



CARWATHA COLLEGE P-12

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English Speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school.

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 Example School has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Carwatha College P-12.

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 Carwatha College P-12, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

DEFINITION

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

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 Carwatha College P-12 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 Carwatha College P-12, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Carwatha College P-12 for particular activities.

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

Carwatha College P-12 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.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Carwatha College P-12 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 Carwatha College P-12 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.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Carwatha College P-12's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

- Canine Comprehension/Dog Therapy - funded through the School Focused Youth Services to improve attendance.
- The implementation of Learning Houses and Homegroups in the secondary school to promote and manage student attendance
- Navigator Program - a service that students can access if they have less than 30% attendance and can be provided as an outreach program.
- Wellbeing programs run through the Health Domain: E.g. the Peer Support Program, the Inside and Out Program and the Rite Mentoring program which all have a focus on improving attendance through engagement strategies.

Recording attendance

Carwatha College P-12 must record student attendance at least twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Carwatha College P-12's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers at the start of each period using compass.

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

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify Carwatha College P-12 of absences by:

- contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence, calling the absence phone number or recording the absence on compass.

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, Carwatha College P-12 will notify parents by SMS/push notification message. If parents respond the office records the data in Compass. If the Year Level Coordinator or Primary classroom teacher receives a note from the student, a response will be entered in Compass.

Carwatha College P-12 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 Carwatha College P-12 considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

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

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, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- 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.

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, Carwatha College P-12 will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, which could 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 relevant student wellbeing staff

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.

Incorrect Attendance Recording

Marking attendance is an obligation of all staff members. Accuracy should be ensured at all times. If a mistake is made in the marking of attendance, students/parents/carers are to contact the staff member responsible in the first instance. If the issue is not rectified, it can be escalated to the child's House Leader (Secondary) or Primary Leading Teacher/Assistant Principal.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Carwatha College P-12 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 south east 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:
 - the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
 - measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
 - the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

Attendance – Staff roles and responsibilities

Secondary:

Administration Support (day-to-day management)	Homegroup Teachers (weekly management)	Learning House Assistants (overall management)	Learning House Leaders (ultimate responsibility)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Management of daily late passes -Emails/Phone calls home for daily unexplained absences on ad hoc. Chronicle contact. -Generating CASES attendance reports/Producing Compass attendance 'letters' when directed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Call home for students absent without a reason for two days in a row -Configure chronicle digest as per instructions in HGT Handbook. Contact home. Chronicle contact. Enter absence notes. -Work with students to discuss and encourage attendance. Set attendance goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Oversee attendance in the Learning House, with support from the leader. -Run regular attendance report and monitor attendance trends within the house. -Work with HGTs to ensure students' families are contacted when absent -Make regular contact home for students who fall below 90% -Devise attendance plans for students below 80% attendance without a known reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Co-ordinate the homegroup program and responsible for managing their team of staff -Management of complex student absences, including school refusers -Working with the LHA to provide significant support for students below 60% attendance, including referrals to external services. -Creation of return to school plans. -Responsible for any timetable modifications, pathways discussions, etc.

Role of the Homegroup Teacher:

Student Absences

Homegroup teachers are expected to follow homegroup students on their chronicle digest on Compass. When doing so, Homegroup Teachers should configure their chronicle digest to receive the following attendance flags:

Attendance Flags

Flag Types: ⓘ

- Not Present (Unexplained)
- Not Present (Unexplained) over Last 3 Days
- Late (Unexplained)
- Late (Unexplained) over Last 3 Days
- Late Today (Unexplained)
- Not Present (Unexplained) for more than 50% of classes in last 3 Days
- Not Present (Unexplained) for at least one session today
- Late Today (Unexplained/Explained)
- Present but no longer accounted for

Late (Unexplained) Consecutive Days: 2

Late (Unexplained/Explained) Cumulative Days in a Term: []

Late to Class instances in the last 3 days: []

Not Present (Unexplained) Consecutive Days: []

Not Present (Unexplained) Cumulative Days in a Term: []

Save Cancel

Homegroup teachers are expected to call home for students that are absent two days in a row.

Homegroup teachers are expected to chronicle their contact home and any reasons provided for the absences/lateness and enter the data in the attendance area (see below for codes). Any students in V3 require a medical certificate for the absence to be approved and this needs to be given to the LHL or LHA.

If the reasons for absence require intervention, these students will be referred to Learning House Leaders and Assistants.

Should any homegroup have an unusually high number of students in these categories in any given week, they should discuss this with their Learning House Leaders.

These attendance and lateness concerns should also be raised with the students in homegroup time, Homegroup Teachers should advocate for the student and highlight the importance of coming to school on time every day.

Homegroup Teachers will also help students to set attendance targets and review attendance data at the instruction of Learning House Leaders and Learning House Assistants.

At the end of each week, the main office will email all parents students missed attendance and be asked to rectify this via compass by enter illness/medical/holiday.

Role of the Learning House Assistant:

Learning House Assistants are to manage attendance within their Learning House as part of their portfolio. Learning House Assistants will:

- Run attendance reports on a regular basis, identifying students who require support/contact and identifying and responding to attendance trends
- Monitor and ensure that students missing 2 days in a row are being contacted/supported by HGTs. Work with HGTs to ensure these students' absence reason is known, attendance notes entered and contact chronicled.
- Make contact with families of students who fall below the 90% attendance threshold. Entering attendance notes, documenting contact and supporting the student to attend more regularly. Inform families about redemption processes. *
- Devise attendance plans for students below 80% attendance without a known reason (such as family holiday). Work with the Learning House Leader to arrange adequate support, parent meetings, etc where required. *
- Devise absence learning plans (ensuring student work is available) for students who will miss 5 days or more in a row.
- Work with the Learning House Leader to respond to truancy and chronic lateness

*Note – a 'common sense' approach to these thresholds should be enacted – contact may not be required if there is a known and unavoidable reason for student absences (such as medical

issues or long holidays), attendance notes have been entered and no further support is required.

Role of the Learning House Leader:

Learning House Leaders will oversee a team of staff including HGTs and LHAs to ensure that students are adequately supported. LHLs are ultimately responsible for the management of attendance within their house. Learning House Leaders will:

- Ensure staff within their teams are supported in implementing attendance procedures
- Working with the LHA to provide significant support for students below 60% attendance, including referrals to external services. Complete Navigator referrals, consider alternate pathways and settings, etc.
- Manage complex student absences, including school refusal.
- Create return to school plans for students who have missed extended periods.
- Work with stakeholders to develop and define pathways for senior students with poor attendance. Modify timetables where necessary
- Build LHA capacity to manage attendance, working with them to develop attendance plans

Primary:

Administration Support (daily management)	Primary House Leader (co-ordinates attendance responses)	Classroom Teacher (Weekly management, ultimate responsibility)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Management of daily late passes-Emails/Phone calls home for daily unexplained absences on ad hoc. Chronicle contact.-Generating CASES attendance reports/Producing Compass attendance 'letters' when directed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Working with classroom teachers to ensure students within the Learning House are followed up-Promoting attendance within their Learning House	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Regular contact home for students who are absent/late, especially without reason.-Entering attendance notes on Compass and chronicling contact home.-Documenting attendance plans/discussions and working with the Primary AP/LT on management of chronically absent students.

Department of Education Resources:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/resources>

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2023
Consultation	School Council, October 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2027