12 College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge our school'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 lesson/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.

Recording absences

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

Parents should notify the school of absences by:

- contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence, or entering the absence on COMPASS

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, Apollo bay P-12 College will notify parents by SMS/push notification message via COMPASS. Our school will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact 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, on the day of the unexplained absence.

Apollo Bay P-12 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 the 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
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student
- 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, our 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.

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 Officer

If Apollo Bay P-12 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 West Victorian Region for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to make 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

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- [School intranet](#)

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three year review Cycle.

DATE RATIFIED: 17 May 2016

DATE FOR REVIEW:

Term 2 2019

UPDATED 14/05/2019

Tiffany Holt
Principal

Tamara Gorrie
College Council President



Apollo Bay P-12 College Attendance Policy

Summary of Key Expectations in Relation to This Policy

Our College aims to ensure that 95% of our students will attend school for 95% of the required time. This means that 95% of our students will not miss greater than 10 days of school each year.

All students at Apollo Bay P-12 College must maintain at minimum a **90% Attendance Rate**, however 95% is desirable.

Subject Teachers

- Subject Teachers will monitor student attendance within their own classes. They will keep accurate records via COMPASS, marking their rolls electronically for every lesson.
- Where a student's attendance is not meeting policy requirements in a particular subject (as oppose to all subjects), the subject teacher may contact a students' parent/guardian directly where this concern is raised (after consultation with the Head of Junior or Senior School).

Homegroup Leaders

- Homegroup Leaders will monitor via COMPASS the attendance percentages of all students within their Homegroup.
- Homegroup Leaders will encourage students to monitor their own attendance percentages each week during Homegroup meetings via COMPASS.
- Homegroup Leaders will report to the Leading Teacher when a concern regarding meeting policy requirements is raised for an individual student.
- Homegroup Leaders may make direct contact with a parent to alert them to the concern.

Heads of Junior and Senior School

- In consultation with the Homegroup Leader, the Head of Junior or Senior School will arrange any further correspondence with parents and perform any subsequent interview processes.
- The Homegroup teacher and the Leading Teacher will implement any processes required for students that will enable them reach their attendance requirements.

Office Administration Staff

- The student attendance Office personnel will ensure that accurate information regarding student attendance is provided to the Homegroup Leader fortnightly.
- The student attendance Office personnel will also alert the Leading Teacher where a concern regarding attendance may be evident.
- The student attendance Office personnel will assist the Leading Teacher in any administration tasks regarding correspondence with specific parents/guardians and will also send correspondence to all parents/guardians of students with unapproved absences.

STUDENT LATE Arrival/ Early Departure

- Students who are late must sign in at the office and then report directly to their scheduled class.
- Repeated latecomers may be subject to the same implications and those not meeting attendance requirements.
- Parents picking up students early must sign them out via the General Office.