

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Creswick North Primary School we believe schools should provide a safe, success orientated and caring environment. We believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education, enabling them to reach their full potential. School staff should set an example for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies. We believe the early detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance and the provision of organisational structures, which are responsive to the needs of students, is vital.

All members of the school community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance and work to the best of their ability and skill as consistently as possible.

General

A child who turns five years of age by April 30th or in the year he/she turns six is of compulsory school age irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability or not (Education and Training Reform Act 2006). These students are required to be enrolled at a registered or non-government school and must attend the school on every day instruction is provided at the school for the child, unless the Minister has granted an exemption from school attendance. The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent/guardian. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the DET. **The department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.**

Students are expected to attend normal school hours every day of each term. An exemption should be sought if the attendance expectation is reduced for a particular child. A principal or regional director (depending on the circumstances) authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.

For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian should provide an explanation on each occasion and the school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

Exemptions from school attendance may be granted in some circumstances. All applications for exemptions are considered on a case by case basis, with the child's best interests as the guiding principle for decision-making. In making a decision the potential benefits or negative consequences of granting the exemption to the child's educational progress, wellbeing and development are also considered.

Schools must maintain attendance records and develop policies to support and maintain attendance.

Responsibilities

Parent's responsibilities

Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.

- ❖ Children must arrive at school between 8.30am and 8.50am.
- ❖ Children must attend school on every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (eg illness).
- ❖ Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. Usually this comprises a letter or telephone call from a parent/caregiver or a medical certificate after three days a written explanation is required.
- ❖ When a student is late for school, it is appropriate that the parent/caregiver explains the reason for lateness.
- ❖ Parents/caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely or if the school needs to arrange work at home for students.

School's responsibilities

Schools must record attendance and absences at least half daily in order to:

- ❖ Meet legislative requirements
- ❖ Assist calculation of the school's Student Resource Package (SRP) funding
- ❖ Enable School Councils to report on attendance annually

Schools must use only CASES21, Ecases21 or third party software which is compatible with CASES21 to record student attendance.

Parents/guardians are required to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and a principal must record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent/guardian.

Schools must advise parents/guardians promptly of unexplained absences, including for post-compulsory aged students.

Teachers' responsibilities

- ❖ Monitor each child's attendance.
- ❖ Record absence and reason for absence in attendance folder and send to front office by 10.00am each morning.
- ❖ Contact home on third day of absence. Record in notes section of attendance folder. Document any strategies/interventions and include in student's file.
- ❖ After contacting parent/caregiver alert the leadership team.
- ❖ Other action: Discuss with leadership team.
- ❖ Co-ordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested.

Principal responsibilities

- ❖ Ensure that the roll is accurately completed.
- ❖ The leadership team will complete the letter regarding the absence of a student and send home to parent/caregiver.
- ❖ The leadership team should document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in student's file.

- ❖ Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month.
- ❖ Parents/caregivers should apply in writing and principals should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advices are to be retained in school files, together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate department officers as required.
- ❖ Where a student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months, the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences and measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and been unsuccessful, or are inappropriate in the circumstances, principals can exercise their discretion to refer the matter to the principal for further action.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the school's three year review cycle.

Certification:

This policy was endorsed by School Council at the meeting held on 15th November 2017