



## ATTENDANCE

### POLICY

#### **RATIONALE:**

International research demonstrates a strong correlation between students' learning, long-term life outcomes, attendance at school and appropriate participation in education programs. For this reason, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has very clear policies and guidelines in relation to student attendance at school. These policies are the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* and the *Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013*.

The Victorian Government's 'Everyday Counts' initiative promotes the fact that regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development. Children with attendance of 80 per cent or less may be significantly disadvantaged in their learning.

Children of compulsory school age (six years and up to the age of seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to meet the National Youth Participation Requirement agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in July 2009. The agreed participation requirement includes a mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling (meaning full time attendance at a government or registered non-government school or an approved equivalent such as registered home schooling or through the Victorian Distance Education Centre until they complete Year 10).

For the purpose of this policy, the Laurimar Primary School *Procedures for Attendance* documentation must also be referred to.

#### **AIM:**

To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school, do so regularly and without unnecessary absences.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Illness, accidents, religious events or obligation, and other unforeseeable circumstances are reasonable grounds for an absence.
- Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if ill, or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents/Guardians have a further responsibility to provide either a written note or medical certificate explaining the reason for the absence upon their child's return. Alternatively, parents/guardians may contact the school office (9717 7100) on the day of the absence or complete the Absence Notification on the school App.
- The school will promote the DEECD policy of 'Everyday Counts'.
- As per the DEECD 'Everyday Counts' initiative and School Attendance Guidelines, students must achieve a minimum of 80% attendance for automatic promotion to the next year level.

- The school will continue to promote a minimum attendance rate of 95% for all students to ensure that core teaching and learning is not missed throughout the year.
- Attendance Awards will be given at the end of each semester for students who have achieved 100% attendance.
- Parents/Guardians should notify the school in writing prior to any anticipated extended absence.
- Students who are taking extended absences (more than ten days) from the school must have a Student Absence Learning Plan to support their education, which is prepared by the classroom teacher.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified if their child's extended absence will impact on their ability to be promoted to the next year level.
- Involvement in external programs is encouraged by the school; however, participation in these programs should not occur during school hours unless discussed prior with a member of the Principal Class team.
- Students who are late to school disrupt the class and often miss vital work at the start of the day. A student arriving late to school must sign in and their late arrival will be recorded on the daily attendance roll.
- Parents/Guardians must provide a reason for their child arriving late to school.
- The class teacher will notify the Assistant Principal of students consistently late to school. The class teacher will then follow up with parents to seek their support and co-operation. If the lateness continues, the Student Wellbeing Team and/or the School Principal will follow up with the family.
- Parents/Guardians and students will be regularly informed about school and community attendance expectations and absence notification procedures.
- Staff will be encouraged to recognise their role and responsibility in promoting and supporting strong attendance.
- Individual class teachers have the responsibility to follow up absences in their class and request written notification or explanation from parents/guardians for all student absences.
- On the third day of consecutive unexplained absence, the class teacher will contact the parent/guardian. If unable to do so, the teacher will notify the PLT Leader and/or the relevant Assistant Principal who will endeavour to contact the family. If contact cannot be made after continued absence, the Principal will notify the Regional Office.
- Student attendance will be monitored and recorded daily by the school in accordance with both DEECD policies and requirements and the school's internal procedures.
- Where no explanation is received from the parents/guardians, the school will record an absence as an unexplained absence.
- The Principal Class team has a responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated and that high levels of absenteeism are explained.
- Each month, office staff will produce a report reflecting students with attendance under 80 per cent and a letter is sent home to the parents/guardians explaining the impact this level of attendance has on their child's education.
- If attendance does not improve, follow up meetings are held, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- If deemed appropriate, the Student Wellbeing Team will become involved to further implement intervention strategies.
- Ongoing unexplained absences, or a lack of co-operation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. As per DEECD School Attendance Guidelines, this may result in notification to the Regional Office and an Infringement Notice being issued to parents.
- All absence notes and records of communication must be retained and stored at the school for auditing purposes by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).
- Ongoing unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Human Services.
- Student absence figures will appear on student mid-year and end of year reports.

- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the DEECD and wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- Appropriate DEECD transfer and enrolment procedures will be utilised when students enrol or transfer from the school.
- The DEECD Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance will be followed and support materials, including proformas, checklists and brochures, will be used as a key resource.

**Supporting Documentation:**

- DEECD School Attendance Guidelines 2014  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/attendance.aspx>
- Laurimar Primary School Procedures for Attendance
- Laurimar Primary School Student Engagement Policy
- DEECD Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014
- DEECD Schools Policy and Advisory Guide – Environment 4.1

**EVALUATION:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

**April 2014**