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ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Glengarry Primary School on 03 5192 4292 or glengarry.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

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 Glengarry Primary School has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

Scope

This policy applies to all students at Glengarry Primary School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Glengarry Primary School, 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 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 Glengarry Primary 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 Glengarry Primary School, or



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- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Glengarry Primary School for particular activities.

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

Glengarry Primary 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.

Glengarry Primary School parents 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 will communicate with the relevant staff at Glengarry Primary School 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

Glengarry Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by the Glengarry Primary School and Inner Gippsland Area Attendance Process (Appendix A). We also have a tiered Response to Intervention approach to support students and their families who require additional targeted or intensive support (Appendix B)

Recording attendance

Glengarry Primary School must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Glengarry Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by the responsible teacher at 9:00am and 12:30pm using Compass School Manager.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.



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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 Glengarry Primary School of absences by:

- Phone call to 5192 4292, a signed written explanation or by entering an approval on Compass.

Entering absences via Compass is our preferred method of communication for all planned and unplanned absences. Please refer to our Compass Parent Handbook on instructions regarding how to do this.

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, Glengarry Primary School will notify parents by an SMS message at 9:30am. If the absence is still recorded as unexplained at 11:00am, Glengarry Primary School will attempt to phone parents as soon as practicable, asking for an explanation of the student's absence.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details or the parent does not answer the phone), the school will leave a message asking for an explanation to be provided.

Glengarry Primary 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 Glengarry Primary School considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

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

The Principal 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, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- 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/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.



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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, Glengarry Primary School 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
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- coordinating our Response to Intervention approach

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,

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Glengarry Primary 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 Department of Education and Training - Moe Regional Office 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.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

More information and resources

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



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POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	April, 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	April, 2028



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INNER GIPPSLAND ATTENDANCE PROCESS

<p>Referral to School Attendance Officer</p> <p>Seek assistance from relevant Dept. Education Office Wellbeing personnel (if required)</p> 	<p>Intensive response to Intervention</p> <p>12. School Attendance Officer delegate will acknowledge and contact school regarding referral</p> <p>11. Make a referral if appropriate. Refer to the "Key Considerations" before making a referral; Send to health.wellbeing_ssr@edumail.vic.gov.au</p> <p>10. Seek a secondary consultation from the Senior Health and Wellbeing Support Officer at the Department of Education and Training South Eastern Victorian. Moe Office: 03 5127 0400</p> <p>9. Engage Student Support Services Officers (SSS) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSS consultation and referrals have been initiated where appropriate <p>8. Additional support from DET workforce and Community links and agencies –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child & Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) • Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) • Connect with Child First to seek support from agencies for parents • Primary School Nurses are consulted where appropriate 	<p>Who</p> <p>Principal Wellbeing Leader</p>
<p>Implement attendance improvement strategies</p> <p>Determine the reasonableness of an excuse provided for the absence/s</p> <p>Follow up on student absence</p> 	<p>Targeted response to Intervention</p> <p>7. Support for parents –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate concerns with parents verbally • letters go home for students with high absence Template letter for principals to raise concerns about repeated and/or unexplained absences Template - Communication to support a staged response to non-attendance • arrange Attendance Support Group meetings to investigate reasons for absence Attendance Support Group Guidance • create appropriate plan (* see list below) with support or fact sheets provided to parent or carer • a key school contact has been provided to the parent (* Attendance improvement Plan/Return to School Plan/Absent from School Plan/Reengagement Plan/Individual Learning Plan/Staged response – see improving attendance for templates) <p>6. Support for staff –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance to implement strategies where appropriate with a whole-school consistent approach • possible liaison with regional staff for advice (eg KESO's, SSS, School Nurse,) • professional reading http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/attresources.aspx • professional learning - Common reasons for absences and general advice <p>5. Support for student –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate one strategy with targeted students at a time • Develop an individual attendance plan - allow time for plan to be implemented and evaluated • Build upon existing relationships <u>with</u> student and key family members and celebrate successes • Ensure that the interventions consistent with other frameworks or protocols e.g. Out of Home Care, Disabilities? 	<p>Who</p> <p>7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Principal • Principal • Principal, Wellbeing Leader and Teacher <p>6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal and Wellbeing Leader <p>5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing Team led by Wellbeing Leader • Coordinator • Prin / Assistant Principal
<p>Follow up on student absence</p> <p>Promote full attendance</p> 	<p>Universal approach to Improve Attendance</p> <p>4. Effective use of data-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistency of roll marking across the school • correct input of attendance data • unexplained student absence letters sent home monthly to families • staffroom and classroom displays of attendance data (weekly or monthly patterns) • upload data onto CASES21 at least once a month • leadership regularly review data to identify patterns and share with staff <p>attendance must continue to be recorded</p> <p>3. Supportive and purposeful learning environment-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact parent or carer on first day of absence • appoint designated person to make daily attendance phone calls • discussions with student groups about lateness &/or absence and possible reasons why • attendance strategy communicated to the school community <p>2. Clear and high expectations –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication about expectations to whole school community through newsletters, posters and brochures, narrative and conversations, and inclusion of attendance in student report forms. • establish reward systems for attendance and punctuality • acknowledge and celebrate high attendance to both students and the school community • staff modelling punctuality <p>1. Strategic approach linking attendance with student outcomes and achievement (School Policy Templates Portal) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Student Engagement policy • Develop a Student Attendance Policy Attendance - Policy Template - April 2018.docx, see School Policy Templates Portal – attendance • Annual Implementation Plan • FISO foci • attendance plan in place with a wellbeing team established <p>Further resources to support principals in making a referral can be found at: Attendance resources for principals or attendance - what schools can do</p>	<p>Who</p> <p>4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff • Teachers and Business Manager • Wellbeing Leader – Attendance Data Wall • Business Manager • SIT <p>3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compass SMS (9.30am) • Daily phone calls made by Jenny Jeffs and staff on FA duty for all unexplained absences (11am) <p>• All staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal <p>2.</p> <p>Led by Principal / Wellbeing Team and implemented by whole staff</p> <p>1.</p> <p>Led by Principal / Wellbeing Team and implemented by whole staff</p>



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