



Ringwood Secondary College

Attendance Policy

Version No: 3

Date: March 2015

Committee: Policy and Education

Rationale:

Regular attendance is essential to ensure students learn and that they form good relationships. The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* and *Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013* requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless formally exempt. Ringwood Secondary College requires that post-compulsory aged students also attend school unless there is a valid reason not to attend. The College utilises a combination of strategies to monitor attendance and, where necessary, to resolve non-attendance issues.

Aims:

The College aims to:

- Promote attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures
- Develop and implement rigorous and effective systems to record and monitor absences
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded in every class
- Maintain accurate attendance records on the College attendance system - Compass
- Ensure the prompt processing of student transfers upon the student's enrolment at their new school
- Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly and provide timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school
- Monitor and follow up student absences, ensuring wherever possible that parents/carers are aware of student absence
- Pursue and record an explanation for every absence
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time
- Convene student support group meetings with parents/carers and students when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the College, leading to the development of Individual Educational Plans (IEP) to improve the student's attendance
- Provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/carers has not been possible or if the student's attendance pattern continues to be a problem after the initial student support group meeting

Implementation Guidelines:

- The monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of the College Systems Development and Integration Leader, Attendance Officer, Administration and College staff in accordance with the instructions in the Staff Handbook.
- Students and parent/carers are made aware of their roles and responsibilities, and those of the College, regarding attendance.
- Records of attendance are to be retained according to Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.
- Attendance will be recorded and monitored using Compass.
- Attendance in VCE classes will be monitored in accordance with VCAA requirements.
- Year 11 and 12 students may leave after Period 3 if they have no timetabled Period 4 class.
- The College will implement attendance-monitoring processes such as emails/SMSs to parent/care givers of students who are absent, establishing target groups for closer monitoring and convening Attendance Support Groups for students whose attendance is of concern.
- Individual Student Absence Learning Plans are to be developed to assist students who experience extended periods of absence.

- Refer persistent non-attendance to the North Eastern Victoria Region of DET.
- Provide members of the College community with attendance information that highlights the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders as outlined below:

Preventative Strategies

Role of the Teacher:

Teachers are to:

- Promote attendance through clear statements of expectations
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded every class using Compass
- Maintain accurate attendance records on Compass
- Monitor and follow up student absences/lateness to class
- Notify Community Coordinators if a student is absent without notice for more than two lessons or displays a regular pattern of absenteeism
- Work collaboratively with Community Coordinators, parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time
- Record the number of classes taught and classes missed for each student on semester reports

Role of the Students

Students are to:

- Attend school at all times when it is a designated school day
- VCE students are required to maintain the specified attendance rate in accordance with both the College and VCAA guidelines
- Arrive on time to school and to every class including Bounce
- Go to the General Office to sign in/sign out via the Kiosk to obtain a Late Pass or Early Leavers pass. In all cases, students should have a note or communication (Compass, phone or email) from home explaining the late/early arrival.
- Ensure their parent/carer provides an explanation for an absence on return to school. This can be done by note, email, Compass or phone
- Remain on school premises during school time unless they have permission to leave the school from both the school and their parents/carers
- Work with their teachers to develop/obtain learning activities to be included in a Student Absence Learning Plan for completion during a prolonged absence
- Work cooperatively with the College to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent

Role of the Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are to:

- Ensure that their child attends school at all times when it is a designated school day
- Promote and support their child to attend and participate at school
- Ensure that their child is on time for school each day
- Notify the College by phone, Compass message, email or note
 - of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence
 - in advance of an absence of any length that is planned
 - of the need for an early leavers pass or late pass for their child
- To avoid, as far as possible, student appointments during school time as well as other extended absences including family holidays
- Advise one of the Community Coordinators or Assistant Principal if their child is reluctant to attend school
- Support their child's learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school
- Work cooperatively with the College in supporting their child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence
- Ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up-to-date

Appendix 1

Individual tasks required to monitor attendance:

Student Attendance Officer

- Enter daily absence data generated via attendance line, parent emails from Compass or general information from College staff in regard to absences
- Notify Community Coordinators of any extended student absences that are directly communicated to the Attendance Officer
- Check on Compass to ensure that the SMS messages to parents have been sent each day
- Communicate with parents re unapproved absences on daily/weekly basis and update information on Compass
- Monitor patterns of non-attendance and pass on any relevant or important attendance information to Community Co-Ordinators or other college staff where appropriate
- Enter attendance data for scheduled absences that are not covered under Events - ie VET courses, numeracy or literacy programs, welfare activities, year level exams or excursions or other activities as required
- Check event entries on a regular basis to ensure there is no issue with start or duration times that may generate unapproved absences or incorrect SMS messages to parents. Follow up with relevant staff if required
- Ensure that information for exiting students is updated and classes removed from Compass
- Identify students across all year levels that are continually late to school and run weekly lunchtime detentions. Enter information in the student Chronicle section so it is visible to parents. Send list to sub-schools once a month
- Assist staff with any Compass related enquiries or problems related to the inputting of student attendance data for rolls, classes or activities
- Monitor unmarked rolls and send a reminder to teachers if they remain unmarked for a considerable length of time as some of these rolls may need to be cancelled.
- Upload attendance data into Cases at the end of each month and generate report for Principal
- At the start of Term 1 each year, the Attendance Officer will print off Class Lists and produce a Master List of classes for checking during an Emergency Drill
- Reprint lists as required to update any class changes

Office Staff

- Issue late and early leaver passes throughout the day
- Enter Community Service students before 10.00 am each morning
- Assist Attendance Officer as required
- Ensure any support documentation from parents re absences is passed on to the Attendance Officer as soon as possible

Classroom Teacher

- It is a legal requirement for staff to mark the roll on Compass during the first 10 minutes of the class
- Update the roll during the lesson if a student is late to class for a legitimate reason
- Inform Community Coordinators of a student's ongoing patterns of non-attendance in classes - in particular for VCE students whose attendance has dropped below 80%.
- Cancel VCE classes that did not run for appropriate reasons
- The organising teacher should enter class activities/excursions on Compass ensuring that times, dates and sessions are correct. If unsure check with Attendance Officer
- Mark Event rolls at the beginning of the activity or excursion. If unable to do so contact the Attendance Officer for assistance
- If taking an Extra ensure the roll is marked at the beginning of the lesson
- Avoid letting students leave the classroom unless they have a legitimate reason
- Insist students who are more than 10 minutes to class go to the office to get a late pass

Community Coordinators

- Monitor their relevant community on a regular basis for patterns of whole day absences and period non-attendance
- Issue detentions where appropriate and advise Attendance Officer so that attendance records can be updated and absences removed
- Liaise with Attendance Officer on any issues that can impact a student's attendance on a regular basis
- Inform staff and Attendance Officer of any student whose parent or guardian has advised they will be absent for an extended period of time
- In conjunction with Wellbeing and Attendance Officer, case manage students whose attendance patterns are of concern or have ongoing issues that prevent them attending school on a regular basis
- Inform Attendance Officer of any changes to student schedules that relate to subject changes and free periods so that unapproved absences are not generated
- Establish an Attendance Support Group for students where their attendance pattern is of concern and liaise with and subsequently involve Student Services staff when deemed necessary
- Liaise with College Systems Development and Integration Leader regarding attendance issues
- In consultation with teachers, student and parent/guardian, develop a Student Learning Plan for students that are absent for an extended period of time and review that plan as required

VCAL, VET, Careers Practitioners

- Provide Attendance Officer with the lists of students who are attending external and internal courses at the start of Term 1 each year or as soon as lists are finalised - ideally the start and end dates of the courses should be as accurate as possible
- Advise the Attendance Officer when students have changed their start times, course days or have changed or dropped courses so that this can be updated on Compass as quickly as possible to avoid any SMS messages being generated or unapproved absences on student records

Student Welfare Services

- Liaise with Community Coordinators and Attendance Officer in relation to any students who are identified as having attendance issues or are at risk for any reason so that the attendance can be monitored on a daily/weekly basis
- Advise key staff if students are attending external programs and the start and end times of the course
- Keep Community Coordinators and Attendance Officer updated on any changes to the arrangements in place for monitored students.
- Advise Community Coordinators and Attendance Officer of any 'Back to School' or other support plans that have been initiated by welfare staff for students and provide details of the times, period attendance and the duration of the arrangements.
- Ensure that all student visits to welfare are recorded in a timely manner so that unapproved absences and SMS messages are not generated

College Systems Development and Integration Leader

- Set up and maintain the Compass attendance system throughout the year
- Work with Compass personnel regarding College requirements and updates to software
- Communicate with staff regarding updates on the attendance system as required
- Provide/arrange for professional development for relevant staff regarding the use of Compass as required during the year
- Create attendance monitoring facilities for monitoring attendance in alternative programs
- Liaise with Principal, Assistant Principal and Attendance Officer regarding attendance issues as required

Assistant Principal

- Oversee Attendance procedures with Student Progress Leader
- Support Community Coordinators /Sub-school Coordinators in implementing attendance procedures
- Monitor school attendance rates