



“We flourish as engaged bilingual global citizens who can face challenges as critical, creative thinkers. Our exemplary holistic education promotes a lifelong love of learning.”

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to not only ensure that Camberwell Primary School (CPS) adheres to the Department of Education’s guidelines regarding attendance, but to outline the key procedures, practices and expectations regarding attendance at the school. This includes:

- ensuring enrolled students attend school every day the school is open for instruction
- ensuring students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- explaining to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures the 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 Camberwell 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 the school, parents/carers and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

### 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 of the Commonwealth 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).

At CPS we recognise that daily attendance is important for all children to succeed in education and to ensure they continue to develop both socially and academically. 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

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and participation in their community. For these reasons we are committed to supporting our students’ regular attendance at school.

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

CPS 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.

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

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 prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

CPS parents/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 CPS 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

Camberwell Primary School’s Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

The school promotes student attendance by:

- contacting parents/carers after three consecutive days of unexplained absence
- publishing newsletter articles outlining the importance of school attendance

### Recording Attendance

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The school records student attendance twice daily. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge the school’s duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher or specialist teacher responsible for the class at the start of the school day and after lunch using the Compass attendance module .

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present. This information is then sent to the office where the Admin staff enter in the appropriate code i.e. Camp, Excursion or Special Event.

**Recording Absences**

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent/carer must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school, preferably between 8.30 am and 9.00 am.

Parents/Carers should notify the school of absences by either:

- informing the classroom teacher in writing of a planned absence
- Contacting the school office by phone or email, preferably between 8:30am and 9:00am
- submitting an Attendance note through their Compass parent portal

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 school will notify parents by email or SMS by 9:45 am on the day of the absence, requesting notification. If there are three consecutive days of unexplained absences, class teachers will contact parents/carers by phone.

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/carer meeting their responsibilities under the Education Training Reform Act 2006 and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If the school considers that the parent/carer has provided a reasonable excuse for their child’s absence the absence will be marked as ‘Explained’ and the reason given is recorded.

If the school determines that the excuse provided is not reasonable the absence will be marked as 'Parent Choice Unauthorised'. The Principal has the discretion to accept a valid reason given by a parent/carer for a student’s absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- illness
- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate

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- 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/carer 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/carer notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer within 10 school days of an absence, it will remain recorded as ‘Unexplained’ 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, the school will work collaboratively with parents/carers, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, possibly 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 student wellbeing staff in the school.

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional support 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 Camberwell 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 North Eastern Victoria Regional Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact 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 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

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- 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.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- CPS Student Engagement & Wellbeing Policy
- CPS Enrolment Policy
- CPS Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy

The following Department of Education policies and information have informed the development of this policy:

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- The Department’s Policy and Advisory Library: [Attendance](#)
- DET’s parent resources regarding attendance at school:  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/attendance-missing-school.aspx>

## REVIEW PERIOD

This policy, first developed in this format in April 2019, was last updated in June 2021. The policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-yearly review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update June 2020).

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