



Southern Cross Primary School

Student Attendance Policy

CONSULTED

October 2020

REVIEW

October 2024

Definition:

In accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years unless an exemption has been granted.

Parents/Guardians must enrol a child of compulsory school age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.

Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance or attendance and enrolment for the student, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.

A principal or regional director (*depending on the circumstances*) may authorize an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance or attendance and enrolment to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.

For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. The school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Schools must record student attendance twice per day in primary schools and record, in writing, the reason given for each absence. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge schools' duty of care for all students
- assist calculation of the school's funding
- enable school councils to report on student attendance annually
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements (for VCE students).

All registered schools must ensure their system for recording student attendance meets the requirements above. Government schools must use only CASES21, eCASES21 or third party software which is compatible with CASES21 to record student attendance. Schools using third party software are required to import attendance data into CASES21 on a monthly basis. Schools that do not have current attendance data recorded in CASES21 will receive regular email notifications reminding them to import their data.

Parents/guardians are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and a principal must record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent/guardian.

Schools must advise parents/guardians promptly of unexplained absences, including for post-compulsory aged students.

Additionally schools enrolling international students are required to effectively monitor student attendance and implement a documented intervention strategy where attendance is at risk of failing to meet the minimum Student Visa requirement (attendance of a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours during each study period). See: *ISP Quality Standards and School Resources* under [Department resources](#)

Year level movement:

Schools should regularly promote students to the next year level with their peer group. Schools use their professional expertise and judgment in relation to these matters.

Students are retained only in exceptional circumstances where a school considers it is required for the long-term benefit of the student e.g. considering their social, welfare and academic needs. Schools must ensure that parents/guardians are fully advised of the options that the school considers to best meet individual student needs. Students however should not be retained without the consent of parents/guardians.

Schools should avoid practices and policies that have the effect of restricting admission.

Policy:

Schools must follow the Department's student exemption processes.

Attending school every school day for the whole day enables students to participate in the school's educational program as well as develop their social skills. Regular attendance enables the school to:

- plan an organized educational program that is delivered in a consistent way and has continuity
- facilitate shared student learning experiences that support the educational program
- monitor student progress and adjust the educational program to meet student needs.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* allows exemptions from school attendance and enrolment to be granted in certain circumstances. All applications for exemptions are considered on a case by case basis, with the student's best interests as the guiding principle for decision-making. In making a decision, the potential benefits or negative consequences of granting the exemption to the student's educational progress, wellbeing and development are also considered.

Note: No exemption is required if a student is not of compulsory school age (6-17 years of age).

A student must continue attending school until an exemption is granted. (See exemption categories listed overleaf)

School Procedures:

- If student is absent for initial day, after rolls have been marked in the classrooms, the office manager sends a cases21 text to the nominated parent on the enrolment form to let them know of the absence.

- If there is no reply to the text, the office manager will attempt to call the parent to verify absence.
- If students are on leave for more than 2 days and we have had no parent contact, the class teacher will call to see if all is well with the student. The parent will be asked to present a medical certificate upon the students return to school as a requirement from the Department of Education.
- If a student is away for an undetermined period of time, relevant school work will be provided if the student is capable of completing it.
- If no contact is received from the family for 2 or more days, regular phone calls will be made to ascertain reasons for absence. If this fails a registered letter will be sent asking for the school to be informed of student absence.
- If a student is travelling overseas for a lengthy period of time, sufficient and relevant work will be provided. This will be negotiated with the parents and student if possible (age of student important here) this can be placed on “**google docs**” **if possible and agreed to by parents**, and can be a means of keeping contact with the student whilst they are not in the country. A **student absence learning plan** will be filled out during the parent meeting for both **google docs** work or paperwork for the student. This is to be signed and agreed to by all involved.
- If a student is continually late over a period of weeks, parents will be contacted for reasons/explanations, which can then be forwarded onto the Regional office. Disruptions to classroom learning/student uneasiness will be discussed with parents in the hope of initiating a change of attitude/behaviour from the families concerned.