

## **Berengarra School**

*Berengarra takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022).*

### **Attendance**

#### **Purpose of this policy**

To ensure all students of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction.

#### **Policy**

In accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years unless an exemption has been granted.

Parents/guardians/carers must enrol a child of compulsory school age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.

Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance or attendance and enrolment for the student, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.

A Principal or Head of Campus (depending on the circumstances) may authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance or attendance and enrolment to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.

For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must promptly provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. 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.

Schools must maintain attendance records, identify and follow up unexplained absences, and develop policies to support and maintain attendance.

#### **Attendance support policies**

Schools must develop policies to support and maintain student attendance.

For Department of Education and Training (DET) policy guidance relating to:

- student engagement, see: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-engagement/policy>
- re-engagement programs, see: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/re-engagement-programs/policy>
- non-attendance, see: [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- student support services, see: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-support-services/policy>
- students affected by homelessness, who may be more likely to have patterns of irregular attendance, See: [Out-of-Home Care and Homelessness - Supporting Children, Young People and their Families Affected by Homelessness – Guidelines for Victorian Schools](#)

## **Attendance records**

Schools must record student attendance twice per day in primary schools and in every class in secondary schools and record, in writing, the reason given for each absence. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge schools' duty of care for all students
- assist calculation of the school's funding
- enable school councils to report on student attendance annually
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements (for VCE students)

All registered schools must ensure their system for recording student attendance meets the requirements above. 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.

## **Same day notification of unexplained absences**

Schools must advise parents/guardians of unexplained absences, on the same day, as soon as practicable, including for post-compulsory aged students. Using an automated messaging solution (SMS) is an efficient and effective method of notifying parents/guardians of unexplained absences.

Additionally, schools enrolling international students are required to effectively monitor student attendance and implement a documented intervention strategy where attendance is at risk of failing to meet the minimum Student Visa requirement (attendance of a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours during each study period).

## **Year level movement**

Schools should regularly promote students to the next year level with their peer group. Schools use their professional expertise and judgment in relation to these matters. Students are retained only in exceptional circumstances where a school considers it is required for the long-term benefit of the student e.g. considering their social, welfare and academic needs. Schools must ensure that parents/guardians are fully advised of the options that the school considers to best meet individual student needs. Students however should not be retained

without the consent of parents/guardians. Schools should avoid practices and policies that have the effect of restricting admission.

### **Related legislation**

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006

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