



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 Swinburne Senior Secondary College 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 Swinburne Senior 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 Swinburne Senior 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 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 set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Swinburne Senior Secondary College 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 Swinburne Senior Secondary College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Swinburne Senior Secondary College for particular activities.

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

Swinburne Senior Secondary College 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.

Swinburne Senior Secondary College 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 Swinburne Senior Secondary College 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.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Swinburne Senior Secondary College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Swinburne Senior Secondary College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Swinburne Senior Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers each lesson using Compass

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 Swinburne Senior Secondary College of absences by:

- approving an absence on Compass

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Swinburne Senior Secondary College will notify parents. Swinburne Senior Secondary College will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

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.

Swinburne Senior Secondary College 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 Swinburne Senior Secondary College 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, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- 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.

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, Swinburne Senior 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 staff (e.g. Mentor, Study Support, Wellbeing)

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 Swinburne Senior 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 NEVR 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
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)

PROCEDURES

The Attendance Policy has been developed in line with the requirements stipulated by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

VCAA policy requires that students attend at least 50 hours of class time for each unit during a semester. As a result **students must not be absent for more than 8 single periods per subject each semester**. This minimum requirement is designed to accommodate student illness, bereavement or other significant personal circumstances. A student will be deemed to have not met the college's attendance requirement when they have missed 9 or more periods. The Year Level Managers have overall responsibility for attendance management.

Absences related to significant personal circumstances need to be approved by the Year Level

Manager.

Student attendance requirement

Tier	Threshold	Action	Responsible
Tier 1	4 classes	Chronicle entry - Attendance concern Student and Parents/Carers informed via Compass entry	Classroom teacher
	8 classes	Chronicle entry - Attendance at risk (Year 11 or Year 12) Student and Parents/Carers informed via Compass entry Phone call to parents/carers	Classroom teacher
Tier 2	10 classes	Chronicle entry - Attendance at risk (Year 11 or Year 12) Refer to Year Level Leaders Student and Parents/Carers informed via Compass entry Phone call to parents/carers	Classroom teacher - referral Year Level Leader - attendance improvement plan visible to parents, students and teachers through Chronicle
	15 classes	Meeting with Parent and Student to outline the withdrawal from the subject Chronicle entry to record meeting	Year Level Leader to convene team
Tier 3	Significant absence due to illness or engagement issues which will result in the student being unable to complete their studies.	SSG, Attendance improvement plan, re-engagement plan formulated. Chronicle entry to record meeting	Year Level Leader / Assistant Principal

Students who are absent for more than 16 periods in a subject will not meet the school's attendance requirement and will be removed from the subject. This may then impact students' ability to complete a VCE over the normal 2 year period.

Note, these absences are inclusive of physical or mental illness or other personal circumstances. Students who experience significant circumstances that impact their ability to attend may apply for Special Provision through the Wellbeing team (see below).

IMPLEMENTATION

College Responsibilities

- The Attendance Policy will be published on the College website.
- Students will be informed of the policy during assembly at the start of the year.
- Compass School Manager will show a student's attendance in real time. Students and parents/guardians have access to Compass School Manager 24/7.
- Parents / Carers and students will be informed via email when attendance issues are identified

Bell Times - Absences & Lateness

- Before each class a 5 minute warning bell will sound telling students to make their way to class. The second bell will sound to mark the start of class.
- Students are expected to be punctual and as such students who arrive after the second bell will be marked late.

Absences and school-based assessments (SACs / SATs)

- The college expects students to attend all School Assessed Coursework (SAC) and submit School Assessment Tasks (SAT) on time.
- If a student is absent from a Year 12 SAC, it will not be scored unless the Year Level Office has been supplied with a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation explaining the absence. This documentation will be entered on Compass.

Student Responsibilities

- If a student is absent for any reason, it is expected they will discuss work requirements that have been missed with their teachers on return to school.
- If a student arrives late to class, they should check with the teacher to ensure that they have been marked as attending.
- Students who miss a SAC or SAT must discuss this with their teacher and organise the rescheduling of the SAC on the SAC catch up sessions
- A medical certificate needs to be provided to explain absences for a SAC for health matters. Without a medical certificate the SAC will not be scored. An email from the parent is sufficient for a bereavement.
- If a student is removed from a subject they are expected to spend the time studying to ensure success in their other subjects. It is highly advised that during this time they engage with Study Support.

Parent Responsibilities

- Parents/carers are expected to notify the college on the day of an absence and verify any absence that is not school related on the day of the absence (where possible) using the Compass School Management System. A phone call to the Year Level Office can also be made.
- It is important that it is understood that verifying an absence does not exclude students from completing any work missed by the student when absent or alter the requirement to attend no less than 50 hours of class time.
- Parents/guardians should monitor student absences to ensure they do not miss more than 8 periods.

Principal

Daryl Bennett

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	January 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2026