

Rationale

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) requires that children of compulsory school age (six years and up to the age of sixteen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, or correspondence education through the Distance Education Centre. In exceptional circumstances, an exemption from school attendance may be granted.

Principles

- Attendance at school is one of the principal indicators for student achievement. Students who are regularly absent from school are at the greatest risk of not succeeding.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable grounds exist for them to be absent, such as illness.
- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.

Goals

- Student learning opportunities and performance will be maximized by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and absenteeism is kept to a minimum.
- An up to date attendance record must be retained in the school and be available for inspection by any person authorized by the Minister for Education and Training at all times when the school is open.
- Student absence figures will be included on student half year and end of year reports.

Strategies

Parents

Parents have responsibility to:

- ensure that their child attend school regularly, as regular attendance provides the best opportunity for student learning.
- provide an explanation as to why any absence has occurred. This explanation may be verbal or written and should be communicated to

the classroom teacher as soon as is practicable preferably before the start of the school day to avoid follow up phone calls.

- inform teachers of known extended absences and seek information about work missed.

Teachers

Teachers must:

- accurately record attendances and absences in both the morning and the afternoon
- follow up unexplained absences in their class requesting written notes or verbal explanations from parents
- provide support for students who are absent showing concern and providing assistance to catch up on work missed
- inform the Head Teacher when there are:
 - unexplained absences
 - irregular attendance patterns
 - absences that appear unwarranted
- follow up consistent lateness
- provide roll data to the office administrator daily

Office Administrator

The Office Administrator should:

- complete an Absence Action Sheet (Appendix A) for the Head Teacher daily to assist him/her to investigate absences appropriately.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher has the responsibility to:

- ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school
- obtain summary of roll data from office administrator daily
- investigate unexplained absences, and be satisfied that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. Based on absence data, the Head Teacher may contact the parents of students via phone or letter. This contact must be conducted with courtesy and respect and with recognition of the potentially sensitive nature of the issue. Contact is made with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences and to build positive home-school relationships. Strategies may include:

- counselling for parents and/or students
- home visits
- support groups
- regular meetings
- development of an individual Attendance Plan
- maintain an accurate log book of parent contacts and approved absences
- report ongoing truancy issues to appropriate welfare and government agencies
- be satisfied that parents/guardians are aware of student absences. In the case of unexplained absences, the Head Teacher should ensure that there is prompt communication with parents/guardians.

Date

August 2007

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APPENDIX A

Absence Action Sheet

Date of absence	Child's Name	Reason for absence	Previous recent absences	Notification to teacher?	Action required?	Phone call	Letter home	Other	Comments