

COLAC SECONDARY COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 Colac Secondary College has in place to:
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences

This policy applies to all students at Colac Secondary College. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's School Attendance Guidelines. It does not replace or change the obligations of Colac Secondary College, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Definition

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

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's help students to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

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

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

Colac Secondary 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. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Colac Secondary College parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered. Parents are encouraged to communicate openly with the school and provide valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Colac Secondary 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 outside of school hours.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Colac Secondary College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Colac Secondary College must record period attendance in every class, sessions 1 – 5 daily. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Colac Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements for VCE students.

Attendance will be recorded via COMPASS.

If students are in attendance at 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 Colac Secondary College of absences by:

- Via COMPASS,
- Calling the College absence line 5231 9888, or
- Calling the General Office 5231 9800

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, Colac Secondary College will notify parents by SMS/push notification message from COMPASS to the nominated mobile telephone number- after 10.00 am each day.

Colac Secondary College 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 Colac Secondary College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence, the absence will be marked as an '**excused absence**', or relevant category.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexcused absence**', or relevant category.

The Principal, or delegate, 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, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student
- 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 notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance

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, Colac Secondary 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
- arranging for assistance from the Year Level Student Manager or 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.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every three to four years or more frequently if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Council Approval date	August 2024
Review date	2027
DET/VRQA required	Yes