



## 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 Monivae 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 Monivae 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 Monivae College parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

## Legislative Context

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

## Definitions

Term	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 Statement / Principles

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 Monivae 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 Monivae College, or

- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Monivae College for particular activities.

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

Monivae 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 approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Monivae 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 Monivae 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.

## **Actions**

### **Supporting and Promoting Attendance**

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- articulating high expectations to all members of the school community by:
  - regularly communicating with parents about expectations for attendance
  - promoting awareness that absence results in quantifiable lost learning time and opportunities
  - modelling punctuality across the whole school
- creating safe, supportive learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning by:
  - developing collaborative and empowering relationships between teachers, students and parents
  - implementing effective and supportive transition programs, including student transitions between different learning areas and levels within the school, and pathways and careers support programs
  - developing class and home group structures and environments that enable opportunities for increased connectedness to individual teachers and peers
  - encouraging parents to get involved in the life of the school
  - immediately following-up any problems identified by students and parents in a transparent manner
- adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence by
  - immediately following-up individual student absences
  - correctly using student attendance data management systems
  - delegating responsibilities to all staff, with a key member of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives
- implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies, for example:
  - monitoring and analysing school attendance records regularly and using tools

- regularly discussing student attendance records in staff meetings and in the staff performance and development review process
- providing early identification of and supportive intervention for students at risk of poor attendance by:
  - understanding the causal factors of absence and the need for targeted interventions
  - providing out-of-school programs, including homework clubs
- linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support by:
  - collaborating with other schools, community groups and agencies
- accessing specialist support for individual students with identified behavioural, health, or social issues by:
  - utilising Student Support Services or external community services where appropriate
- provide a staged response to non-attendance by:
  - focusing on prevention and early intervention by creating a positive school culture
  - intervening and providing targeted responses for individual students
- supporting students to return to school after absences through:
  - setting individual student attendance goals and data-driven improvement plans
  - formal procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended period
  - positive and flexible support and follow-up with students on their return to school, including the use of Return to School Plans and modification of learning outcomes where required
- creating school-based wellbeing workforces such as Student Support Services and Koorie Engagement Support Services.

## **Recording Attendance**

Monivae College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Monivae College's duty of care for all students
- assist in the calculation of the school's funding
- enable reporting to the school board on student attendance annually
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each period using the SIMON system.

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 by 9.30am on the day of the absence.

Parents should notify Monivae College of absences by:

- contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence, informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned absence.

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, Monivae College will notify parents via a phone call and a request made for an immediate response to explain their absence. This will

be sent to parents prior to 10.00am. Where a parent fails to respond to the initial contact by the school within 1 hour, a second attempt to contact them will be made via direct contact. In the event that this communication remains unsuccessful, a subsequent attempt to contact individuals identified as the student's emergency contact will be made. The school will make all reasonable attempts to determine the location and wellbeing of the student.

Monivae 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 Monivae 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, Monivae 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 student support staff.

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.

### **Truancy**

Truancy is when a child chooses to miss school without a parent's permission. Such absences are due to the child's disobedience and not due to any fault of the parent. Therefore, they may be considered a reasonable excuse for a parent.

In deciding to accept this explanation, the principal will consider:

- The age of the student;

- Previous attendance records for the student; and/or
- The parent's capacity to influence and control the student's behaviour.

In the case of truancy or school refusal, the parents and the school will work together on a plan to address the cause/s.

### Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Monivae 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 Catholic Education Office 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.

### Forms and Record Keeping

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Records of all contact, or attempts to make contact, with the student's family,	Varied	Reception Officer Staff Member	One (1) Year
Documentation of all attempted and implemented intervention strategies aimed at restoring a student's attendance	Varied	Staff Member Principal	Permanent
attendance records (electronic and hardcopy)	SIMON	Reception Staff Member	Permanent

### Review and Circulation

<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Approved by:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Principal <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Team <input type="checkbox"/> Governing Authority
<b>Effective Date:</b>	01.04.2021
<b>Review Date:</b>	01.04.2022
<b>Audience:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Employees

### Promulgation

This policy will be communicated throughout the Monivae College school community in the form of:

- policies section of the Monivae College website;

- policy library section of the Monivae College intranet; and
- distribution of email to all staff.

## **Implementation**

This policy will be implemented throughout Monivae College via:

- policy library section of the Monivae College intranet; and
- staff briefing session.