

Attendance Policy



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Croydon Community School on 9724 2900

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 Croydon Community School has in place to:
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.
 - Maximise attendance of all students
 - Support families in achieving regular attendance for their children
 - Provide organisational structures which support the early detection and identification of causes of student non- attendance
 - Identify and support all students at risk of non-attendance
 - Support staff in monitoring and following up all absences
 - Ensure the efficiency and accuracy of data collection for school, legal and audit requirements

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Croydon Community School.

With regular monitoring of attendance early identification of students at risk is possible allowing for the development and implementation of intervention strategies. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Croydon Community School, parents/carers and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Regular attendance and participation in class is essential for a student to achieve success at school. For many students at Croydon Community School attendance has previously been a major issue. It is important to ensure a supportive school environment and structure exists together with an engaging curriculum that promotes student attendance.

With regular monitoring of attendance early identification of students at risk is possible allowing for the development and implementation of intervention strategies. Within the school the Principal has the overall responsibility for student attendance, but as attendance is fundamental to the role of teachers, all staff are actively and cooperatively involved in its maintenance.

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 helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Croydon Community 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 has only a partial enrolment in Example School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Croydon Community School for particular activities.

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

Croydon Community School 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 approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Croydon Community School parents/carers 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/carers will communicate with the relevant staff at Croydon Community School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents/carers 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

Croydon Community School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Croydon Community School must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge school's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for senior students

Attendance will be recorded by the advisory teacher at the start of each session using 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, preferably by 9.00am.

Parents/Carers should notify the school of absences by:

- contacting the school office via phone, email or logging into the school portal Compass
- informing the classroom teacher in writing of an 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, Croydon Community School will notify parents by SMS by 9.30am.

Croydon Community 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.

The 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 the school considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as **'Explained'**.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as **'Parent Choice Unauthorised'**.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a valid reason given by a parent/carer for a student's absence.

The Principal will generally excuse:

- Significant wellbeing concerns, if a plan is in place with parent/carer to address causes and support the student's return to school.
- illness
- 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/carer 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/carer notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as **'Unexplained absence'** on the student's file unless clarifying information is received later.

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, the school will work collaboratively with parents/carers, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, possibly 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 within the school.

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional support 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 Croydon Community 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 North Eastern Victoria Region (NEVR) 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 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.

School Specific Procedures

Shared Expectations for Attendance

Students must:

- Attend and be punctual for all timetabled classes.
- Notify school of any absence.
- Provide a medical certificate/written note to Advisor on return to school or Parent to make a Compass entry for the absence
- If late, sign in at office and provide explanation.
- Work cooperatively with the school to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent.
- Discuss with each teacher procedures for catching up on any work missed through lateness or absence.

Parents must:

- Provide support to their child to maximise attendance and participation at school. Ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day.
- Notify the school on the first day of absence by 9 am.
- If there is knowledge of a long-term absence, notify the school in advance.
- Provide written explanation to the school for each student absence.

- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school and their child to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent.
- Support their child's learning during consistent or prolonged absence by picking up school work to be completed at home.
- Work cooperatively with the school in supporting the child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence.
- Contact the Advisor, Assistant Principal or Principal for assistance if a student is resistant to attending school.
- Ensure that contact details for the family are correct and up to date.

Advisors must:

- Accurately mark and maintain daily rolls using Compass.
- Ask for and process notes to approve absences.
- Make telephone contact with parents/guardians of students with unexplained absences or absences deemed unsatisfactory by the school. Update Compass records.
- Monitor students and discuss with individual students when attendance is a concern.
- Seek support from Assistant Principal / Wellbeing team if any student's attendance is an ongoing concern. This may include arranging SSGs & the development of an appropriate plan.

Principal

- Encourage the development of policies and culture, which encourage student engagement and attendance.
- Ensure that attendance policy and practises are implemented and reviewed on a regular basis.

Assistant Principal

- Ensure that very clear attendance expectations are evident to students and parents.
- Ensure that a good example is set by all staff with attendance and punctuality.
- Coordinate, monitor and support Advisors, teachers, Education Support staff, students and parents to implement attendance procedures and policy.
- Identify and follow up student absences through analysis of attendance data.
- Support the progress of students at risk through liaison with Advisors.
- Where necessary make or ensure that reports are made to DFFH regarding long term absences.

Wellbeing Staff

- Support students who are struggling with long term absence through home visits and assisting the Student Support Group.
- Collaborate with staff parents and students when working with DFFH & any other external agencies.

Attendance Officer

- Support principal class in the tracking and explanation of student absences.
- To collaborate and support the Advisors that the roll is marked daily.
- To collaborate with Advisors and Wellbeing when attendance is a concern.
- To provide Compass reports to Advisors on a weekly basis

Reception - CASES 21/Compass

- Accurately input daily absences and absence information on Compass

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Resources and links:

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2023
School Council Approval	15 th August 2023 School Council President – Leanne Haley
Approved by	Acting Principal, Kaye Bhan
Next scheduled review date	August 2026 minimum review cycle for this policy is 3 to 4 years

Student Absence Process

Advisor marks student attendance on Compass within 15 minutes of class commencing: beginning of the day, after recess & after lunch.

Excursion rolls must be marked prior to leaving the school or as soon as is taken where students meet advisors at an external location. Where staff cannot enter excursion rolls onto Compass in a timely manner, rolls should be phoned in or handed to reception for entering on Compass immediately.

Attendance Officer makes immediate contact with parent/carer via preferred method phone/email/SMS to establish reason for absence. Aim is to support attendance ASAP – **Contact documented on Compass Chronical**.
Where contact cannot be made with parent / carer, and the young person's situation is unknown, the emergency contact is contacted.
Attendance Officer prints weekly "Unexplained Absence" reports each Monday and distributes to advisors to follow up by Thursday afternoon of the same week. Attendance Officer alerts principals to absences that have not been followed up

Contact Unsuccessful

Advisory team continue to attempt contact for 3 days and document efforts on Compass.
If contact is unsuccessful after repeated attempts the Advisory team should attempt out of hours contact or refer contact to principal class

Absences explained

Advisory Team record explanation on Compass
Medical Certificates and documents are collected and filed
Complete *Student Absence Learning Plan* if absence will be extended e.g. Holidays
Uploaded to Compass student files

Commence CASES21
DET
staged letter
response to absence
proforma

Continuing absence issues

Advisor convenes an SSG to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan or return to School Plan. The SSG would typically include parent/carer, student, wellbeing and any external agencies involved with the student. All plans are documented, distributed to parents/carers, stored in student files and noted/pinned to Compass. Referrals to School Wellbeing or external agencies (e.g. Child First, DHS) may be made as a result of the SSG.

Five Days unexplained absences

When a *student* has five days unexplained absences (not necessarily consecutive and can accumulate over a year) the Advisor makes a referral to region and submits to the principal for signing.

OR

If a student reaches 10 unexplained consecutive days

Advisors make a Whereabouts unknown referral to region and submit to principal for signing.
All documents are saved to student files and pinned to Compass

Complete Student Return to School Plan if challenges at re-entry are anticipated and timetable is modified.

Complete *Student Absence Learning Plan*
Uploaded to Compass student files
Attendance Improvement Plan must include a review date.

Student returns to school

Advisor remains responsible for actively pursuing re engagement and recording actions on Compass.
Advisory team continue re engagement and wellbeing strategies until attendance improves or student exits to a valid pathway