

Student Attendance



Policy

Updated November 2018



PURPOSE

To ensure all students enrolled at Skye Primary School attend school every day to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from their schooling.

AIM

- To ensure students, staff, parents and carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.
- To explain to school staff, parents and carers the key practices and procedures Skye Primary School has in place to support, monitor and maintain student attendance; and record, monitor and follow up student absences.

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 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 children to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

It is an expectation that students at Skye Primary School are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn.

Students are expected to attend school 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 at Skye Primary School.
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Skye Primary School for particular activities.

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

Parents and Carers Responsibilities

Parents and carers have a responsibility:

- To ensure that their child/children attend school on time every day.
- To communicate with relevant staff at Skye Primary School about any issues affecting their child/children's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- To provide a valid explanation for their child/children's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.



- To notify Skye Primary School of unplanned absences by calling the school absence line or entering an absence through the Sentral Parent Portal.
- To inform the classroom teacher prior to an absence if it is planned.

School Responsibilities

Skye Primary School 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.

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, Skye Primary School will work collaboratively with parents or carers, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance.

Skye Primary 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 or carers to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.
- Encourage students to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- Support students if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- Record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to meet legislative requirements and discharge Skye Primary School's duty of care for all students. Attendance is recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of the school day and after lunch using Sentral. If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the classroom teacher will record them as being present on Sentral and the supervising teacher will record attendance also.
- Notify parents and carers by SMS if a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified, or the absence is otherwise unexplained. Skye Primary School will attempt to contact parents and carers by SMS as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond. If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school, where possible, on the day of the unexplained absence.
- Keep a record of the reason given for each absence. If Skye Primary School considers that the parent or carer has provided a reasonable excuse for the purpose of the parent or carer meeting their responsibility under the Education Training Reform Act 2006 and the School Attendance Guidelines, the absence will be marked accordingly. If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as 'parents choice unapproved'. 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. Parents or carers will be notified if an absence has not been excused.



Acceptable reasons for absences are:

- 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 and time for mourning.
- School refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent or carer to address causes and support the students return to school.
- Religious/cultural observance if the parent or carer notifies the school in advance.
- Family holidays where the parent or carer notifies the school in advance.

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, Skye Primary School will work collaboratively with parents and carers, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- 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 of time.
- Arranging for assistance from relevant Wellbeing staff.

Skye Primary School understands from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance. In collaboration with the student and their family or carer Skye Primary School will endeavour to provide this support when it is required.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Skye Primary School 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 Eastern Victoria region for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact a parent/carer, 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/carer 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 is unknown and the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

Related Policies

- 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 Skye Primary School, parents/carers and the School Attendance Officer under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on 23 November 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2022.

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL ON	
PRINCIPAL	Jane Briffa
SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT	Janelle Forster-Wilson
EVALUATION	This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle, or as required due to changes in relevant Acts, Laws, DET mandates, or should situations arise that require earlier consideration.