

School Attendance Policy

Ratified by School Council August 2019



1. **Definitions:**

- 1.1 DET – Department of Education & Training
- 1.2 School community – parents/carers, teachers & students
- 1.3 Sentral - Student Data Management System
- 1.4 Principal Class Officers – Principal and Assistant Principals
- 1.5 SSG – Student Support Group
- 1.6 IAP – Individual Attendance Plan
- 1.7 IEP – Individual Education Plan

2. **Purpose:**

- 2.1 Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years, unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 School participation is important as it maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks.
- 2.5 School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.
- 2.6 This policy provides the framework for a whole-school approach related to the engagement of students in their learning and school life. It is to be read in conjunction with:
 - *The school's Engagement and Inclusion Policy* ([see school website](#))
 - *The school's Staged Response to Non-Attendance* (available upon request)
 - [DET School Attendance Guidelines 2014](#)
 - [DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014](#)
- 2.7 We understand that sometimes special consideration may need to be given to students and their families from particular backgrounds or with particular living circumstances. In our setting we identify families whom we consider to be particularly vulnerable and we work in consultation with them, using specialised interventions.
- 2.8 The recent research in Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts suggests that where there is multiple disadvantage apparent, early intervention through SSG's and ~~I~~**I**~~P~~**I**~~E~~**P**~~s~~**-plans** are beneficial and are initiated at the time of enrolment, where appropriate.
- 2.9 Coatesville Primary School expects all students to attend for the full school year in order to maximise student wellbeing, engagement and continuous improvement in their learning outcomes.

3. Guidelines

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

The Coatesville Primary School community:

- 3.1 is committed to promoting the key messages of the benefits of regular school attendance
- 3.2 believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day
- 3.3 believes successful students are well organised and start the day on time
- 3.4 believes that family holidays should not occur during school Terms as per the Victorian DET calendar
- 3.5 believes that in the best interest of students that shopping trips are scheduled outside of school hours
- 3.6 believes that in the best interest of students that medical appointments are scheduled outside of school hours, where practicable
- 3.7 believes non-attendance can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- 3.8 monitors, communicates and implements whole school strategies to improve regular school attendance
- 3.9 is aware that chronic absenteeism may be a sign of stress factors in a student's life
- 3.10 believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

4. Implementation:

Teacher responsibilities include:

- 4.1 recording each student's attendance and punctuality on Sentral
- 4.2 sending students who arrive late for class to the office administration for a late pass
- 4.3 recording the reason for an absence on Sentral or inform the office administrators
- 4.4 addressing attendance/punctuality concerns early through meeting parents and developing an attendance/punctuality improvement plan
- 4.5 identifying students who are at risk of disengaging from school
- 4.6 notifying DHHS/Child FIRST where appropriate and in consultation with school leadership
- 4.7 escalating attendance concerns as per DET's Staged Response to Non-Attendance
- 4.8 advising the Principal of family holidays taken during the school Term. Family holidays during the school Term are deemed to impact upon a child's formal

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Student responsibilities include:

- 4.9 attending school every day, all day
- 4.10 arriving at school and classes on time and prepared in line with the Ready, Set Learn program.
 - Step 1: 8.50am - enter the classroom, place school bag in locker, unpack daily requisites and then play inside or outside
 - Step 2: 8.57am - sitting in class ready for roll call
 - Step 3: 9:00am - roll call and begin first learning session
- 4.11 talking to a staff member if they have issues that might impact on their ability to attend school/class.

Parent/Carers responsibilities include:

- 4.12 enrolling their child of compulsory school age in a government or non-government school or, applying the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) for registration for home-schooling.
- 4.13 ensuring their child who is enrolled at school, attends every day the school is open for instruction
- 4.14 ensuring that their child arrives on time in line with the Ready, Set, Learn program
- 4.15 contacting the school via the absence phone line on 9570 1652 or at coatesville.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au if their child is absent from school. Telephoning the office, after 8.30am, on the morning of your child's absence from school. A message is forwarded to your child's class teacher.
- 4.16 Informing the school with an explanation of your child's absence, ~~the office will contact parents/carer as soon as is practicable. If no explanation is provided, the child's absence will be recorded as an unapproved absence.~~
- 4.17 prior to collecting a child early, parents/carers need to sign their child/ren out at the office.
- 4.18 providing the school in advance of any valid, planned up-coming absence
- 4.19 communicating with the school about a student's ongoing medical condition that may result in ongoing absence or medical appointments during school hours
- 4.20 alerting the school early to issues that may impact on a student's attendance
- 4.21 working in partnership with the school to address attendance concerns
- 4.22 making any appointments outside of school hours so as not to disrupt the learning outcomes of students, where possible.

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Principal/ Principal Nominee/ School Leadership responsibilities include:

- 4.23 prompt communication with parents/carers where there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a student
- 4.24 ensuring that all staff access Sentral to record student attendance and absences
- 4.25 ensuring that Sentral holds a complete attendance history for each student. This history shows lateness, early dismissal, holiday and non-school related activities
- 4.26 ensuring that student attendance is recorded twice per day, (9:00am & 2:00pm) in every class and reason given for each absence is recorded considering the explanation given for an absence and whether it is reasonable in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- 4.27 reporting the annual rates of student attendance for the year to the school community at least once a year
- 4.28 ensuring that processes are in place to document non-attendance strategies at whole school level
- 4.29 ensuring that processes are in place to document non-attendance strategies at individual level in student's file e.g. home visits, phone calls, referrals, DHHS/Child FIRST notifications
- 4.30 notifying the DET Regional School Attendance Officer, as required
- 4.31 processes are in place to document further enforcement proceedings around non-attendance including, referral to the DET School Attendance Officer.

5. Implementation Strategies to improve student attendance:

At Coatesville Primary School we promote 100% attendance at a whole school level by:

- 5.1 providing interpreters and translated materials; including letters, are available when communicating with parents from language backgrounds other than English in matters relating to school attendance
- 5.2 providing annual induction to staff regarding school attendance policies and procedures
- 5.3 articulating high expectations to all members of the community
- 5.4 regularly communicating with parents about expectations for attendance promoting awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
- 5.5 modelling punctuality across the whole school

- 5.6 creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- 5.7 developing collaborative and empowering relationships between teachers, students and parents/carers
- 5.8 implementing effective and supportive transition programs, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school
- 5.9 developing class and home group structures and environments that enable opportunities for increased connectedness to individual teachers and peers
- 5.10 encouraging parents to get involved in the life of the school
- 5.11 immediately following-up any problems identified by students and parents/carers in a transparent manner
- 5.12 adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences
- 5.13 immediately following-up individual student absence
- 5.14 correctly using student attendance data management systems
- 5.15 delegating responsibilities to all staff, with a key member of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives
- 5.16 monitoring and analysing school attendance records regularly and using Sentral to identify students at risk
- 5.17 regularly discussing student attendance records in staff meetings and in the staff performance and development review process
- 5.18 provide early identification of and supportive intervention for students at risk of poor attendance
- 5.19 understanding the causal factors of absence and the need for targeted interventions
- 5.20 focusing on prevention and early intervention by creating a positive school culture
- 5.21 intervening and providing targeted responses for individual students
- 5.22 setting individual student attendance goals and data-driven improvement plans for identified students
- 5.23 procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended period as deemed appropriate by the Principal.

At Coatesville Primary School we promote 100% attendance at an individual level by:

- 5.24 employing a full time Student Wellbeing Coordinator
- 5.25 providing a positive, supportive and inclusive school climate
- 5.26 implementing a Whole School Positive Behaviours Model and restorative practices
- 5.27 promoting whole school values through the Ready, Set, Learn program

- 5.28 building school pride by delivering Student Leadership programs, including SRC and House Captains
- 5.29 conducting effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications
- 5.30 providing Individual Education Plans.

6. Response to absences

At Coatesville Primary School, we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- 6.1 contacting parents of students who have not arrived at school by 9.30am
- 6.2 publishing an annual Parent Information book
- 6.3 following the Victorian DET's Staged Response to Non-attendance proforma to target individual non-attendance concerns.

~~6.3~~

7. Reporting and monitoring attendance

- 7.1 At Coatesville Primary School reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents/carers, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:
 - DET [School Attendance Guidelines](#)

8. Additional resources

- [DET School Attendance Guidelines 2014](#)
- [Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts](#)

This policy was last ratified by School Council in August 2019

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