

	Attendance and Leave Policy	Review & endorsed by School Council: Revised : November 2020 Developed: November 2020
Information: 02 6076 1566 Manager: Principal	DET Schools Reference Guide: Everyday Counts Associated Policies: Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy	Next review: November 2024 Issue No: 1.0

RATIONALE

The rationale 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 learning
- 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 Corryong College has in place to support, monitor and maintain student attendance
- record, monitor and follow up student absences.

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 Corryong College 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 therefore the part-time enrolment of each school, when combined, accounts to a full-time schooling program.
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Corryong College for particular activities.

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day. Corryong College believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for learning and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance. This philosophy is supported by the **DET Everyday counts campaign (Appendix C)**.

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

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.

Parents

Corryong College parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when learning is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Corryong College 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

Corryong College Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

At Corryong College we promote 100% attendance at a whole school level by:

- Regularly communicating with parents about expectations for attendance
- Promoting awareness that absences results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
- Immediately following-up any problems identified by students and parents
- Regularly discussing student attendance records at staff meetings and in the staff Performance and Development review process.
- Focussing on prevention and early intervention by creating a positive school culture
- Intervening and providing targeted responses for individual students

At Corryong College we promote 100% attendance at an individual level by:

- Year level meetings to discuss attendance data and plan strategies to follow up individual students
- Year Level leaders develop an improvement plan when attendance falls below 85%.

Recording attendance

Corryong College must record attendance in every class within the first 15 minutes. This is necessary to:

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

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each lesson using Xuno, this information is collated centrally on the CASES21 database system. All teachers are responsible for following up their own class absenteeism and ensuring students do not miss learning opportunities.

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

At Corryong College, we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- 95% approved attendance (5% unapproved)
- Over 90% attendance for all student

Recording absences – Form Assembly and Period 1 classes

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

Parents should notify Corryong College of absences by:

- contacting the front office by 9:00am on the morning of the absence
- recording absence on Xuno by 9:00am on the morning of the 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, Corryong College will notify parents by Xuno.

Corryong College 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 Corryong College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as **'approved absence' – Illness, Medical and Dental appointments, Bereavement, School Refusal, Cultural Observance, Family Holidays**.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as **'unexplained 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 (refer to appendix A - High attendance re-engagement process)
- 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 5 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.

Students leaving during school time

- Foundation to Grade 6 students are not permitted to leave school during the day unless they are collected from school by parents or authorised adults, who need to complete the leave register in the Front office (written verification of this is required).
- Year 7 to 12 students must seek permission to leave school grounds at any time including lunchtime or recess break.
- Any student who wishes to leave the grounds for any reason **MUST** bring a note from home (signed by their parent/carer). If they are attending an appointment or another reason that cannot be carried out in lunchtime or after school, they should take their explanatory note to the Year Level Leader, Assistant Principal, or Principal and sign-out in the usual manner (and sign in on return) at the front office.
- Leave is not granted for the purpose of purchasing food or beverage items (**Excluding year 12 students**)
- Year 12 students may leave at lunchtime but must sign out and in on the leave register at the front office.

Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

Where **two days** unexplained absences are recorded in a row, Year Level Leaders are to call parents/guardians to confirm reason for absence.

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than **five days**, Corryong College will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing an Attendance Student Support Group – Year Level Leader, AP – Wellbeing, parents/carers, and student
- implementing a Return to School Plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan where necessary
- arranging for assistance from relevant student wellbeing staff which may include referrals to; School counsellor, SSSO, Reengagement services, Child First or Welfare agencies.

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 DET School Attendance Officer

If the Wellbeing team has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the nonattendance to the DET School Attendance Officer in the North Eastern Victoria 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.

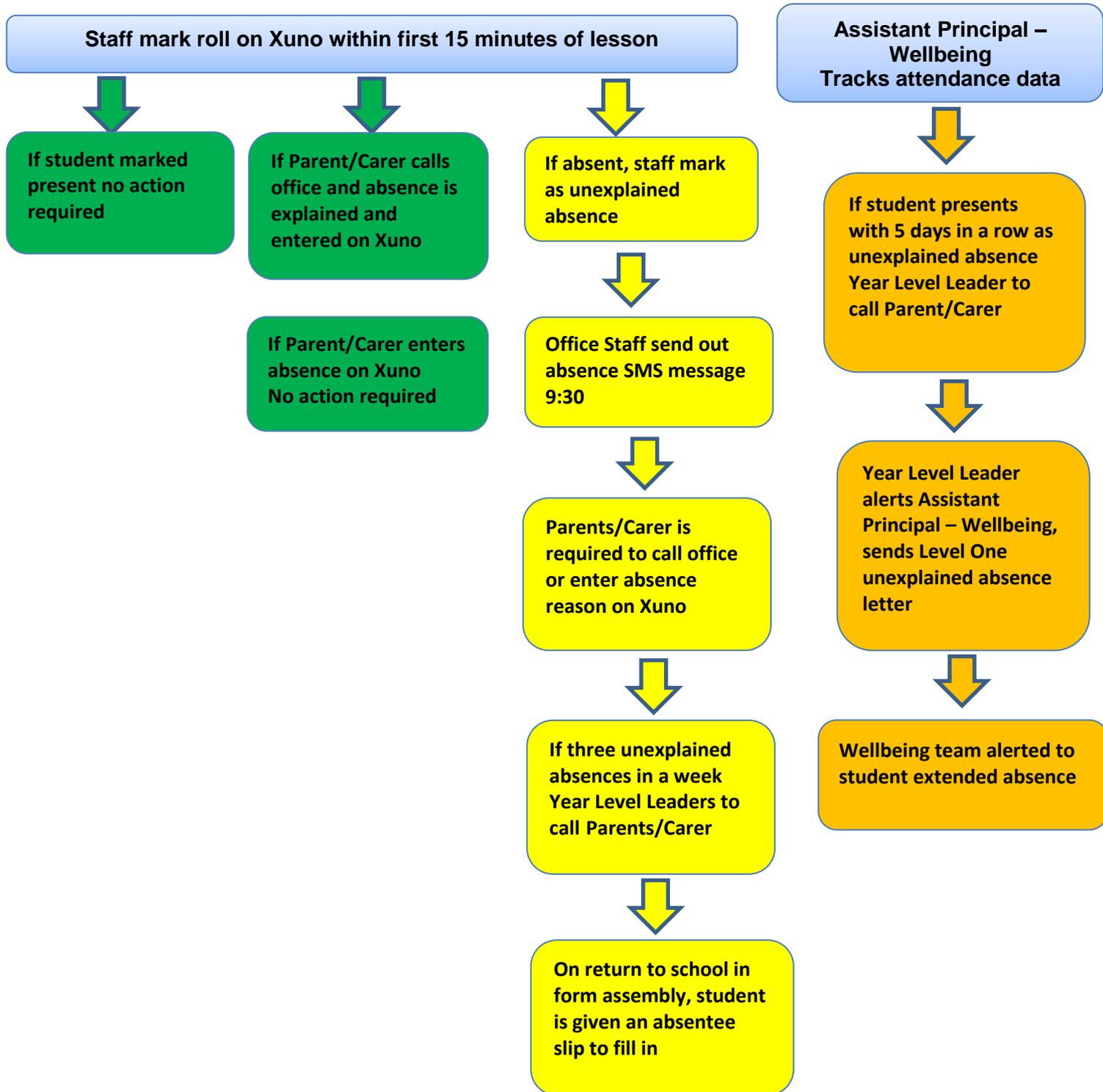
Definitions

AP – Assistant Principal

SSSO – Student Support Service Officer

DET – Department of Education and Training

APPENDIX A - Attendance Procedure



APPENDIX B - Exit Procedure

Parents/Carer contact school – student will be leaving school

Foundation to Year 9

Exit document downloaded from CASES21

Information recorded on exit document
New address
New school information

Exit document information updated on CASES21

Year 10, 11 and 12

Exit document downloaded from CASES21

Exiting to another school

Year Level Leader holds exit interview

Information recorded on exit document
New address, new school information, equipment returned.

Exit document information updated on CASES21

Exit document downloaded from CASES21

Exiting to employment

Careers counsellor holds interview to assist with determining career path

Information recorded on exit document
Employment details, new address (if applicable) any school equipment returned.

Exit document information updated on CASES21



EVERY DAY COUNTS

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education.

Students learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them behind.

SCHOOL IS BETTER WHEN YOUR CHILD IS THERE

Why it's important

We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school each and every day.

Students develop good habits by going to school every day – habits that are necessary to succeed during their time at school as well as after they have left, whether it's in the workplace or in further study.

Missing school can have a big impact on students academically and socially. It can affect their test results as they progress through school, concluding with their VCE & VCAL studies, and, just as importantly, it can affect their relationships with other students, and lead to social isolation.

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes.

Each missed day is associated with progressively lower achievement in numeracy, writing and reading within the primary years. Later this leads to falling behind in subject topics and assessment tasks, and lead to fewer subject choices and may impact on achievement in years 11 and 12 and post-school pathways.

Getting in early

It's never too late to improve attendance. Attendance patterns are established early – a child regularly missing days in their early years, will often continue to miss classes in the later years, and receive lower outcomes than their classmates. It is vital that students go to school every day.

In the middle years, when school can seem the most challenging for students and when attendance rates can be at their lowest, going to school more often can make a big difference. **Every day counts.**

Schools are there to help – if you're having attendance issues with your child, speak to your school about ways to address those issues.

IN VICTORIA SCHOOL IS COMPULSORY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 6 – 17 YEARS

Student Absences

The main reasons for absence are:

Sickness – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they're ill. It's vital that they're only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and setting good sleep patterns, eating well and exercising regularly can make a big difference.

Family holidays - It's vital that holidays are planned during school holidays where possible, and not during the term. If you are planning to go on holiday during term time, make sure that you talk to your school in advance, and work with them to develop an absence learning plan.

“Day off” – Think twice before letting your teenager have a “day off” as they could fall behind their classmates – every day counts.

Truancy – This is when students choose not to go to school without their parent’s permission or skip out of school during the day. There can be many reasons for truancy; the best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together.

While all absences can affect academic performance, DET’s statistics show that unexcused absences are a much stronger indicator of lower reading and maths achievement.

School refusal - School refusing children experience significant emotional distress not only when going to school but also at the thought of going to school; they may be absent from school for weeks or even months at a time. School refusal differs from truancy as children generally stay home with the knowledge of the parents and despite their best efforts to encourage their child to go to school. See: [My child or teenager has anxiety](#)

BEING AWAY FROM SCHOOL FOR 1 DAY A FORTNIGHT EQUALS MISSING 1.5 YEARS OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOL.

3 WEEKS PER YEAR IS A HALF A YEAR MISSED BY YEAR 6. THIS CREATES A LARGE GAP IN STUDENTS LEARNING.

If your child is away

If for any reason your child must miss school, there are things you can do with your school to ensure they don’t fall behind:

- Inform the school via your child’s Classroom Teacher for Primary, Form teacher or Year Level Leader for Secondary.
- Find out what work your child needs to do to keep up.
- Develop an absence learning plan with your child’s teacher and ensure they complete the plan.

Remember, every day counts. If your child must miss school, speak with your child’s classroom teacher, form teacher or year level leader as early as possible.

Openly communicating with your child’s school about all absences is a good way to prevent attendance issues being escalated to the Assistant Principal – Wellbeing and then to the Department’s School Attendance Officer. A School Attendance Officer is a Department of Education and Training Regional Director who has authority to follow up attendance issues. Chronic or ongoing attendance issues that are escalated can lead to an Infringement Notice being issued to parent/s.

If you’re having attendance issues with your child, please let the classroom teacher, year level leader, or Assistant Principal – Wellbeing know so you can work together to get your child to school every day.

TOP ATTENDANCE TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Schools want to work in partnership with parents – act early if you have any concerns by contacting your child’s school and asking for advice and support
- Remember that every day counts
- There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes and their social connectedness
- Talk positively about school and the importance of attending every day
- Open and prompt communication with your child’s school about all absences is a good idea
- Avoid making routine medical and dental appointments during the school day or planning family holidays during the term
- Seek help from your school if you are concerned about your child’s attendance and wellbeing. Schools want to work in partnership with parents to support student attendance and wellbeing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information and resources to help address attendance issues, visit: [Student attendance](#).