



Attendance Policy

Purpose:

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.

Aim:

The aim 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 Chewton Primary School has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

Implementation:

Students are expected to attend 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 Example School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment at our school for particular activities.

We promote student attendance at our school by:

- supplying breakfast to children on a regular or at point of need basis
- creating a safe and supportive environment by addressing behaviour and social/emotional concerns promptly
- maintaining a strong leadership program
- ensuring our grounds and buildings are clean and well maintained
- reviewing our curriculum annually to ensure it is relevant to our students needs and promotes critical and creative thinking

Recording attendance:

- Attendance will be recorded twice per day to meet legislative requirements and ensure our duty of care for all students
- Class teachers will record attendance using the eCASES system at the start of the school day and after the lunch break
- Paper rolls will be available for use in emergency situations and for use by casual relief teachers
- If the student is in attendance at school this will be recorded as present
- For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Notification

- Parents should notify the school of absences by: Using the notification option on Flexibuzz. This message goes to the school email address and will be checked by the school business manager or the principal at the recess break.
- **Or** make a phone call to the school phone: 54722557 (Not to staff mobiles) between the hours of 8:00am and 9:00am
- **Parents may send a courtesy email to staff however this is not an official form of notification**
- 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, we will notify parents by phone as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond if a recorded message has been left.
- 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.

Records

- The 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 it is considered 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, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
 - 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, we will work collaboratively with parents, 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 relevant 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 the 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 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.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 3 year cycle review. This policy was ratified by school council on 17/05/2018