



## Attendance Policy

### 1. BACKGROUND & PRINCIPLES

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted.

Daily school attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they don't fall behind both socially and developmentally. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age.

School participation is important as it 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 which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Conversely, limited school participation is associated with a greater chance of dropping out of school, disruptive and delinquent behaviour and may lead to a cycle of rebellion against authority. These outcomes have later implications for employment, a range of health risk behaviours (drug and alcohol abuse), homelessness, poverty, welfare dependence, and involvement in the justice system.

It is acknowledged that for some children and young people mainstream school environments may not always be the most appropriate settings. Therefore, participation in an approved re-engagement program is considered attendance at school.

Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student, or
- the student is registered for home schooling which may also include a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.

A student is considered to be in attendance at school;

- When involved in an offsite curriculum program or other activity organised by the school (e.g. an excursion or camp).
- When the student is engaged in a re-engagement program or another school part time to make up full time attendance and the schools or settings have agreed the time fractions, allocation of Student Resource Package (or other funding) and the educational plan for the student.

Home schooling in Victoria is a legally recognised alternative to attending a registered school. Parents who wish to home school their child must satisfy the requirements of the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority and require approval to do so.

### 2. PURPOSE & AIMS

The overall purpose and aim of this policy is to encourage **regular and consistent** attendance at school by **ALL** students.

- *Through this policy, we at Apollo Bay P-12 College are attempting to highlight the importance of attendance and change any mindset where attendance is sometimes seen as discretionary, contrary to the stated Education Acts for those under 17 years of age.*

### ***Our Specific AIM is therefore:***

- To maximise learning experiences, opportunities, performance and outcomes of all students at Apollo Bay P-12 College by ensuring that they attend school *regularly and without unnecessary or frivolous absences*.

***Our College aims to ensure that 95% of our students will attend school for 95% of the required time. This means that 95% of our students will not miss greater than 10 days of school each year.***

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **3.1 Attendance Requirements**

3.1.1 Students are required to attend school and ALL their scheduled classes (including private study periods for senior students), except where legitimate and serious reasons prevent such attendance. See 3.2 below.

3.1.2 All students must maintain at minimum **90% Attendance Rate**, however 95% is desirable.

**NOTE: 90% = 20 days absence per year, which is greater than the State Average for P-6 being 15 days and Year 7-12 being 18 days.**

3.1.3 Exemptions or variations may be made to this **90% requirement** for students with special circumstances. In this instance an '**Individual Education Plan (IEP)** will be established for the student.

3.1.4 VCE Students are required to meet attendance requirements as per VCAA Policy. This policy meets these requirements, however, details of any further particular attendance requirements applying to VCE classes will be provided at the beginning of the year to VCE students.

3.1.5 Attendance Rates will be reported via COMPASS and End of Semester Reports.

3.1.6 Parents/Guardians will regularly be sent letters regarding explanations for any "unexplained" absences. The College Administration Officer will undertake this role.

### **3.2 Types of Absence and their Impact on attendance requirements-**

Absences of all types – including parental approved, unapproved, suspensions and truancy will normally count towards overall school absences. Parents / guardians must formally notify the school by phone or in writing of an absence and the reason for this absence in order not to affect the percentage absent requirement.

**KEY EXCEPTIONS Attendance Requirement include the following:**

#### **3.2.1 Medically Certificated Absences-**

- Certificates must be submitted to the school. The College reserves the right to verify the authenticity of medical certificates. Where feasible, and particularly in situations of extended illness, catch up work should be set and completed.

### 3.2.2 **Extended family holidays-**

- The Learning Community Leader or General Office should be informed in writing ahead of time of such holiday arrangements. Where feasible, catch up work will be set and completed. *An extended Family Holiday is any holiday that is 5 days or longer of missed school.*

### 3.2.3 **Funerals and other major family events**

- Notified prior to the event via a note or phone call.

### 3.2.4 **Legitimate appointments**

- Notified prior to the event via a note or appointment card, and proof of attendance following the appointment e.g. Medical Certificate of attendance to appointment.

### 3.2.5 **College sanctioned activities-** NOT considered as an absence.

- These include activities such as school sport, music lessons and performances, College productions, excursions and camps, work placements, student meetings, counselling, community involvement activities and others as determined by the Principal. The College Principal will make any final decision as to whether an activity is College sanctioned or not.

## 3.3 Implications of Not Meeting Attendance Requirements

Where a student's attendance level falls below the 90% Attendance Requirement, the College will implement actions according to the DET "Strategies to Improve a Students Attendance" as detailed in the link below.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/improvementstrategies.aspx>

These strategies may include;

- Engaging with the Family and meeting with Parents/Guardians
- Establishing an Attendance Support Group
- Establishing an Attendance Improvement Plan, Return to School Plan or an Individual Education Plan.
- Establishing a Student Absence Learning Plan
- Referral to school or community based wellbeing professional
- Investigating re-engagement programs
- Reporting concerns: Referral to Child First or Child Protection
- Referral to a DET School Attendance Officer
- Issuing an official DET Infringement Notice

## 3.4 Teachers and Administration Staff- Prevention

**ALERTS: When a student's Attendance Rate begins to approach the 90% benchmark (e.g. 92%) for either overall attendance or attendance in one or more specific subject units, parents will be notified immediately.**

### Subject Teachers

- Subject Teachers will monitor student attendance within their own classes. They will keep accurate records via COMPASS, marking their rolls electronically for every lesson.

- Where a student's attendance is not meeting policy requirements in a particular subject (as oppose to all subjects), the subject teacher may contact a students' parent/guardian directly where this concern is raised (after consultation with the Learning Community Leader).

### **Homegroup Leaders**

- Homegroup Leaders will monitor via COMPASS the attendance percentages of all students within their Homegroup.
- Homegroup Leaders will encourage students to monitor their own attendance percentages each week during Homegroup meetings via COMPASS.
- Homegroup Leaders will report to the Learning Community Leaders when a concern regarding meeting policy requirements is raised for an individual student.
- Homegroup Leaders may make direct contact with a parent to alert them to the concern.

### **Learning Community Leaders and Heads of Junior and Senior School**

- In consultation with the Homegroup Leader, the Learning Community Leader and /or Head of Junior or Senior School will arrange any further correspondence with parents and perform any subsequent interview processes.
- The Learning Community Leader will implement any processes required for students that will enable them reach their attendance requirements.

### **Office Administration Staff**

- The student attendance Office personnel will ensure that accurate information regarding student attendance is provided to the Homegroup Leader fortnightly.
- The student attendance Office personnel will also alert the Learning Community Leader where a concern regarding attendance may be evident.
- The student attendance Office personnel will assist the Learning Community Leader in any administration tasks regarding correspondence with specific parents/guardians and will also send correspondence to all parents/guardians of students with unapproved absences.

### **3.5 STUDENT LATE Arrival/ Early Departure**

- Students who are late must sign in at the office and then report directly to their scheduled class.
- Classroom teachers are to correct their COMPASS roll as necessary ensuring late arrival is noted.
- Repeated latecomers may be subject to the same implications and those not meeting attendance requirements.
- Parents picking up students early must sign them out via the General Office.

## **5. EVALUATION**

This Policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three year review Cycle.

**DEFINITIONS:** NA

**REFERENCES:**

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/attendance.aspx>

**DATE RATIFIED:** 17 May 2016

**DATE FOR REVIEW:** Term 2 2019

Tiffany Holt  
**Principal**

Andrew Gardiner  
**College Council President**



# Apollo Bay P-12 College Attendance Policy

## Summary of Key Expectations in Relation to This Policy

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