

# ATTENDANCE



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the General Office.

## 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 Mount Waverley Secondary 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Mount Waverley Secondary College, 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College for particular activities.

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

Mount Waverley Secondary College 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 to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Mount Waverley Secondary College 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College 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**

Mount Waverley Secondary College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by: Student Support Groups, Koorie Support Officer, specific wellbeing programs/days, breakfast clubs, lunchtime clubs and celebrating diversity and inclusion.

### **Recording attendance**

**Mount Waverley Secondary College** must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Mount Waverley Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each lesson/period 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.

Parents should notify Mount Waverley Secondary College of absences by:

- Recording the absence on Compass, or:
- Phone the General Office (Junior Campus: 9887 9290 or Senior Campus: 9803 6811)

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, Mount Waverley Secondary College will notify parents by SMS/push notification message via Compass. Mount Waverley Secondary College will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

Mount Waverley Secondary College 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**approved**'.

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

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 6 weeks 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 approved.

### **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, Mount Waverley Secondary College 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
- arranging for assistance from relevant student wellbeing staff or subschool team

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 Mount Waverley Secondary College 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 Victorian Region 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.

### **Year 7-10 Attendance Requirements**

All absences must be explained by parents/carers as soon as practicable.

For absences of two or more days, students will not be able to sit a CAT unless a medical certificate and/or bereavement notice is provided.

Any Common Assessment Task (CAT) missed due to extended absence will be marked as NA (Not Assessed) and may affect the students' ability to pass the subject. In order to pass the subject, a student must be able to show the teacher their understanding of the required skills and knowledge as demonstrated in classwork from that unit and/or work completed as part of an Absences Learning Plan.

Principals may consider the excuse given for an absence and use their discretion to decide if the parent/carer has a reasonable excuse for not meeting their legal obligations or does not have a reasonable excuse.

The college does not support the scheduling of absences during the school day and/or school term, including routine medical and dental appointments and family holidays, where these may be arranged for holiday periods.



The process for making a decision about student absences involves a Principal or their nominee:

- considering a request from a parent/carer
- exercising their discretion as to whether or not to approve the absence
- notifying the parent/carer of the outcome of their request.

In exercising their discretion, the College Principal will take the following considerations into account:

- whether the absence is explicitly covered in section 2.1.3 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- whether the student will complete the work required during the absence (see: Student Absence Learning Plan)
- whether or not the length of absence will affect the student's learning and progress whether the parent/carer has requested this kind of absence before, and if so how recently and how many times
- whether or not the principal has approved this kind of absence before
- cultural factors or details of the student and family's circumstances
- whether an exemption would be appropriate, whereby the college should assist the parent/carer apply for an exemption.

In general, it is expected that principals would approve absences for:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or not 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
- cultural observance, if the parent/carer notifies the college in advance At Mount Waverley Secondary College all applications for an extended absence must be made, in writing, at least six weeks before the absence. The application must be addressed to the relevant Head of School who will, in conjunction with the College Principal and/or relevant Campus Principal, determine if the absence is approved. The application process covers absences such as those due to sporting or other external commitments, interstate and overseas travel and other exceptional circumstances. If the absence is approved a letter will be sent to the parents/carers and a learning plan will be developed. If the absence is not approved parents/carers will be notified in writing.

### **VCE (Year 11 and 12) Attendance**

Success in VCE starts with attending each day. Attendance in class ensures that our students have access to instruction and set work to keep up to date with their studies.

While the college understands that some absences are unavoidable due to health, medical, legal or family reasons, students in Years 11 and 12 are required to attend **90% of scheduled classes** to satisfactorily complete a unit of study.

An approved absence may be:

- an illness which requires medical treatment and for which there is a valid medical certificate
- an approved college excursion or sporting event or,



- a serious problem which the Head of Senior School has been notified, and which can be shown to have resulted in the student suffering significant hardship

Documentation to support an approved absence must be submitted within 5 days of the return to school or the absence will be recorded as unapproved.

#### **Medical Certificates:**

- If you are absent from school on the day of a SAC you must produce a valid medical certificate from a doctor for the absence to be approved.
- The medical certificate must be dated for the day of the absence and cannot be back dated.

## **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 (for required staff)
- 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](#)

## **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed	May 2026
Consultation	Education Subcommittee – May 2026
Approved by	College Principal and School Council
Next scheduled review date	May 2030