



Tarwin Lower Primary School

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"Small School, Big Opportunities"

Cooperation, Kindness, Resilience, Respect

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale:

- The *Education Act* requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Regional Director.

Aims:

- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

Implementation:

- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.
- Absenteeism contributes to educational disadvantage and contributes significantly to student failure at school.
- All students are expected to arrive to school on time.
- Parents/Guardians will sign their child/children in or out at the Office if they arrive late or leave early.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence - shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.
- If a student is ill for over a week, a doctor's certificate will be requested.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to school to explain why an absence has occurred early on the same day.
 - Phone call
 - Email
 - Compass
 - Written note – before the day
 - Complete an absent form generated from Compass – sent home as an unexplained after the absent day/s
- The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
- All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers, are aggregated on our CASES database and communicated to the Department of Education.
- The Department of Education and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained.
- The principal will ensure parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences are contacted, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- If a parent does not contact the school to provide an explanation on the day of the student absence, the school must attempt to contact the parent (for example by telephone or text) of the student as soon as practicable on the same day. If an explanation is received, the accurate cause of the absence must be recorded.
- Schools must advise parents promptly of unexplained absences. Schools should take care to notify the parent who is responsible for ensuring the child's attendance on that particular day. If, upon being notified of their child's absence or contacted to seek an explanation, a parent reports that the child

was not living with them on that day, the school should- ensure they notify another parent who was responsible for ensuring the child attended school on the relevant day(s).

- If contact cannot be made with the parent, the school should attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school.
- If, following contact, the student's safety has been established, but no explanation has been provided within 10 school days, the absence should be recorded as an unexplained absence and also be noted in the student's file.
- Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance may result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported to the Department of Human Services.
- Posters encouraging school attendance will feature prominently, as well as newsletter articles.
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

Related Policies

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/attendance.aspx>
- School Attendance Guidelines
- Student Absence Learning Plan
- <https://www.telethonkids.org.au/our-research/research-topics/school-attendance>

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's **three-year** review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 8th May 2018