

STUDENT 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 Braybrook 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 Braybrook College. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [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* and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

POLICY

Schooling is compulsory for children/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/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/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 Braybrook 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 Braybrook College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment with us for particular activities.

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

Braybrook 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/cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions/supports.

Students must be committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and being prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach their Year Level Team to seek assistance if they have any issues affecting their attendance.

Braybrook College parents must be committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, communicate openly with the school and provide valid explanations for any absence. Parents are asked to communicate with the relevant staff at Braybrook College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns. Parents are also asked to 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.

College Practices Supporting and promoting attendance

Braybrook College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance. Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- The provision of a supportive school environment
- Effective record keeping
- Prompt follow-up of absences by a Year Level Team member (e.g. Year Level Coordinator, Deputy Year Level Coordinator, Sub-school Leader, Administrative Assistant) or the Youth Support Officer
- Close liaison with parents/guardians/caregivers
- Guidance and support for those with attendance problems
- Running a Year 7/8 Breakfast Club

Where there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a student, prompt communication should occur with the parents/guardians/caregivers

Recording attendance

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

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

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each lesson/period using COMPASS

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them 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 Braybrook College of absences by:

- telephoning the Attendance Office or by making an entry on COMPASS of the reason for a student's absence
- Where practicable, parents/guardians/caregivers are encouraged to notify the college in advance of any absence
- Where there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a student, prompt communication should occur with the college

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, Braybrook College will notify parents by telephone.

Braybrook 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.

Braybrook 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 Braybrook 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
- 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, Braybrook College will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- Implementing a Return to School Plan
- Implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- Arranging for assistance from the Youth Support Officer or the Student Wellbeing Team

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 Braybrook 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 South Western Victoria Region 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.

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated in May 2021 and is scheduled for review in May, 2022.