

	<b>Policy Name:</b>	Attendance Policy	<b>Date of Approval:</b>	2018
	<b>Responsible:</b>	Leadership Team	<b>Review Date:</b>	2022

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 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 that Tyabb Primary 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 enrolled at Tyabb Primary School.

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 Tyabb Primary School, 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 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation 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 that sets them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Tyabb Primary School during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Tyabb Primary School, or

- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Tyabb Primary School for particular activities.

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day. Tyabb Primary School believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

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.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Tyabb Primary School parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Tyabb Primary School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns. Parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.

## PROCEDURE

### Parents

The Department of Education & Training (DET) has issued a directive to ensure all 'Unexplained' absences are followed up with parents **on the day of the absence**. All class rolls are marked by 9.15am. If your child is absent without an explanation after 9.30am a member of the administration team will contact you by text or phone for approval and a reason for the absence.

To help the school complete this very important process in a timely manner we ask that parents:

- Ring the school on the day of the absence and leave a message on the Absence voicemail with your child's name, grade (or teacher) and the reason for the absence or by completing the Absence Form through the Flexibuzz app **before 9.30am**.
- If your child is late ie after the 9am bell, students are to be signed in at the office and a late pass taken to the teacher. The office will record the time of arrival on the roll.
- If you collect your child before the 3.30pm bell, please come to the office to sign them out and take an Early Departure pass to the teacher. The office will record the time of departure on the roll.
- If your child will be absent at a date in the future, please send a note either to the teacher or office and the absence will be recorded prior to the date. Please include the dates of the absence and the reason for the absence eg family holiday, appointment.

### Teachers

8.50am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell rings. Students go to class to prepare for the 9am bell.</li> </ul>
9am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell rings. <b>Roll is marked by 9.15am.</b></li> <li>• Any students not in class are to be marked '500 Unexplained'. No other code is to be used by the teacher. The office will update the roll as required.</li> <li>• Any student arriving after the bell should have signed into the office and have a 'Late Pass'.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If student doesn't have a Late Pass they are to be sent back to the office immediately to sign in and take a Late Pass back to class</li> </ul>
<b>9.15am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All eCases rolls are to have been marked.</li> <li>Rolls which have not been marked by 9.15am will be contacted by the office or an announcement will be made</li> </ul>
<b>9.15-9.30am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office staff check the answering machine, Flexibuzz, Passtab, notes and late passes and updates CASES with the relevant code.</li> </ul>
<b>9.30 am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report for 500 Unexplained absences will be printed and checked</li> </ul>
<b>9.30 – 10.00am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The office will either phone or text parents whose child is '500 Absent Unexplained' and CASES will be updated with the correct code after parents have confirmed the absence and reason.</li> </ul>

All notes from parents are to be sent to the office in the morning pouch so absences or future absences ie family holiday etc. can be recorded in eCASES. The office will record these absences and teachers are not to change the code please. Notes will be kept at the office and filed in to grade envelopes.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Supporting and promoting attendance

Tyabb Primary School's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance by engaging students in their learning through a PLC (Professional Learning Community) approach and by providing additional extra-curricular activities. These include:

"It's not OK to be away" approach

Whole School Values Education

Promotion of positive behaviours

You Can Do It program

Student Leadership Programs

Buddy Program

Transition Program

HPV Human Powered Vehicle

Specialist Programs – Art, Music, PE, Science and Studies

of Asia

Senior School Electives

PALS – Peninsula Accelerated Learning

Start Up Program

Tyabb's Got Talent

Camps - years 3-6

Instrumental Music

Sporting School Program

Camp Australia – before and after school care

Swimming and Water Safety

Incursions and Excursions

### Recording attendance

All primary schools must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements,
- discharge Tyabb Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher and office staff at the start of the school day, this includes late arrivals. The classroom teacher will also record attendance at the end of lunchtimes, with office staff recording any early departures during the day.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

### 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 Tyabb Primary School of absences by:

- Providing a written note explaining the reason for the absence

- Contacting the office directly or by leaving a message on the school telephone answering machine or via Flexibuzz.

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent the office staff at Tyabb Primary School will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond. This contact will be made via a phone call or SMS message.

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.

Tyabb Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. 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 Tyabb Primary School considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'. If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexcused absence**'.

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,
- 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 within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file. Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

## Monitoring attendance

Tyabb Primary School will monitor attendance in the following ways:

- Classroom teachers will monitor the attendance of their own grades and consult with the AP (Student Welfare Officer) if there are any concerns e.g. student absent for more than 5 days or frequent absences.
- Each month the Student Welfare Officer will review student attendance data and contact parents via written letter or phone call to discuss the importance of attendance and provide supports as listed below.
- Principal to contact Schools Regional Attendance Officer where school based strategies have been exhausted and non attendance continues.

## 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, Tyabb Primary School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- Meeting with parents to reinforce the importance of attendance and providing support where needed,
- 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 student wellbeing staff e.g. Assistant Principal (welfare officer), SSSO personnel or external providers.

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 Tyabb Primary School 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 Victorian Regional Office for further action.

After 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.

### **MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- [School intranet](#)

### **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and is scheduled for review in May 2022.