

SANDRINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Attendance Policy

Everyday counts and learning starts at 9am

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain the key practices and procedures Sandringham Primary School has in place to support, monitor and maintain student attendance and to record and follow up student absences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Sandringham Primary School.

POLICY

The building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school each and every day. Daily attendance maximises life opportunities for children 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.

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption has been granted). Students are expected to attend Sandringham Primary 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 only a partial enrolment here
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment here

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day. Sandringham Primary School is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance. We will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Sandringham Primary School students are committed to coming to school on time every day, prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues affecting their attendance.

Sandringham Primary School 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 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

Sandringham Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Sandringham Primary School must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers at the start of the school day and after lunch using Sentral. If students are attending 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 the school of absences by:

- logging the absence on Sentral or contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence, informing the classroom teacher and logging it on Sentral if it is a planned 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 Sandringham Primary School will notify parents by push notification email. Sandringham Primary School will attempt to contact parents 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.

Sandringham Primary School 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 Sandringham Primary School 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,
- 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 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.

Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

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, Sandringham Primary School 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
- implementing a Return to School Plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan if students are absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from 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,

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If the 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 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 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.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school’s website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Link included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- 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	February 2022
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal, Louise Neave
Next scheduled review date	February 2025