



## Sebastopol Primary School

P.O. Box 246  
Warreen Street  
Sebastopol 3356

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# Attendance Policy

## RATIONALE

The *Education Act* requires that children of school age (six to sixteen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Regional Director.

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of learning, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult, contributing significantly to the student's lack of opportunity to achieve their potential.

## AIMS

To maximise student's social, emotional and learning opportunities by ensuring that children attend school regularly, are punctual and value their learning time at school.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of learning, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. Contributing significantly to the student's lack of opportunity to achieve their potential. All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent. Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence - shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary. Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note or return a completed absence form to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.

The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school. All student absences and late arrivals are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers, are aggregated on our CASES database and communicated to the Department of Education. The Department of Education and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records. The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences and late arrivals are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism and punctuality are adequately explained.

A 'Strike Three' policy will be implemented across the school to target late arrivals to school. Teachers will notify parents when their child has accumulated three late arrivals to school within a term. A fourth late arrival will result in principal contact. The principal will ensure parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences and late arrivals are contacted, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences. Class teachers and office staff are to record any actions taken in regard to monitoring students absences using the Student Absence Action form.

If a student returns to school after an absence which is unexplained, the teacher will send home a Student Absence Reminder Form. Parents are to notify the school *prior* to taking their child on a family holiday. Parents may use the Student Absence Prior Notification Form or put this in a letter.



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### ONGOING MONITORING

- Newsletter articles and posters will be created and displayed by the Student Voice on the school website.
- Positive recognition of students and classes with high attendance and low lateness will be recognised and acknowledged at assemblies and in the newsletter.
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

In general, it would be expected that the Principal would excuse absences for:

- Medical and dental appointments, where an out of hours appointment is not possible
- Bereavement or attendance at a funeral of a relative or friend of the student
- School refusal, if a plan is in place with the parents to address causes
- Cultural observances, if the parent notifies the school in advance
- Family holidays, where the parent notifies the school in advance and the student completes any Student Absence Learning Plan agreed by the school, parent and student.

In general, the Principal would not be expected to excuse absences where:

- Approval had not been sought in advance
- The student was absent due to participating in leisure or social activities without approval
- The conditions of approval have not been met (e.g. Student Absence Learning Plan for a family holiday not completed).
- The parent has provided no explanation of the absence

### DAILY ORGANISATION

Teacher	Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mark the hard copy attendance roll daily</li><li>• Send dated absence slip to the office daily indicating status by 9:30am</li><li>• Maintain up to date hard copy attendance roll in the classroom for emergencies</li><li>• Send children who arrive late to the office</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check attendance daily</li><li>• Enter any late students who have come via the office</li><li>• Print up absence report daily.</li><li>• Notify teacher of any early pickups.</li><li>• Office will record early exits on eCases</li><li>• Office to call families regarding unexplained absences after 11am each day and record responses in eCases.</li></ul>
Wellbeing Coordinator	Principal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor absence reports each term and organise Student Support Group meetings for students deemed at risk</li><li>• Make referrals to appropriate support services as required</li><li>• Liaise with the school Principal regarding students deemed at risk</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor daily absences in liaison with office administration</li><li>• Track students at risk in consultation with the wellbeing coordinator and decide on appropriate actions</li><li>• Attend/organise Student Support Meetings as required</li></ul>



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### EVALUATION

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

This document was last ratified by School Council in <MONTH> <YEAR>.