

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

The DET Guidelines on student attendance set out the school's responsibility to manage student attendance. These guidelines state that all students enrolled in government schools must attend on a full time basis unless absent with the authority of the school. Cranbourne West Primary School believes attendance is intrinsic to educational opportunity and this policy acknowledges that attendance depends on active co-operation between school, parents/caregivers and the student. It outlines the procedural requirements for supporting and managing student attendance.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to

- Inform all families with in our community that we are open for enrolment and children of compulsory school age are expected to attend 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 Cranbourne West Primary School 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 Cranbourne West Primary School

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 Cranbourne West Primary School, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Definitions

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.

Implementation

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 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.

Students are expected to attend Cranbourne West 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 Cranbourne West Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Cranbourne West Primary School for particular activities.

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

Cranbourne West 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 full 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 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.

Cranbourne West Primary School parents are encouraged to ensure 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 Cranbourne West Primary School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents 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

Cranbourne West Primary School's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance through programs such as the Brunch Club.

Recording attendance

Cranbourne West Primary School teachers must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Cranbourne West Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded on Sentral by either the classroom teacher or Administration staff at the start of the school day and after the lunch break and then transferred to CASES21.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being 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 Cranbourne West Primary School of absences by:

- Phone call via the dedicated absence line [option 1]
- SMS
- Sentral
- Written notes
- Email
- In person [absence notification form]

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, Cranbourne West Primary School will notify parents by SMS messages or emails via Sentral. Cranbourne West Primary School 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, however, no response is received, follow up phone calls are made by the school's Administration Team.

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.

Cranbourne West 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 meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Cranbourne West Primary School 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 '**excusedabsence**'.

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.

Late Arrivals and leaving early:

- Students leaving early must be signed out of the school in the Early Departures Register by a parent/guardian or nominee at the school office. Photo identification must be produced. The carer/ guardian should be aged eighteen or over. Special permission is required from senior personnel if younger.
- Class teachers will record 'late' arrivals after 9am.

- Administration staff will issue 'late' slips from 9.15am.
- Class teachers will enter late arrivals during this 15 minute gap
- If a student arrives late to class, without a late slip, the student must be redirected to the office.
- Frequent late arrivals will be referred to the Student Wellbeing Officer for follow up

Administrative Tasks:

- Absent notes received by the classroom teacher need to be sent to the school office
- Attendance roll/folders are to be kept in Home Group Pigeon holes when not in use to allow access by CRTs, the Student Wellbeing Officer and other staff
- Student absences for each semester are noted on Student Reports
- Student absences that total multiples of five days will be brought to the attention of the Student Wellbeing Officer.
- Continued absences will result in parents being requested to attend a meeting with the Student Wellbeing Officer
- A summary report of student absences and late arrivals will be provided to the Student Wellbeing Officer at the end of each term for trend analysis and additional follow up if required
- The school community is to be reminded on a regular basis [via the newsletter and the student handbook] re the importance of school attendance and the processes involved in nonattendance.

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, Cranbourne West Primary School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing a correspondence trail when recurring absences or concerns are identified
- 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 [informal work packages]
- arranging for assistance from relevant support personnel and agencies

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 Cranbourne West 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 South Eastern Region [SEVR] 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.

More information and resources

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School website and Sentral Parent's page
- The Department's Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- [Exemption from School Attendance or Enrolment](#)
- Hard copy available on request to the school office
- Staff Induction Pack
- Staff Handbook

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on a cyclic basis or as required.