

ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT Attendance Policy

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office at 03 9430 5111.

INTRODUCTION

By law all children aged between six and 17 in Victoria must be enrolled at a registered school or registered for home schooling unless there is some reasonable excuse.

Eltham High School aims to ensure that all students enrolled at the school attend regularly to maximise access to learning opportunities. The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline the processes used to monitor student attendance.

PHILOSOPHY

Daily school attendance is important for students to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. Students who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes throughout their lives. It is important that students develop habits of regular attendance at an early age.

Eltham High School acknowledges school participation is important as it maximises life opportunities for students by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people develop important skills, knowledge and values which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Conversely, limited school participation is associated with a greater chance of disengaging from education. This may have later implications for employment and a range of health and social risks including homelessness, poverty, welfare dependence, and involvement in the justice system.

POLICY STATEMENT

Students at Eltham High School are expected to attend school during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

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

A student is considered to be in attendance at school when involved in an offsite curriculum program or other activity organised by the school (for example an excursion or camp), or where the student is attending an engagement program or another school partner to make up fulltime attendance.

At Eltham High School student absence, lateness and tardiness are taken seriously. Eltham High School has developed a staged response to managing attendance.

are commonly a sign of stress factors either in a student's life outside school, and/or in the immediate learning environment and identifies early warning signs for disengagement including poor attendance in primary school or

- Contacting the school in advance prior to any planned short-term absence.
- Providing the reason for any unplanned absences before 10.00 am on the day of absence
- Providing a written note to the SubSchool, if their child is required to leave school early.
- Providing a written note explaining any lateness.
- Contacting the SubSchool if student absence is to be for an extended period of time (e.g. family reasons or illness) and request schoolwork.

○ Contact the SubSchool or Student Services Leader if a student is r 0.006 Twsd

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situation can seem intractable and the management is often very draining for schools. Strong partnerships giving the family consistent messages about attendance, exploring flexible learning options and alternative educational pathways, effective use of secondary consultation, families engaging with support, and maintaining a positive schoolhome relationship are often crucial to improving attendance here.

Truancy

This refers to on-attendance without parent/guardian knowledge or permission. Missing classes, avoiding certain subjects/teachers can be precursors to a pattern of truancy being created. Truancy is often about school failure and engaging in activities that give more positive reinforcement than attending school. Peer influence can play a role in the disengagement. A rapid and consistent response to truancy that factors in possible peer influence offering reengagement programs, individualised and flexible learning options and engaging the support of parents and can be successful in improving attendance here.

Staged Response to Non-attendance

STAGE ONE Unexplained/unauthorised absence from school/ class

- x In the case where the parent/ guardian has not contacted the school, SMS will be made using Compass
- x Teachers are required to inform the subschool coordinator where a student has been absent from their class without approval for three consecutive periods.

STAGE TWO three - five days unexplained absences school

- x Phone/ email contact made with parent/guardian contact by the subschool Coordinator.
- x Use informal contacts to investigate situation
- x Record actions on Compass Chronicle.

STAGE THREE five days or more of unexplained absences

- x Phone/ email contact as per level two
- x Increase offer of, or refer, support Liaise with existing family service / seek support for family
- x Written request to parent/guardian regarding absences. The letter to be signed by the subschool Leader
- x Consult with Student Services team.
- x Record actions on Compass Chronicle.

STAGE FOUR ongoing unexplained absences

- x Continued contact with offers of support.
- x Subschool leader will enlist the support of the relevant Assistant Principal to organise a meeting with parents/carers to address issues contributing to absences and supports that can be put into place.
- x The purpose of this meeting will be to establish causes of non-attendance, develop Student Absence Learning Plan and/or Attendance Improvement Plan or Return to School Plan to support attendance as per DET School Attendance Guidelines 2014
- x Request secondary consultation or direct intervention from Student Services team. This may lead to referral to external agency, such as Health Ability CAMHS Child FIRS/ Berry Street.
- x Consider an individual tailored program. Explore Flexible Learning Options/ Engagement programs at a school level or in the community.
- x Continue to support the student's education with the development of a Student Absence Learning Plan
- x CASES21: DET Excusing attendance due to school refusal
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/managingabsence.aspx>
 " in general, it is expected that principals would excuse absences for:.....school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes....."

- x Record actions on Compass Chronicle.

STAGE FIVE Unresolved ongoing nonattendance

- x Letter to parent/guardian summarising all intervention and support offered. To be signed and sent by the Principal. The letter is to offer an opportunity to meet with the school for an Attendance Student Support Group Meeting and advising the parent/guardian unless there is improvement the matter will be referred to School Attendance Officer. Parents required to respond within 7 days.
- x Letter to be sent registered post
- x Continue with secondary consultations/phone calls/home visits
- x Record actions on Compass Chronicle.

STAGE SIX Referral to School Attendance Officer

- x A principal

- Where there is a known school absence parents/guardians are requested to advise the school by entering the details into Compass through the parental portal, emailing the relevant Coordinator or by telephoning the school attendance line on 9430 5299 by 10:30am on the morning of the absence.

BASIS OF DISCRETION

The School Council has responsibility for the establishment, evaluation and review of school policies. The School Principal has the responsibility to ensure that school policies are implemented effectively.

Minor changes to the policy (changes that will not affect the spirit of the policy) may be made at the discretion of the Principal.

The Policy Review and Evaluation process will recommend any major changes to the policy to School Council.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Available to all staff on the school's SharePoint database
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

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Consultation has taken place with the relevant group(s) in the following list:

Group	Consultation
School Operations Committee	

Staff

