

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school Policy Leader on 9112 9500 or via email info@footscray.vic.edu.au

RATIONALE

Footscray High School recognises that regular and ongoing attendance of students is essential for students to experience success and fulfilment in their school lives. Students as a result are expected to be punctual and to attend all classes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure that all students enrolled at Footscray High School 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 Footscray High School has in place to:
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences

OBJECTIVES

Student attendance will be made a priority in the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plans with clear and achievable improvement strategies and targets documented.

- Attendance data will be analysed regularly for the purposes of evaluation and planning of whole school attendance improvement strategies as well as for the early identification of non-attending students.
- The expectation that students will attend 100% of classes will be clearly communicated to students, parents/carers and teachers.
- Parents/carers and the school will work in partnership to ensure that immediate and apparent follow up to student absence occurs.
- All school staff will recognise their roles and responsibilities in promoting, monitoring and supporting the attendance of students.
- The school will actively utilise and promote a variety of student engagement and connectedness to school strategies and programs. Such strategies and programs will be targeted where appropriate at the whole school, individual year level, home group, small group or individual student level.
- The school will adhere to stated policies and expectations in regard to student attendance as outlined by key bodies such as DET and VCAA.



SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Footscray High School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's School Attendance Guidelines. <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/guidance>. It does not replace or change the obligations of Footscray High School, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the 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 (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

POLICY

Schooling is compulsory for young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted). Footscray High School is committed to supporting all students to achieve the highest attendance rates.

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.

- Footscray High 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 full school attendance.
- Our school will identify individual students who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.
- Students are 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 that are affecting their attendance.
- Footscray High School parents and carers are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.
- Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Footscray High School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- Parents are 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.

GUIDELINES

RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE

- The school will provide for the accurate and effective monitoring and electronic recording of student attendance on a period by period basis.
- The organisation for the collection and timely dissemination of accurate daily electronic student attendance data will be done by the school Attendance Officer.
- The school Attendance Officer will work in close collaboration with other key staff and will provide data and attendance reports where appropriate.
- Late arrivals to class will be dealt with by a consistently applied whole school response that will be clearly relayed and explained to all staff, parents/carers and students.



HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS FOR STUDENT ABSENCE

- Parents/carers and the school will work in partnership to ensure that immediate follow up to student absence occurs.
- The school will provide a range of means for parents/carers to report student absence on the day it occurs and that these means will be clearly relayed and explained to all parents/carers.
- The school will report any unexplained student absences to the parent/carer on the morning of the absence via an automated SMS service linked to the school's Compass portal. Direct contact may also be made with the parent/carer via telephone.
- Accurate records of all contact between parents/carers and the school in regard to the explanation of student absence will be maintained by appropriate student management personnel. The appropriate student management personnel may be; a year level coordinator, program manager, attendance officer, designated education support staff member, campus assistant principal or student welfare coordinator.
- The school Attendance Officer will also work in collaboration with appropriate student management personnel and produce notification of unexplained absence letters. Such letters will be sent home in a timely manner to parents / guardians of students for whom an explanation of an absence has not yet been received.
- The school will continue to monitor and investigate improvements in procedures for reporting student absence to parents/carers.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH THE UNSATISFACTORY LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE

- Any student whose absences are greater than 10% in any given term will be deemed to have an unsatisfactory level of attendance.
- The school will utilise a range of procedures that may vary according to individual student circumstances and previous experiences with the student involved.
- Such procedures will involve appropriate student management personnel such as; Year Level Coordinators, Program Managers, Home group teachers, Student Welfare Coordinators, Campus Assistant Principals or Careers Coordinators.
- Year Level Coordinators will convene Attendance Meetings with parents/carers for all students with absences that exceed 10% of any given school term. Attendance meetings will involve the identification of internal school attendance improvement strategies with clearly denoted target levels of improvement.
- The attendance of students in the VCAL program, International Students program (ISP) the program for students with disabilities (PSD) will be monitored by the relevant Co-ordinator of those programs. When the absences of a student in any of these programs exceeds 10% of any given term, the Coordinator of that student's program will make parent/carer contact and will be responsible for setting up any necessary Attendance Meetings in collaboration with the Year level Coordinator.
- Program Managers, Program Coordinators (VCAL, ISP, & PSD), Student Welfare Coordinators and Campus Assistant Principals may convene Student Support Groups which will be established to enable multi-disciplinary support of individual students and their families. This will involve an attendance support plan and/or return to school plan being developed.
- Appropriate protocols and procedures will be established for outside referrals such as to DET Student Support Services or other appropriate community assistance agencies.
- If a student has not responded to strategies outlined in Attendance Meetings or Student Support Group Meetings then referrals to alternative educational providers or assistance in finding employment will be made.



STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT AND IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day. Footscray High School's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

- Clear and achievable improvement strategies and targets for student attendance will be stated in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan.
- The school will ensure that clear lines of communication and defined protocols of action will exist between all key school staff members involved in the monitoring and promotion of student attendance.
- The School will actively utilise and promote a variety of whole school and individual student strategies to provide a safe, positive and engaging learning environment for all students
- The School will continue to monitor and investigate improvements in procedures for reporting student absence to parents / guardians.
- The School promotes student attendance by providing breakfast club 2 days per week, having a range of clubs and lunchtime activities, active SLC, camps and excursions/incursions

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN STUDY WITH EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

Footscray High School may enter arrangements with external providers to deliver part of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), or the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC). External providers may include:

- TAFE providers
- Private providers (RTOs)
- Registered schools, including both government and non-government that are also RTOs

Footscray High School will enter into a written agreement between the school and the external provider detailing the responsibilities of each party including how the attendance of students will be managed and monitored between the parties. Footscray High School will appoint a member of staff to monitor the attendance of students studying with external providers upon entering into any agreement.

The external party must provide the services consistent with the Department's Policies and Procedures on Supervision and Purchasing Secondary Courses and Vocational Training from External Providers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL:

- The articulation of high expectations of student attendance to all members of the school community.
- The adoption of consistent and rigorous procedures to record, monitor and follow up student absence.
- The implementation of data driven attendance improvement strategies.
- The creation of a safe, supportive learning environment where all students can experience engagement and success.
- The provision of early intervention and individualised support for students at risk of non-attendance.



PARENTS/CARERS:

- To ensure that their child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.
- To provide support for their child for full and timely attendance and participation at school.
- To notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child's absence.
- To notify the school in advance of any prolonged period of absence.
- To make notification about a child's absence, the parent/carer will use one or more of the following options:
 - Log the absence notice for their child on Compass.
 - Leave a message on the school's attendance hotline on (03) 9112 9711
 - Provide a written explanation for the student to give to their Co-ordinator
- To work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies for their child when attendance has been inconsistent.
- To ensure that all contact details for the child are correct and up to date.

STUDENTS:

- To arrive at school in a timely manner at all times when the school is open for instruction.
- To attend all timetabled classes punctually.
- To remain on school premises from the beginning to the end of their school day
- To have written permission from your parent/carer if you are required to leave the school during school hours.
- To work cooperatively with the school to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when attendance has been inconsistent.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website and Compass
- Included in staff induction and child safety training processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2019
Consultation	School Council - October 2023
Endorsed by	Executive Principal
Endorsed on	October 2023
Mandatory minimum review cycle	3 - 4 Years
Next review date	October 2027