

## Rationale

International research demonstrates a strong correlation between students' learning, long-term life outcomes, attendance at school and appropriate participation in education programs. For this reason, the Department of Education and Training (DET) has very clear policies and guidelines in relation to student attendance at school. These policies are the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 and the Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013.

The Victorian Government's 'Everyday Counts' initiative promotes the fact that regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students regularly absent from school may be significantly disadvantaged in their learning, and are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development.

Children attending school in Victoria who are of compulsory school age (ages six to seventeen years) are required to meet the National Youth Participation Requirement agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in July 2009. The agreed participation requirement includes a mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling (meaning full time attendance at a government or registered nongovernment school or an approved equivalent such as registered home schooling or through the Victorian Distance Education Centre until they complete Year 10). For the purpose of this policy, the Hazel Glen College Procedures for Attendance documentation must also be referred to.

## Aims

To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school, do so regularly and without excessive and unnecessary absences.

## Implementation

### 1. Attendance

- 1.1. All enrolled students are required to attend the College unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- 1.2. Illness, accidents, medical appointments, religious events or obligations, and other unforeseeable circumstances are examples of reasonable grounds for an absence.

### 2. Parent/Guardians Responsibilities

- 2.1. Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to;
  - a) ensure that their children attend the College regularly and are only absent if ill, or if absolutely necessary.
  - b) contact the College office (9717 7500) on the day of the absence.
  - c) ensure attendance records are up to date and correct in compass. Any discrepancies are to be reported to the College office
  - d) upon return to the College, provide either a written note or medical certificate explaining the reason for the absence.
  - e) notify the school in writing prior to any anticipated extended absence.

### 3. College Responsibilities

- 3.1. The College maintains accurate records of attendance on both internal (compass) and external (cases) systems.
- 3.2. The College promotes attendance for all students in accordance with DET's 'everyday counts' initiative to ensure that core teaching and learning is not missed throughout the year.
- 3.3. Attendance will be recognised through awards ceremonies throughout the year.
- 3.4. Parents/guardians and students will be regularly informed about school and community attendance expectations and absence notification procedures.
- 3.5. Staff will be encouraged to recognise their role and responsibility in promoting and supporting strong attendance.
- 3.6. All absence notes and records of communication must be retained and stored at the school for auditing purposes by the Department of Education and Training (DET).
- 3.7. Student absence figures will be available to students and parents via the portal.
- 3.8. Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the DET and wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- 3.9. Appropriate DET transfer and enrolment procedures will be utilised when students enrol or transfer from the school.
- 3.10. The DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance will be followed and support materials, including proformas, checklists and brochures, will be used as a key resource.  
Supporting Documentation:

### 4. Extended Absence

- 4.1. Students who are on extended absences (more than ten days) due to illness from the school must have a Student Absence Learning Plan completed to support their education, which is prepared by the classroom teacher, Home Room Teacher, Year Level Leader, Head Of School.
- 4.2. Extended family holiday: The College asks the family to consider the amount of time students are absent from school and the impact this has on their learning. Student Absent Learning Plan **will not** be provided for extended family holidays.
- 4.3. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child's extended absence will impact on their ability to be promoted to the next year level.
- 4.4. Involvement in external programs is encouraged by the College; however, participation in these programs should not occur during College hours unless discussed prior with a member of the Assistant Principal/s or Principal.

### 5. Late Attendance

- 5.1. Students are expected to arrive at the College with adequate time to commence the day.
- 5.2. Students who are late to the College disrupt the class and often miss vital work at the start of the day. A student arriving late to the College must sign in (electronic or paper) and their late arrival will be recorded on the daily attendance roll.
- 5.3. Parents/guardians must provide a reason for their child arriving late to the College.

### 6. Unexplained or Excessive Absences

- 6.1. Individual class teachers have the responsibility to follow up absences in their class and request written notification or explanation from parents/guardians for all student absences.
- 6.2. Student attendance will be monitored and recorded daily by the College in accordance with both DET policies and requirements and the school's internal procedures.
- 6.3. Where no explanation is received from the parents/guardians, the College will record an absence as an unexplained absence.
- 6.4. At the completion of the second day of consecutive unexplained absence, the class / home group teacher will contact the parent/guardian. If unable to do so, the teacher will notify the Year Level Leader and/or the relevant Head of School who will endeavour to contact the family. If contact cannot be made after a continued absence, the Assistant Principal will notify the Regional Office.
- 6.5. The Principal or Assistant Principal has a responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated and that high levels of absenteeism are explained.
- 6.6. Each month, the Attendance Officer will produce a report reflecting students with attendance under 80 per cent and a letter is sent home to inform the parents/guardians explaining the impact this level of attendance has on their child's education.
- 6.7. If attendance does not improve, follow up meetings are held, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- 6.8. If deemed appropriate, the Student Wellbeing Team will become involved to further implement intervention strategies.
- 6.9. Ongoing unexplained absences, or a lack of co-operation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. As per DET School Attendance Guidelines, this may result in notification to the Regional Office and an Infringement Notice being issued to parents/guardians.
- 6.10. Ongoing unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Student Wellbeing Team to the Department of Human Services.

### Related Policies / Documents

DET School Attendance Guidelines 2014

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

Hazel Glen College Diary

Hazel Glen College Parent Handbook

DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014

DET Schools Policy and Advisory Guide – Environment 4.1 EVALUATION: This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

### Evaluation

This policy was created in term 4 of 2015

This policy was reviewed in term 1 of 2017