

POLICY TITLE: Attendance Policy  
 DATE RATIFIED: 2017  
 REVIEW DATE: 2020

ENPS MISSION: We maximise the potential of all; empowering independence, excellence, innovation and engagement with the world.

Critical Engagement  
with the World

Academic Excellence

Inclusive Learning  
Environment

Personal and Social  
Wellbeing

## RATIONALE

At Essendon North Primary School, in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged 6 to 17 years of age unless an exemption has been granted or the student is registered for homeschooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.

There is a strong correlation between student learning, longer-term life outcomes, attendance at school and appropriate participation in education programs. It is critical that students develop habits of regular attendance from the time they commence school. Poor patterns of attendance can place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations. Once learners have begun to absent themselves from school, and the initial cause of this remains undetected or unexplored, it is likely that the pattern of absence will continue and escalate through the subsequent school career.

## DEFINITIONS

**Exemption:** 2.1.5 Exemption from attendance at school The Minister, by Order generally or in a specific case, may exempt a child or children from attendance at school. (*Education and Training Reform Act 2006 Act No. 24/2006 page 17*)

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

**Home Schooling:** Home schooling in Victoria is a legally recognised alternative to attending a registered school. Parents/carers who wish to homeschool their child must satisfy the requirements of the *Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority*.

**Unexplained absences:** no verbal or written explanation given to the school by the parent/carer of the student.

**Unapproved absences:** no reasonable excuse has been given for the student's absence and is not approved by the principal.

## THEORY OF ACTION

**If**, school participation is important as it maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks

**Then** consistently attending school helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

## **PURPOSE**

Essendon North Primary School is committed to improving the attendance rates of all students. Specific processes will be followed to maximise learning opportunities by encouraging and supporting all students to consistently attend school. All those involved in the education of students will manage absenteeism using agreed procedures. Procedures and processes will be communicated to parents/carers on a regular basis, and full-attendance will be actively encouraged by all ENPS staff.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **a.) School Attendance Guidelines**

The school adheres to the *Victorian DET's Attendance Guidelines 2014* that:

- Applies to all registered schools in Victoria (including non-government schools), parents/carers of compulsory school-aged children, and School Attendance Officers.
- Supports schools and School Attendance Officers to meet their responsibilities and duties under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* and *Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013*

### **The attendance guidelines includes:**

- Strategies to encourage high levels of school attendance and how to improve attendance where an issue is identified.
- An explanation of the legal requirements of school-age children to attend school, and the processes required to excuse or exempt their attendance.
- Procedures for schools to record, excuse, monitor and follow up student attendance in order to meet the requirements of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* and *Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013*.
- An explanation of the procedures a School Attendance Officer will follow as required by the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* and *Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013*.
- Advice for School Attendance Officers to aid their decision making when a parent has not met their obligations

Note: Terms in these guidelines have the same definition as in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. Thus, unless specifically defined otherwise, the term "parent" includes "a guardian and every person who has parental/carer responsibility for the child including parental/carer responsibility under the *Family Law Act of the Commonwealth* and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides".

### **b.) Attendance Records**

The school will record student attendance twice per day 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 the school's council to report on student attendance annually

The school will use only CASES21 or eCASES21 to record student attendance. Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and the principal must record in writing the reason

(if any) given by the parent/carers. The school will advise parents/carers promptly of unexplained or unapproved absences.

### c.) Year Level Movement

The school will promote students to the next year level with their peer group, and staff will use their professional expertise and judgment in relation to these matters.

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

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### The role of the school:

- maintain attendance records and develop policies to support and maintain attendance.
- ensure attendance records are correctly coded according to the *CASES21 Administration Guide*.
- attendance processes are explained in the ENPS parent handbook.
- utilise the re-engagement program if required for ongoing absenteeism.
- detail number of days absent twice yearly on student progression point reports.

### The role of the parent/carer:

- must provide an explanation on each occasion of absence to the school by providing a note, or face to face conversation, or via an email or phone conversation.

### The role of the principal:

- approve or not approve any absence on a case by case basis.
- notify parents if more than five days unapproved or unexplained absence.
- make referrals to the School Attendance Officer when required.
- authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance or attendance and enrolment to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.

## EVALUATION

The Student Attendance Policy will be reviewed in 2020 or earlier as deemed necessary.

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

| Version | Effective Date | Owner          | Description of change  |
|---------|----------------|----------------|--|
| 2       | June 2017      | Executive Team | Adjustments to previous Student Attendance policy to ensure document is reflective of DET and school practices and procedures. |

\* Information on revisions and new versions to be added to the top of the table, therefore the most recent is always on top.