



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 Altona PS has in place to
 - o support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - o record, monitor and follow up student absences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Altona Primary School.

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 Altona Primary School, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

DEFINITIONS

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 IMPLEMENTATION

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 Altona Primary School 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 Example School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Altona Primary School for particular activities.

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

Altona Primary School 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.



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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.

Altona Primary School 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 at Altona 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.

Expectations

Enrolled students are expected to attend Altona PS 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 Altona PS, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Altona PS for particular activities.

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

Process for:

Principal

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.

The principal will ensure:

- Clear attendance expectations are evident to students and parents
- A good example is set by all staff with attendance and punctuality
- Oversee the consistent implementation and review of policies and procedures

Classroom Teacher

- Accurately and consistently mark the roll using the Compass platform and maintain class attendance roll;
- Follow up consistent lateness;
- Monitor students and seek support from principal with concerns;
- Show concern for students who are absent and supply work missed;



ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Notify the office in advance of students attending excursions;
- Develop and implement a program which is challenging and engaging to students;
- Regularly monitor percentage student attendance rates.

Students

- Attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes;
- Provide a medical certificate/written note to classroom teacher on return to school;
- Sign in at office and provide explanation if late for school;

Parents

- Ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day;
- Notify the school (preferably in advance) if a student is to be absent, using COMPASS (see school website for COMPASS log-in and instructions);
- Provide written explanation to the school for each student absence;
- Contact the classroom teacher for assistance if a student is resistant to attending school.

CASES 21 Operator

- Generate and maintain class rolls;
- Accurately input daily absences and absence information on CASES 21;
- Facilitate the tracking of student lateness;
- Provide CASES 21 reports to classroom teachers on request.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Altona Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance. Our school also promotes student attendance by: Promoting 'It's not ok to be away',

Recording attendance

Altona PS must record student attendance twice per day.

This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge the school's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers at start of the school day and after lunch using the COMPASS portal. Attendance data is imported to CASES21/eCASES monthly.

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

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 through phone call if it is an unplanned absence, adding an attendance note via COMPASS, and/or informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned absence

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, Altona Primary School will notify parents by SMS through COMPASS and/or by phone and attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the **same day** of the unexplained absence.



ATTENDANCE POLICY

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to no response or 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. If a student is absent on a particular day, and the parents/guardian have not contacted the school, and if the school has made every attempt to contact the parents/guardian with no response, the absence is marked as unexplained.

Altona PS 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 Altona Primary School considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**Parent Choice**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**Parent Choice: Unauthorised**'.

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, Altona PS will work collaboratively with parents, 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 wellbeing team

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 Altona PS 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 Vic South Western Regional Office for further action.

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 a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - o the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
 - o measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
 - o the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
 - o no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related School Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Child Safe Policy



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Related DET Resources

- [School Attendance Guidelines \(docx - 148.04kb\)](#)
- [Out-of-Home Care and Homelessness - Supporting Children, Young People and their Families](#)
- [Affected by Homelessness – Guidelines for Victorian Schools](#)

- *Legislation - Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle, and/or if circumstances and regulations change.