Collingwood College

# Attendance Policy

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**Review By:** Sam Luck

## Rationale

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.

## 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 Collingwood College has in place to
  - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
  - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

A child missing one day a fortnight will miss four weeks in a year, and more than a year of school by year 10. It is important that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age.

## Aims

This policy applies to all students at Collingwood College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's Reform Act School Attendance Guidelines. It does not replace or change the obligations of Collingwood College, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

## Definitions


Website: www.collingwood.vic.edu.au
Email:
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Corner Cromwell St and McCutcheon Way, Collingwood, VIC, Australia 3066
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*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

Students are expected to attend Collingwood 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 has only a partial enrolment in Collingwood College
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Collingwood College for particular activities.

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

Collingwood College 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. At Collingwood College, students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Collingwood College 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 Collingwood 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


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outside of school hours.

## Supporting and promoting attendance

Collingwood College *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- maintaining an engaging and challenging curriculum
- offering student wellbeing services for students who have been identified as 'at risk'
- helping 'at risk' students through the involvement of SSS (Student Support Services) personnel when appropriate
- offering student programs that focus on re-engaging "at-risk', students for example the program New Start
- working with parents to implement an attendance plan when required
- carry out home visits when required
- providing opportunities for students to make up for missed lesson times.

## Recording attendance

Collingwood College must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

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

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers throughout the day. For the Primary School, classroom teachers must mark the roll at the beginning of the day and again at 2pm. For the Secondary School, the class teacher marks the roll in the morning and then the individual classroom teachers must mark the roll at the beginning of every scheduled lesson. Instrumental music teachers must mark the attendance at the beginning of each student's music lesson. Teachers at Collingwood College use the Compass Management System to record student attendance and monitor absences.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge will provide details via Compass to ensure that attendance is monitored.

## Recording absences


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

Parents should notify Collingwood College of absences by:

- entering a reason on Compass on the day
- contacting Reception staff
- informing classroom teachers if it is a planned absence
- providing a written letter/email to the classroom teacher to explain 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, Collingwood College will notify parents by SMS/push notification message, email sent via Compass, telephone home if the student has not been present for two consecutive days, send out attendance letters requiring parents to explain their child's absences.

Collingwood College 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.

Collingwood College will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The classroom teacher, year level co-ordinator and principal class 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 Collingwood College 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**'.

Any student arriving more than 5 minutes late must sign into the Compass kiosk at the front office.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- for any absence of more than 3 days, a medical certificate


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- 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. 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, Collingwood 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
- 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 and external Student Support 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 Collingwood College 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 Northwest Regional Office for further action.


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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.

## Communication

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

- available publicly on our school website
- included in staff induction processes.

### More information and resources

School Attendance Guidelines
School Policy and Advisory Guide: Attendance
School intranet

### Revision History

| VERSION | DATE | AUTHOR(S) | CHANGES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 25/5/23 | Sam Luck | New format |