



ALBANY RISE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 23rd May 2018

REVIEW DATE: 2021

RATIONALE:

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. Absenteeism can also contribute significantly to student failure at school.

PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To maximise student learning opportunities, engagement in learning and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school, do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.
- 1.2 To ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered, preferably neighbourhood school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction.

GUIDELINES:

- 2.1 All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- 2.2 In accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 – 17 years unless an exemption has been granted.
- 2.3 Parents/guardians must enrol a child of compulsory school age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.
- 2.4 Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:
 - there is an approved exemption from school attendance or attendance and enrolment for the student, or
 - the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.
- 2.5 A principal or regional director (depending on the circumstances) may authorise an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance or attendance and enrolment to be exempt or reduced to less than full time.
- 2.6 For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. The school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. When a child is absent, parents must contact the school prior to the day, or on the day of the student absence (preferably before 10am). This can occur via Compass (parent portal), phone call to the school office, a message on 'Dojo' (or email) to the class teacher.
- 2.7 Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.
- 2.8 Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.



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- 2.9 Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note on return to school if no other written explanation for absence has occurred. Written explanation can include logging the absence on Compass parent portal.
- 2.10 If a parent does not contact the school to provide an explanation on the day of the student absence, the school must attempt to contact the parent (for example by telephone or text) of the student as soon as practicable on the same day. If an explanation is received, the accurate cause of the absence must be recorded.
- 2.11 If, following contact, the student's safety has been established, but no explanation has been provided within 10 school days, the absence should be recorded as an unexplained absence and also be noted in the student's file.
- 2.12 The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
- 2.13 All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers, are aggregated on the Compass database and communicated to the Department of Education and Training via CASES21. Information is imported from the Compass Portal to CASE21 by the Principal or delegate on a monthly basis.
- 2.14 Students arriving late will be recorded as late (L) on the class roll. Students arriving late must sign in at the office and record the reason for their lateness, before taking a Late Pass to hand to their teacher.
- 2.15 Student's leaving early must be signed 'out' at the office and an 'Early Leaver' pass handed to the classroom teacher. No student should be leaving before 3.30pm without an authorised adult.
- 2.16 As far as possible, the school encourages all student appointments with medical and other consultants to be undertaken outside school hours.
- 2.17 Duty of care policy requires student supervision to occur from 8.45am to 3.45pm. No student should be attending school outside these hours, unless they are attending an approved event or OSHC. Staff are not on duty before 8.45pm or after 3.45pm.
- 2.18 The Principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained.
- 2.19 The Principal, Assistant Principal, Leading Teacher or delegate will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- 2.20 Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported to the Department of Human Services or referred to DET School Attendance Officer (if more than 10 days).
- 2.21 DET School Attendance Officers are empowered by ETRA to issue School Attendance Notices if they have reasonable grounds to believe—
- a) a child who is enrolled at a registered school has been absent from the school on at least 5 separate days in the previous 12 months; and



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- b) no reasonable excuse has been given for the absences; and
- c) measures to improve the student's attendance—
 - i. have been undertaken in accordance with any guidelines issued by the Minister and have been unsuccessful; or
 - ii. are considered to be inappropriate in the circumstances.

- 2.22 DET School Attendance Officers are empowered by ETRA to issue Infringement Notices if they have reason to believe a parent has failed to comply with a School Attendance Notice or School Enrolment Notice. It is intended that Infringement Notices will only be issued as a very last resort.
- 2.23 Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- 2.24 Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and Training and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

Attendance records

- 2.24 Schools must record student attendance twice per day in primary schools and record, in writing, the reason given for each absence. This is necessary to:
 - meet legislative requirements
 - discharge schools' duty of care for all students
 - assist calculation of the school's funding
 - enable school councils to report on student attendance annually
- 2.26 When enrolling international students, ARPS will effectively monitor student attendance and implement a documented intervention strategy where attendance is at risk of failing to meet the minimum Student Visa requirement (attendance of a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours during each study period). See: *ISP Quality Standards and School Resources* under [Department resources](#)

Year level movement

- 2.27 ARPS will regularly promote students to the next year level with their peer group. Staff will use their professional expertise and judgment in relation to the movement of cohorts and individual students.
- 2.28 Students with exceptional academic, social and emotional capacity beyond those of their peers may be promoted to a year level above their cohort at the commencement of an academic year. This would only occur through consultation with the principal, parents, teachers, School Support staff and external practitioners, as appropriate.
- 2.29 Students are retained only in exceptional circumstances where a school considers it is required for the long-term benefit of the student e.g. considering their social, welfare and academic needs. ARPS will ensure that parents/guardians are fully advised of the options that the school considers to best meet individual student needs. Students will not be retained without the consent of parents/guardians.



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Resources:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/attendance.aspx>

http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/num_act/eatra200624o2006319/

Principal: _____

School Council President: _____

Date ratified by School Council: _____ 23rd May 2018 _____

To be reviewed: _____ 2021 _____

ARPS POLICY



SAME-DAY NOTIFICATION OF UNEXPLAINED STUDENT ABSENCES

FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS/CARERS

If your child is sick or absent, you are required to notify their school as soon as possible **on the day of absence** using one of the following methods:

1. **Online:** log the absence directly using your school's IT platform.
2. **Telephone:** the school office and let the staff know your child's name, class, date of absences and reason.
3. **Email:** the school and provide the staff with your child's name, class, date of absences and reason.

Notifying the school of your child's absence either prior to, or on the day that they will be away, helps ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and will fulfil your legal responsibility.

Why do I need to notify the school if my child is absent?

Schools need to know when and why a child is absent and you need to know if your child isn't at school.

From the end of Term 2 2018, all Victorian government schools are required to contact parents/carers as soon as practicable on the same day of an unexplained student absence. If your child is absent on a particular day and you have not contacted the school to explain why, the absence will be marked as unexplained.

This system also promotes daily school attendance. Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education, they learn new things every day – missing school puts them behind.

What is your responsibility?

You are legally required to ensure your child attends school every day or you must provide an explanation for their absence. You should let the school know in advance of any upcoming absences or let them know in the morning if your child won't be at school. In order for schools to implement the same day notification requirement, it's essential that you provide the school with your most up-to-date contact details.

Generally one notification will be sent per family. Should there be circumstances that require both parents and carers to be notified, please contact the school to make the necessary arrangements.

What is the school's responsibility?

The school must notify you of an unexplained absence in relation to your child as soon as practicable on the same day.



EVERY DAY COUNTS

Schools will let you know either by your school's online communications app, SMS, phone call or email. If you can't be reached because the school does not have your correct contact details (i.e. changed phone number, SMS/email failure notification received etc.), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on your child's file held by the school. Where possible, this contact will be made on the same day of the unexplained absence.

Where can I learn more about the process for managing student absences?

Ask your school for a copy of the *Attendance Policy* which outlines the school's processes and procedures for monitoring, recording and following-up of student absences.