



Ringwood Secondary College

Attendance Policy

Version No: 4

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Committee: Policy and Education

Rationale:

Daily attendance is important for all students in order to maximise their learning and development. School participation provides life opportunities for students by establishing education and support networks and developing important skills, knowledge and values that assist students to pursue further learning and to participate in their community. In accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, full-time attendance at school is compulsory for students aged from 6 – 17 years, unless a formal exemption has been granted. Ringwood Secondary College requires that post-compulsory aged students also attend school unless there is a valid reason not to attend. The College utilises a combination of strategies to monitor attendance and, where necessary, to resolve non-attendance issues.

Aims:

The College aims to:

- Promote attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures
- Develop and implement rigorous and effective systems to record and monitor absences
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded in every class
- Maintain accurate attendance records on the College attendance system - Compass
- Ensure the prompt processing of student transfers upon the student's enrolment at their new school
- Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly and provide timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school
- Monitor and follow up student absences, ensuring wherever possible that parents/carers are aware of student absence
- Pursue and record an explanation for every absence
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time
- Convene student support group meetings with parents/carers and students when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the College, leading to the development of Individual Educational Plans (IEP) to improve the student's attendance
- Provide ongoing intensive support for students if the student's attendance pattern continues to be a problem after the initial student support group meeting

Implementation Guidelines:

- The monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of the Compass – Planning and Implementation Leader, Attendance Officer, Administration, House Coordinators and College staff in accordance with the instructions in the Staff Handbook
- Students and parent/carers are made aware of their roles and responsibilities, and those of the College, regarding attendance
- Records of attendance are to be retained according to Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines
- Attendance will be recorded and monitored using Compass
- Attendance in VCE classes will be monitored in accordance with VCAA requirements
- Year 11 and 12 students may leave after Period 4 if they have no timetabled Period 5 class
- The College will implement attendance-monitoring processes such as SMS to parent/care givers of students who are absent, establishing target groups for closer monitoring and convening Attendance Support Groups for students whose attendance is of concern
- Individual Student Absence Learning Plans are to be developed to assist students who experience extended periods of absence.

- Refer persistent non-attendance to the School Attendance Officer in the North Eastern Victoria Region Office of DET.
- Provide members of the College community with attendance information that highlights the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders as outlined below:

Recording Attendance

Ringwood Secondary College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- Meet legislative requirements.
- Discharge Ringwood Secondary College's duty of care for all students.

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 the College by phone, Compass message, email or note

- of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence
- in advance of an absence of any length that is planned
- of the need for an early leavers pass or late pass for their child

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, Ringwood Secondary College will notify parents by SMS by 10:00am on the day of the absence.

The College will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The Attendance Officer, with guidance from 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 the college considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**Not present – parent explained**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**Not present - unexplained**'.

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 by the end of each month, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Role of the Teacher:

Teachers are to:

- Promote attendance through clear statements of expectations
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded every class using Compass by marking the roll during the first 10 minutes of class, updating a roll if a student is late with a legitimate reason and ensuring students who are more than 10 minutes late to class attend the office to receive a late pass

- Monitor and follow up student absences/lateness to class
- Notify House Coordinators if a student is absent without notice for more than two lessons or displays a regular pattern of absenteeism, including where VCE student's attendance has dropped below 90%
- Work collaboratively with House Coordinators, parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time
- Record the number of classes taught and classes missed for each student on semester reports
- Cancel Year 12 VCE classes that did not run for appropriate reasons
- If organising a class activity/excursion, ensure details including times, dates and sessions are entered on Compass
- Mark Event rolls at the beginning of the activity or excursion. If unable to do so, contact the Attendance officer for assistance
- If taking an Extra or In-Lieu class, ensure the roll is marked within 10 minutes of the commencement of the lesson

Role of the Students

Students are to:

- Attend school at all times when it is a designated school day
- VCE students are required to maintain the specified attendance rate in accordance with both the College and VCAA guidelines
- Arrive on time to school and to every class
- Go to the General Office to sign in/sign out via the Kiosk to obtain a Late Pass or Early Leavers pass. In all cases, students should have a note or communication (Compass, phone or email) from home explaining the late arrival or early departure
- Ensure their parent/carer provides an explanation for an absence on return to school. This can be done by note, email, Compass or phone
- Remain on school premises during school time unless they have permission to leave the school from both the school and their parents/carers
- Work with their teachers to develop/obtain learning activities to be included in a Student Absence Learning Plan for completion during a prolonged absence
- Work cooperatively with the College to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent
- Report to first aid if unwell or injured. If required, the First Aid officer will contact parents if a student needs to return home. A parent collecting a student from First Aid must report to the Main Office prior to collecting their child from First Aid or the Main Office.

Role of the Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are to:

- Ensure that their child attends school at all times when it is a designated school day
- Promote and support their child to attend and participate at school
- Ensure that their child is on time for school each day
- Notify the College by phone, Compass message, email or note of their child's absence or planned absence as soon as possible
- To avoid, as far as possible, student appointments during school time as well as other extended absences including family holidays
- Advise one of the House Coordinators or Assistant Principal if their child is reluctant to attend school
- Support their child's learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school
- Work cooperatively with the College in supporting their child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence
- Ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up-to-date

Appendix 1

Individual tasks required to monitor attendance:

Student Attendance Officer

- Enter daily absence data generated via attendance line, parent emails from Compass or general information from College staff in regard to absences
- Notify House Coordinators of any extended student absences that are directly communicated to the Attendance Officer
- Check on Compass to ensure that the SMS messages to parents have been sent each day
- Communicate with parents re unapproved absences on daily/weekly basis and update information on Compass
- Monitor patterns of non-attendance and pass on any relevant or important attendance information to House Co-ordinators or other college staff where appropriate
- Enter attendance data for scheduled absences that are not covered under Events - ie VET courses, numeracy or literacy programs, welfare activities, year level exams or excursions or other activities as required
- Check event entries on a regular basis to ensure there is no issue with start or duration times that may generate unapproved absences or incorrect SMS messages to parents. Follow up with relevant staff if required
- Ensure that information for exiting students is updated and classes removed from Compass
- Enter information in the student Chronicle section so it is visible to parents and send lists to sub-schools once a month
- Assist staff with any Compass related enquiries or problems related to the inputting of student attendance data for rolls, classes or activities
- Monitor unmarked rolls and send a reminder to teachers if they remain unmarked for a considerable length of time as some of these rolls may need to be cancelled
- Upload attendance data into Cases at the end of each month and generate report for Principal
- At the start of Term 1 each year, the Attendance Officer will print off Class Lists and produce a Master List of classes for checking during an Emergency Drill
- Reprint lists as required to update any class changes

Office Staff

- Issue late and early leaver passes throughout the day
- Enter Community Service students before 10.00 am each morning
- Assist Attendance Officer as required
- Ensure any support documentation from parents regarding absences is passed on to the Attendance Officer as soon as possible

First Aid Officer

- Contact parents if a student needs to return home
- Sign out students on Compass if they are to be collected by their parents/guardians
- Enter student attendance at First Aid into the First Aid Journal and then Compass so that it is visible to the classroom teacher and parents

House Coordinators

- Monitor their relevant house on a regular basis for patterns of whole day absences and periods of non-attendance
- Issue detentions where appropriate and advise Attendance Officer so that attendance records can be updated and absences removed
- Liaise with Attendance Officer on any issues that impact a student's attendance on a regular basis
- Inform staff and Attendance Officer of any student whose parent or guardian has advised they will be absent for an extended period of time
- In conjunction with Wellbeing and Attendance Officer, case manage students whose attendance patterns are of concern or have ongoing issues that prevent them attending school on a regular basis

- Inform Attendance Officer of any changes to student schedules that relate to subject changes and free periods so that unapproved absences are not generated
- Establish an Attendance Support Group for students where their attendance pattern is of concern and liaise with and subsequently involve Student Services staff when deemed necessary
- Liaise with Compass – Planning and Implementation Leader regarding attendance issues
- In consultation with teachers, student and parent/guardian, develop a Student Learning Plan for students that are absent for an extended period of time and review that plan as required

VCAL, VET, Careers Practitioners

- Provide Attendance Officer with the lists of students who are attending external and internal courses at the start of Term 1 each year or as soon as lists are finalised - ideally the start and end dates of the courses should be as accurate as possible
- Advise the Attendance Officer when students have changed their start times, course days or have changed or dropped courses so that this can be updated on Compass as quickly as possible to avoid any SMS messages being generated or unapproved absences on student records

Student Welfare Services

- Liaise with House Coordinators and Attendance Officer in relation to any students who are identified as having attendance issues or are at risk for any reason so that the attendance can be monitored on a daily/weekly basis
- Advise key staff if students are attending external programs and the start and end times of the course
- Keep House Coordinators and Attendance Officer updated on any changes to the arrangements in place for monitored students.
- Advise House Coordinators and Attendance Officer of any ‘Back to School’ or other support plans that have been initiated by welfare staff for students and provide details of the times, period attendance and the duration of the arrangements.
- Ensure that all student visits to welfare are recorded in a timely manner so that unapproved absences and SMS messages are not generated

Compass – Planning and Implementation Leader

- Set up and maintain the Compass attendance system throughout the year
- Work with Compass personnel regarding College requirements and updates to software
- Communicate with staff regarding updates on the attendance system as required
- Provide/arrange for professional development for relevant staff regarding the use of Compass as required during the year
- Create attendance monitoring facilities for monitoring attendance in alternative programs
- Liaise with Principal, Assistant Principal and Attendance Officer regarding attendance issues as required

Assistant Principal

- Oversee Attendance procedures with the Attendance Officer and Compass – Planning and Implementation Leader
- Support House Coordinators /Sub-school Leaders in implementing attendance procedures
- Monitor school attendance rates