



Student Attendance Policy

Background

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6-17 years unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted. Whilst ensuring student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents, supporting students to attend school each day is the shared responsibility of all parents, students, the school and the wider community.

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 Kingsley Park 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 Example School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Kingsley Park for particular activities.

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

Kingsley Park believes all students must attend school every day when the school is open for instruction unless the child is unwell and is committed to working with our 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 attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Students must be 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 affecting their attendance.

Parents must be committed to ensuring their child/ren attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for all absences. It is expected that parents will endeavour to schedule appointments and family holidays outside of school hours. Parents must communicate with relevant staff at Kingsley Park about any

issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Kingsley Park Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance. Our school also promotes student attendance by setting individual attendance goals with students and awarding House Points and Positive Shout-outs for regular attendance.

Recording attendance

Kingsley Park staff must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
 - discharge Kingsley Park's duty of care for all students
- Attendance is recorded by classroom teachers at 8.50am at the start of the day and at 2.15pm after lunch using Sentral.

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

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 Kingsley Park of absences by:

- Using the Sentral portal to log the absence and date
- Leaving an absence voicemail on the school phone system clearly stating your child's name, class and absence reason or
- contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence or to discuss the matter

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, Kingsley Park will notify parents by SMS, Sentral push notification message email, telephone or other method of notification. Kingsley Park 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.

Kingsley Park 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 Kingsley Park considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**explained absence**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexplained 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, Kingsley Park will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- If a child's attendance is of concern the classroom teacher should initially meet with the parents/caregivers to discuss the reasons for being absent.
- If attendance issues continue to be of concern, a meeting will be requested with the Principal or Assistant Principal to;
- establish an Attendance Student Support Group
- implement a Return to School Plan
- implement an Individual Education Plan
- implement a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from relevant student wellbeing staff.
- If attendance issues continue to be of concern, a student support group may be formed including the child's teacher, outside agencies, the child, the parents/care givers and Principal/Principal's Nominee to devise an Individual Learning Plan focused on and/or attendance/return to school plan. Further details of this process can be found in the Student Engagement Policy [pages 19-22]

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf>

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 Kingsley Park 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 Regional Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to make 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.

Purpose

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 Kingsley Park has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.
- Maximise learning opportunities by ensuring absenteeism of students is kept to a minimum at Kingsley Park Primary School.
- Ensure Kingsley Park Primary School has effective processes for managing student attendance.
- Comply with the Department of Education and Training (DET) policies and procedures.
- Maintain the DET values of leadership, respect, responsiveness, human rights, integrity, impartiality and accountability.

This policy applies to all students at Kingsley Park Primary School.

Implementation

- The Principal has the overall responsibility of implementing this policy, but may delegate certain roles to suitably qualified staff.

At Kingsley Park Primary School it is recognised that the school, teachers, parents, administration staff and students have a role in ensuring maximum student attendance and have the following responsibilities:

School

The school will:

- Develop policies and procedures to support student attendance.
- Maintain attendance records. (e.g. CASES21, Sentral)
- Ensure attendance data forms part of each child's half year and end of year progress reports to parents.
- Communicate clearly to parents attendance expectations, including being punctual to school.
- Adopt consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence by:
 - immediately following-up individual student absences
 - correctly using student attendance data management systems (e.g. Sentral, CASES21)
 - delegating responsibilities to all staff, with a key member of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives.
- Up-levelling attendance concerns to the DET Student Wellbeing Branch.
- Sending out DET brochures about attendance (e.g. Every Day Counts)
- Awarding classes with low absences and late arrivals at assembly.
- Be familiar with DET's 'Every Day Counts' resources and information at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/everyday.aspx>

Administration Staff

Administration staff will:

- Pass on any telephone messages for student absence to classroom teachers.
- Generate Sentral absence letters each month to ask parents/guardians to explain absences that have not been reported to the school.
- Archive all student absence notes per term
- Monitor that all attendance data has been entered into the Sentral and CASES21 system.
- Monitor that students who are late use Sentral to sign in.
- Ensure parent notification of unexplained absences within an hour of formal schooling time.

Teachers

Classroom teachers will:

- Submit class attendance roll by 8.55am and 2.20pm each day. While on occasion, the roll may be marked using a paper roll, all attendance data must ultimately be recorded using the Sentral online system.
- Ensure the accuracy of their attendance reporting daily.
- Ensure that student absences are recorded using the correct CASES21 codes.
- Promote the importance of attendance in their grade.
- Closely monitor student attendance in their grade.
- Acknowledge students with excellent attendance.
- Follow up with parents (e.g. phone call) on students who have been absent for 2 days or unexplained.

- Pass on absent notes to administration staff to be archived each term.
- Report to the Principal/Assistant Principal concerns about a student's absenteeism.
- Actively participate in support group meetings for students with high absenteeism.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians must:

- Enrol a child of compulsory school-age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction or seek enrolment for approved tuition.
- Contact the school via phone, email or provide a written note, detailing the reason/s for their child's absence. These notes are to be given to the classroom teacher.
- Inform the school ahead of time of planned absences (e.g. family holiday) either using Sentral, an email or a note to the office.
- As much as possible schedule appointments outside of school time.
- Not allow days off for unnecessary events such as shopping or birthdays. These are not determined as valid reasons according to the Department of Education and Training Guidelines, neither is sleeping in.
- Ensure their child attends school and outline the benefits in doing so.
- Inform the school immediately of any attendance issues or concerns with their child.
- Work with the school to work through any attendance issues with their child.

Students

Students should:

- Attend school every day.
- Inform their teacher/parents of any issues which may compromise their attendance at school.
- Students who are late must sign in through the Office to receive a pink slip to give to their classroom teacher.

Further details of this process can be found at:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/improvementstrategies.aspx> • For instances of severe attendance concerns, the school may refer to an attendance officer.

Parents should be informed that if a student has repeated absences without a reasonable excuse or explanation, the parent may be issued with a School Attendance Notice from a School Attendance Officer.

Notes

- CASES21 provides letters to be used for notifying parents of absences and seeking explanations.
- Schools must keep accurate records of all attempts to contact parents or students and any information obtained regarding attendance.

Evaluation

CASES21 enrolment data and Attendance trends in the School Level Report will be used to monitor this policy. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 3 year cycle or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.

The review will include input from staff, parents/carers and the school community and students where appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

This policy was approved by council : August 2022

This policy will be due for review : August 2025 unless required earlier

