ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023 – 2027

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please email the General Office cranbourne.east.sc@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 Example 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 Cranbourne East Secondary College.

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 Cranbourne East 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 – 17 years unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted.

Daily school attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they don't fall behind both socially and developmentally. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age.

School participation is important as it 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 which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

This policy is providing the framework to a whole-school approach to the engagement of students in their learning and school life.

It is to be read in conjunction with:

- *The school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy*
- *The school's Staged Response to non-attendance*
- https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/attendance/Pages/default.aspx

We understand that sometimes special consideration may need to be given to in-school procedures for students and their families from particular backgrounds or with particular living circumstances. It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Cranbourne East Secondary College

- is committed to promoting the key messages of the benefits of regular school attendance
- believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day
- believes successful students are well organised and start the day on time
- believes that in the best interest of students that family holidays/shopping trips/medical appointments are scheduled outside of school hours
- believes non-attendance can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- monitors, communicates and implements whole school strategies to improve regular school attendance
- Believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Home Group Teacher responsibilities:

- monitor each student's attendance and punctuality
- follow up unexplained absences (see Unexplained Absences process)
- Record actions
- Identify students whose attendance is below 80% and flag with YLL

Classroom Teacher responsibilities:

- If students are late for class, mark on Compass.
- Monitor each student's attendance and punctuality

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Date of next review: Term 1 2027

Assistant Year Level Leader responsibilities:

- Support the YLL with attendance processes and supporting students at risk of disengaging due to absences.

Year Level Leader responsibilities:

- Determine the appropriate follow up to ensure the student's education and wellbeing are supported following a school absence
- Coordinate Student Absence Learning Plan if absence is planned and approved
- Identify students who are at risk of disengaging from school (HG teacher flagged 80%)
- Make DHS/ChildFIRST notifications where appropriate and in consultation with school leadership and wellbeing
- Escalation of attendance concerns as per Staged Response to Non-Attendance
- Notify ALLC of staff detention roster.
- Following up single period unapproved absences.

Student responsibilities:

- Attend school every school day
- Arrive at school and classes on time and prepared
- Talk to a teacher if you have issues that might impact on your ability to attend school/class
- All students who are late to school must sign in at the front office. This is regardless of whether a phone call has been made or it has been entered on Compass in advance
- Only students 18 or over can sign out at the front office, if leaving before the end of the day, parent permission must be obtained before leaving the school grounds. All other students must have a listed parent or guardian sign them out and accompany them before leaving the school grounds.

Parent responsibilities:

- Ensure student attends school every day, when instruction is offered
- Ensure student arrives at school between 8- 8:40 am
- Provide a valid explanation for a student's absence/lateness through Compass, by phone or a signed note.
- Provide identification, when picking a student up during school hours, that complies with school records of listed parent/guardians.
- Must sign a student out before leaving the school during school hours. No student will leave the school grounds during school hours without being signed out by a parent/guardian who has provided identification.
- Provide the school with advanced notice if there is a planned up-coming school absence
- Communicate openly with the school about a student's ongoing medical condition that may result in ongoing absence or medical appointments during school hours
- Alert the school early to issues that may impact on a student's attendance
- Work in partnership with the school to address attendance concerns
- communicate with the relevant staff at Cranbourne East Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.

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Principal/School Leadership responsibilities:

- Use Compass & Cases 21 to record student attendance
- Ensure student attendance is recorded in every class and reason given for each absence is recoded in writing
- Consider the explanation given for an absence and whether it is reasonable in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- Report the annual rates of student attendance for the year to the school community at least once a year
- Ensure that processes are in place to document non-attendance strategies at whole school level
- Ensure that processes are in place to document non-attendance strategies at individual level in student's file e.g. home visits, phone calls, Attendance SSG's, SOCS referrals, DHS/childFIRST notifications
- Make a referral to the School Attendance Officer as required
- Ensure processes are in place to document further enforcement proceedings around non-attendance including, referral to the School Attendance Officer, issuing of a school attendance Notice, infringement notice (and any appeal), court proceedings.

STRATEGIES

At Cranbourne East Secondary College we promote 100% attendance at a whole school level by:

- Regularly communicating with parents about expectations for attendance
- Promoting awareness that absences results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
- Immediately following-up any problems identified by students and parents
- Regularly discussing student attendance records at staff meetings and in the staff Performance and Development review process.
- Focussing on prevention and early intervention by creating a positive school culture
- Intervening and providing targeted responses for individual students
- Implementing attendance focused programs such as breakfast clubs, Hands on Learning, C4S program, games clubs etc

At *Cranbourne East Secondary College* we promote 100% attendance at an individual level by:

- Year level meetings to discuss attendance data and plan strategies to follow up individual students
- Year Level leaders develop an improvement plan when attendance falls below 80%.

Responses to absences

At *Cranbourne East Secondary College*, we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- 95% approved attendance (5% unapproved)
- Over 80% attendance for all students

Sports and Excursions are not considered to be absences in this instance, but may impact on the student's ability to complete al the required work for success. Students who attend less than 80% will have an average of 1 day per week absent for the whole year and will not have completed the same learning or have the same level of understanding as a student who has attended 100%. This may impact on their ability to catch up on this work or be successful at the next level of education. The school will work in partnership with a significant

adult to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan. This may include engaging with the family, SSG meetings, convening an Attendance Support Group and/or a return to school plan. If there is deemed to be a behavioural, social or health issue that is impacting attendance, the student will be referred to the Wellbeing team which may also include referrals to; SSO, Reengagement programs, Child First or external Welfare agencies.

Cranbourne East Secondary College will follow the attached Staged Response to Non-attendance document to target individual non-attendance concerns.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At *Cranbourne East Secondary College* reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- By emailing the school
- By phoning the School

Student attendance is recorded electronically every lesson by the classroom teacher, this information is collated centrally on the CASEs system. All teachers are responsible for following up class absenteeism and ensuring students do not miss learning opportunities. Parents are encouraged to use Compass or ring the school if they know the student is going to be absent. For long term absence, eg. Family Holiday please notify the Year Level Leader in advance. Parents are notified by an SMS system if their child is not at school and the parents have not made prior contact with the school. If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school, where possible, on the day of the unexplained absence.

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, Cranbourne East 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 external providers eg student wellbeing staff, SSSO etc

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 Cranbourne East 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 South Eastern 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 handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): Attendance
- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): Attendance Guide

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Term 1 2023
Approved by	Principal – Meagan Cook
Next scheduled review date	Term 1 2027 – recommended review cycle is 3 to 4 years

Additional Resources

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/attendance/Pages/default.aspx

CESC Staff Handbook- Late/Absence processes

CESC Senior Staff Handbook – Late/Absence processes

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