



Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre

Attendance Policy

2017-2019

Attendance Policy

The Principal is responsible for the accurate recording and rigorous monitoring of the attendance of all students and for implementing appropriate strategies to restore attendance if there are attendance issues. Students are required to attend school on every day that it is open except in certain cases. The school must account for every absence of every student and record the reason in the Lesson Attendance section of Integris.

All students who are absent from school must provide a letter/diary note/telephone call/email from their parent or caregiver explaining the reason for the absence. Certificate of illness may be required. Parents will be contacted in the case of unexplained absence of more than 5 days.

Acceptable reasons for student absences are:

- Sickness
- Therapy for younger students with autism/ID
- Danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease
- Chronic illness
- Temporary or permanent infirmity.
- Unavoidable and sufficient cause, e.g.
 - bereavement within the family or of a close friend
 - family trauma

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence are:

- Truancy.
- Shopping expeditions with or without caregiver
- Helping at home or at parent / caregivers place of work
- Excessive time for appointments which are avoidable

It is the responsibility of a caregiver to ensure that their children (of any age) attend school every day unless there are acceptable reasons for absence. For students under the age of compulsion (under 18 years) this is a legal requirement.

Short term absences - 1 or 2 days

Caregivers are asked to provide a written diary note, detailing the reason for absence on the day of return to school. When a student has been absent from school and an acceptable explanation has not been forthcoming, the school is to send a written request for an explanation to the student's family to establish the reasons for non-attendance.

Long term absences - 3 or more days

Parent/caregivers will be asked to contact the Teacher in Charge of their classroom before the absence, if possible, or on the third day at the latest to explain the absence. In addition, a written diary note, stating the reason for the absence needs to be provided on the day of return to school. If the reason is sickness, caregivers are expected to provide a Doctor's Certificate (for 3 days or more).

Very long term absences

Occasionally, requests are made by parent/caregivers for students to be absent for very long periods, e.g. to accompany parent/caregivers on an overseas trip. Parent/caregivers are asked to discuss with the Principal the implications of long term absences from the school, before firm plans are made. Approval needs to be sought from the Principal. When students are unavoidably absent for a long period of time, where possible the school will provide work for students to go on with, if requested to do so.

Consistent with Departmental records management policies, the school will keep detailed records of all contact, or attempts to make contact, with the student's family and the intervention strategies implemented to restore a student's attendance. This documentation will need to be made available to the school attendance officer and/or the School Attendance Panel if the student is subsequently formally referred to the school attendance officer and/or the School Attendance Panel.

School Procedures For Following Up Unacceptable Student Absences

Where an absence is proposed, or has occurred, and the reason is not acceptable, these fall into two categories:

- Common Practice (e.g. accompanying parent/caregivers on holidays, participation in recognised, non-school organised sporting and cultural activities, etc.).
 - In every case a standard school letter will be mailed home by the Registrar. The letter does not approve or disapprove of the absence. It acts as a reminder that places the responsibility for a student's lack of progress on caregivers.
- Unacceptable Practice In every case, the incident will be referred to the Principal who will administer the school and/or Department of Education, attendance procedures. These will involve:
 - Parent/Caregiver contact and conference as deemed necessary
 - 'report of unsatisfactory school attendance' sent to Department of Education Attendance Officer.

Students Who Are Late To School

If a student is to be late, the parent is to telephone the school in advance to notify them. If a student is to be brought by parents rather than on the special bus, parents are to notify the bus, in addition,

Examples of acceptable reasons for lateness are:

- Accident on way to school
- Transport breakdown on way to school
- Illness, poor sleep etc. for students with severe disabilities
- Other unavoidable and sufficient reasons

Parents/Caregivers are asked to provide a written note in the diary

Examples of unacceptable reasons for lateness are:

- Truancy.
- Sleeping in.
- Just late (no reason given).
- Shopping.
- Other avoidable and insufficient reasons.

School Action for Unacceptable Reasons

Discussion with student

Discussion with parents/carers

Possible detention depending on ability of student to understand consequences

NOTE: Lateness on compassionate grounds, e.g. family trauma, will be followed up by the Principal.