



Attendance Policy

GLEN HUNTLY PRIMARY SCHOOL 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 that 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/carers the key practices and procedures Glen Huntly Primary School has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

Recording and monitoring attendance and absences is important for schools to meet the duty of care owed to students, as well as the requirements of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Glen Huntly Primary School.

As part of a school's *Student Engagement and Inclusion and Wellbeing Policy*, all government schools must have a policy about attendance expectations and processes. Additionally, procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are required by the Minimum Standards for School Registration.

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 Glen Huntly Primary School, parents/carers and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Information about the school's attendance policy and procedures should be included in transition and enrolment packs.

This policy should be circulated to all school staff. It should be made available in the staff handbook/manual and included in the induction processes.

Attendance policy during COVID-19/Pandemics

Government schools do not need to update their local Attendance policy to account for variations to school processes during the period of remote learning as a result of COVID-19. Instead,

schools must follow the Department's Coronavirus advice for schools on planning and recording attendance, available at: [School Operations: Advice on the operational aspects to transition to a model of flexible and remote learning](#)

DEFINITION

Parent/Carer – 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

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 academically, socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for students by providing them with education and support networks. Schools help young 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 Glen Huntly 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 Glen Huntly Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Glen Huntly Primary School for particular activities.

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

Glen Huntly Primary School 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 maximum 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/carers to improve their attendance, through a range of interventions and supports.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are ready to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Glen Huntly Primary School parents/carers are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every school day, communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents/carers will communicate with the relevant staff at Glen Huntly Primary School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school, to address any concerns.

Parents/carers 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.

Supporting and Promoting attendance

Glen Huntly Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by promoting the 'Every Day Counts' advice and by providing Before and After School Care.

Recording attendance

Glen Huntly Primary School must record student attendance twice per day digitally, using the Compass student attendance recording system. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- implement and discharge Glen Huntly Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers at the start of the school day and after lunch, using the Compass student attendance recording system. Rolls are to be recorded on paper for evacuation procedures.

The classroom teacher at the start of the school day will record late arrivals when the attendance is marked and when students arrive during the morning or afternoon sessions. Students who are late must sign in at the office (East Site) or with the classroom teacher (West Site). As with absences, the amount of days a student is late will be quantified and recorded in their end of semester report.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity off-site or away from their normal scheduled learning location, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Punctuality:

It is extremely important that students arrive punctually at school on time, ready to learn for every school day, prior to the first bell, which occurs at 8:50am. Parents must aim to ensure that their child/ren arrive at school between 9:00am, when a member of staff will be on yard duty, and 8:55am for each school day.

If a student arrives late after 9:00am, then this will disrupt the teaching and learning of other students and the normal routine at the beginning of the school day. When a student is late, the teacher will then be required to repeat and redeliver essential teaching and learning information and instructions for that student, who will have missed essential pieces of information and the rich learning opportunities that occur, when students learn best when together and the dynamics and benefits of group learning.

Encouraging a reliable and timely attendance for each school day is allowing your child to learn, practise and experience the desirable habits and benefits of being considerately and politely punctual.

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent/carer must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents/carers should notify Glen Huntly Primary School of absences by 9:00am by:

- Phone
- Compass or email
- In writing (letter to the school or classroom teacher)

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent/carer, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, the Compass system will automatically send a notification to the parent/carer and Glen Huntly Primary School may also notify parents/carers by SMS, telephone or via email. Glen Huntly Primary School will attempt to contact parent/carers as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent/carer to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent/carer (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.

Glen Huntly Primary School 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/carer meeting their responsibilities under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, Common law duty of care [School Attendance Guidelines](#) and [Student Engagement](#)

If Glen Huntly Primary School considers that the parent/carer 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 '**unauthorised/unexcused absence**'.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent/carer for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse the following conditions, all of which are all present on the Compass attendance system, as reasons to explain a student absence

- Medical/illness
- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- Religious/cultural
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry events. For more information, see: [Missing School for Cultural Reasons – Information for Koorie families \(pdf - 76.33kb\)](#) or <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/attendance-missing-school.aspx>
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent/carer to address causes and support the student's return to school
- Re-engagement program
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- Extreme weather
- External counselling
- Truancy
- External suspension

- Parent/carer choice; unauthorised or authorised
- Remote Learning
- Pandemic
- family holidays where the parent/carer notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer within ten school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained/unauthorised absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents/carers 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, Glen Huntly Primary School will work collaboratively with parents/carers, 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 the Student Wellbeing Coordinator.

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, Glen Huntly Primary School will endeavour to provide this support when it is required,

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Glen Huntly Primary School 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 Bayside Peninsula Office Phone: 1300 338 738 or the South Eastern Victoria Regional Office Phone: 1300 338 738 email: sevr@education.vic.gov.au for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to make contact with a parent/carer, 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 twelve months where:
 - the parent/carer 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 ten consecutive school days or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs

- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- DET School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- Compass student attendance data base
- Attendance Recording Advice
- Student attendance guidance
- [Exemption from School Attendance and Enrolment](#)
- [Exemption from School Attendance and Enrolment Policy](#)
- [International Student Program Policy](#)

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION: This policy is due to be reviewed again in September 2023, or as required by DET

Status: This policy was last updated in September 2021