

HEATHMONT EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL - ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. RATIONALE

The *Education Act 1958* requires that children of school age (six – fifteen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, distance education or have been granted an exemption by the Regional Director. It is recognised that absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure.

2. GUIDELINES

- 2.1 To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.
- 2.2 Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.
- 2.3 All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- 2.4 Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- 2.5 Students are expected to arrive at school with sufficient time to prepare for the school day. The core hours of the school are between 9am and 3.30pm. As such, arrival time is recommended between 8.30 and 8.50.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 Parents are required to provide a written note or return a completed absence slip, provided in the School Newsletter, to the school explaining why an absence has occurred. Appropriate levels of notification include written letter, absence slip or email.
- 3.2 The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained by staff and monitored at school.
- 3.3 All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers, are aggregated on our CASES 21 database and communicated to DEECD.
- 3.4 The Principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences/lateness is investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. This may include a department generated letter requesting clarification of a student's absence.
- 3.5 Classroom teachers will contact the principal if they are concerned about a child who has been absent for long or continued periods. The Principal or nominee will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- 3.6 Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance, will result in ongoing communication. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Human Services.
- 3.7 Student absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- 3.8 Aggregated student attendance data is reported to DEECD and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- 3.9 The school will implement the DEECD initiative of 'It's Not Okay to be Away' to promote regular school attendance.

3.10 If a student leaves the school during the day, parents/guardians must ensure the child is signed out at the office and then signed in on return.

3.11 Where prolonged absence is planned, eg holidays, written notification is encouraged before the absence.

4. EVALUATION

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