

Rationale

International research demonstrates a strong correlation between students' learning, long-term life outcomes, attendance at school and appropriate participation in education programs.

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.

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 every day the school is open for instruction and are only absent if ill, or if absolutely necessary
 - b) notify the College via the Compass portal on the morning of the absence or contact the College office (9717 7500) on the day of the absence if Compass access is not available
 - c) ensure attendance records are up to date and correct on Compass. Any discrepancies are to be reported to the College office
 - d) notify the College in writing prior to any anticipated extended absence
 - e) provide a medical certificate explaining the reason for the absence where necessary.

3. College Responsibilities

- 3.1. The College maintains accurate records of attendance on both internal (Compass) and external (Cases 21) 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. The College will advise parents/guardians of unexplained absences, on the same day, as soon as practicable, including for post-compulsory aged students. The College uses an

automated messaging solution (SMS) for notifying parents/guardians of unexplained absences.

- 3.5. Parents/guardians and students will be regularly informed about school and community attendance expectations and absence notification procedures.
- 3.6. Staff will be encouraged to recognise their role and responsibility in promoting and supporting strong attendance.
- 3.7. All absence records must be retained and stored at the school for auditing purposes by the DET.
- 3.8. Student absence figures will be available to students and parents via the Compass portal.
- 3.9. Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the DET and wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- 3.10. Appropriate DET transfer and enrolment procedures will be utilised when students enrol or transfer from the College.

4. Extended Absence

- 4.1. Extended family holiday (more than ten days): 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.
- 4.2. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child's extended absence will impact on their ability to be promoted to the next year level.
- 4.3. 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 Principal Class.

5. Late Attendance

- 5.1. Students are expected to arrive at the College prior commencement of the day as stipulated in the College diary/planner.
- 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 Compass.
- 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 College'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 classroom teacher / 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 a member of the Principal Class will notify the Regional Office.

- 6.5. A member of the Principal Class 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 written communication is sent home to inform the parents/guardians and explain 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 Health and 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/Planner

Hazel Glen College Parent Handbook

DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014

DET Schools Policy and Advisory Guide – Environment 4.1

Education and Training Reform Act 2006,

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007

Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013.

National Youth Participation Requirement agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in July 2009.

Evaluation

This policy was created in Term 4 of 2015

This policy was reviewed in Term 1 of 2017

This policy was reviewed in Term 2 of 2018

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College review cycle.