



# Attendance Policy


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## Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Box Hill High School on 03 9877 1177 or [box.hill.hs@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:box.hill.hs@education.vic.gov.au)

Contact us in Mandarin / 则可用中文与我们联系

 (03) 9877 117

 [box.hill.hs@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:box.hill.hs@education.vic.gov.au)

## PURPOSE

The purpose 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 Box Hill High 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 Box Hill High 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 Box Hill 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 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 Box Hill High 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 Box Hill High School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Box Hill High School for particular activities.

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

Box Hill 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 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.

Box Hill High School parents 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 Box Hill High 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

Box Hill High School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by: strong focus on 'Every Day Matters' and promotion of full school attendance with the school community; the school breakfast club; a proactive approach by the school wellbeing and engagement teams, especially with students at risk of disengagement.

### Recording Attendance

Box Hill High School must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements.
- discharge Box Hill High School's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students.

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each period using Compass.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.



## Students participating in study with external providers

Box Hill 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, and
- Learn Local providers that are also RTOs.

Box Hill 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. Box Hill High School will appoint a member of staff to monitor the attendance on 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.

## 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 Box Hill High School of absences by following the [BHHS Attendance process](#) outlined on the 'Every Day Counts' process for BHHS and available on our web page under Parents > School Expectations. This document is updated as elements of the process change. The current process at time of writing this policy, is available on **Attachment A** at the end of this policy.

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, Box Hill High School will notify parents by SMS/Compass attendance (or phone call in some circumstances). Box Hill High 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. Contact regarding absences is made by a representative of the relevant Sub-School.

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.

Box Hill High 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](#) (Vic) and the [School Attendance Guidelines](#).

If Box Hill High 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 '**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 in a term for any reason (indicating attendance falling below 90%), even for parent approved health-related absences. Box Hill High School 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 student wellbeing staff.

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 Box Hill High 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-East Victoria Regional Office for further action, who may issue a School Attendance Notice.

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.



## COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes.
- Included in staff handbook/manual.
- Discussed at sub school briefings.
- Included in transition and enrolment packs.
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions.
- Reminders in our school newsletter and through notices on Compass
- Referenced in our year level assemblies.
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

## SCHOOL COUNCIL APPROVAL

Consultation recommended.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

|                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Policy last reviewed:</b>       | October 2023                  |
| <b>Approved by:</b>                | Principal                     |
| <b>Approval Date:</b>              | 25 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 |
| <b>Next scheduled review Date:</b> | October 2026                  |

## CERTIFICATION

This policy was adopted / ratified at the School Council meeting held at Box Hill High School on 25 October 2023.

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Kaajal Fox  
School Council President

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Kellie Ind  
Principal



**ATTACHMENT A** – note that updated attendance process can be found on school website under Parents > School Expectations. This document is updated as elements of the process change. The current process at time of writing this policy, is below.



## EVERY DAY COUNTS

### SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your teenager's education. Students learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them behind.

### SCHOOL IS BETTER WHEN YOUR TEENAGER IS THERE

#### Why it's important

We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school each and every day.

Students develop good habits by going to school every day – habits that are necessary to succeed after school, whether in the workplace or in further study.

Missing school can have a big impact on students academically and socially. It can affect their test results, including VCE & VCAL, and, just as importantly, it can affect their relationships with other students, and lead to social isolation.

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind and can affect their educational outcomes.

Each missed day is associated with falling behind in subject topics and assessment tasks, and lead to fewer subject choices and may impact on achievement in years 11 and 12 and post-school pathways.

#### Getting in early

It's never too late to improve attendance. Even in the middle years, when school can seem the most challenging for students and when attendance rates can be at their lowest, going to school more often can make a big difference. **Every day counts.**

Schools are there to help – if you're having attendance issues with your child, speak to your school about ways to address those issues.

### IN VICTORIA SCHOOL IS COMPULSORY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 6 – 17 YEARS

#### Student Absences

The main reasons for absence are:

**Sickness** – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they're ill. It's vital that they're only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and setting good sleep patterns, eating well and exercising regularly can make a big difference.

**Family holidays** - It's vital that holidays are planned during school holidays where possible, and not during the term. If you are planning to go on holiday during term time, make sure that you talk to your school in advance, and work with them to develop an absence learning plan.

**"Day off"** – Think twice before letting your teenager have a "day off" as they could fall behind their classmates – every day counts.



**Tuancy** – This is when students choose not to go to school without their parent's permission or skip out of school during the day. There can be many reasons for truancy; the best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together.

While all absences can effect academic performance, DET's statistics show that unexcused absences are a much stronger indicator of lower reading and maths achievement.

**School refusal** - School refusing children experience significant emotional distress not only when going to school but also at the thought of going to school; they may be absent from school for weeks or even months at a time. School refusal differs from truancy as children generally stay home with the knowledge of the parents and despite their best efforts to encourage their child to go to school. See: [My child or teenager has anxiety](#)

### **BEING AWAY FROM SCHOOL FOR 1 DAY A FORTNIGHT EQUALS MISSING 1.5 YEARS OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOL**

#### **If your teenager is away**

If for any reason your teenager must miss school, there are things you can do with your school to ensure they don't fall behind:

- Inform the school via your teen's Form/Home Room teacher or Year Level Coordinator
- Find out what work your teenager needs to do to keep up.
- Develop an absence learning plan with your teenager's teacher and ensure they complete the plan.

Remember, every day counts. If your teenager must miss school, speak with your home room teacher or year level coordinator as early as possible.

Openly communicating with your teenager's school about all absences is a good way to prevent attendance issues being escalated to a School Attendance Officer. A School Attendance Officer is a Department of Education and Training Regional Director who has authority to follow up attendance issues. Chronic or ongoing attendance issues that are escalated can lead to an Infringement Notice being issued to parent/s.

If you're having attendance issues with your teenager, please let the year level coordinator, wellbeing coordinator, principal or other relevant staff member know so you can work together to get your teen to school every day.

#### **TOP ATTENDANCE TIPS FOR PARENTS**

- Schools want to work in partnership with parents – act early if you have any concerns by contacting your child's school and asking for advice and support
- Remember that every day counts
- There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes and their social connectedness
- Talk positively about school and the importance of attending every day
- Open and prompt communication with your child's school about all absences is a good idea
- Avoid making routine medical and dental appointments during the school day or planning family holidays during the term



- Seek help from your school if you are concerned about your child's attendance and wellbeing. Schools want to work in partnership with parents to support student attendance and wellbeing.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For more information and resources to help address attendance issues, visit:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/attendance/Pages/improve-attendance.aspx>





## Student Attendance at Box Hill High School

Using your parent login details on COMPASS, is our preferred method of absence notification, however alternatively you could phone or send us an email using the details below.

For all attendance, absences, early leavers and late arrivals communication, please contact the relevant Sub School as per table below:-

|               |   |                                       |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Junior School | Kiran Tibb  | Kiran.Tibb@education.vic.gov.au       |
| Middle School | Janine Adey (Mon- Wed)<br>Kylie McCall (Thur - Fri) | middleschool@boxhillhs.vic.edu.au     |
| Senior School | Sharon O'Connell                                    | Sharon.OConnell3@education.vic.gov.au |

All students coming after the commencement of the first class and leaving the school before the end of the school day must use their Student ID Card to register at the COMPASS Kiosk which is located outside the General Office

### Absences

If a student is absent on any school day, the parent/guardian must notify the school before classes start at 8.35am.

If you send an email to [sonia.francis@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:sonia.francis@education.vic.gov.au), you need to clearly state the following:

- Student's name
- Form group
- Date of absence
- Reason for the absence
- Parent/Guardian name

The Attendance Coordinator's number is 9875 9139. If you notify us by phone, a written notification via COMPASS or email, including all the details listed above must also be provided.

The school will determine if the absence is an approved absence (refer over the page)

### Absence Notification by SMS

Parents/guardians will receive an SMS message at 10:30 am if:

- A student is marked absent Periods 1 and 2, and
- No explanation for the absence has been given to the Attendance Coordinator, and
- No explanation has been entered on COMPASS.

Having received an SMS a parent/guardian needs to immediately use one of the methods listed above to explain the absence. If no response is received, a further email will be sent later in the day.

### Long Term Absence

If a student is intending to miss significant class time such as a holiday, parents/guardians must supply a written request at the time of booking (not the day before leaving) to the Attendance Coordinator, who will then seek approval from the Principal.

Once approval has been granted parents/guardians should contact all the classroom teachers to inform them of the temporary absence including whether any work is able to be completed during this time.

### Late Arrivals

If a student arrives late to school for any reason or returning to school after an appointment, they must:

- Step 1:** Sign-in using their Student ID Card at the COMPASS Kiosk.
- Step 2:** Provide a valid reason, preferably with a note from the parent/guardian including the same information as requested in "Absences".
- Step 3:** COMPASS Kiosk will print out a COMPASS Arrival Pass which the student must then take to their classroom teacher. Hand in written note to the Attendance Coordinator.

Parents will be notified if a student consistently arrives late for no valid reason.

### Early Leavers

A student needing to leave the school grounds for any reason during the day must:

- Step 1:** Have a written note (or COMPASS approval) from parent/guardian.
- Step 2:** See their Year Level Coordinator before school begins to obtain a Coordinator signed Early Leavers Pass.
- Step 3:** Show the pass to the classroom teacher to be excused from class if leaving during class time.
- Step 4:** Sign-out using the COMPASS Kiosk. It will print out a COMPASS Departure Pass
- Step 5:** Hand the Coordinator Signed Early Leavers Pass to Attendance Coordinator or staff at the General Office before leaving school grounds. Keep the COMPASS Departure Pass as approved permission.

### Illness While at School

Any student who feels sick or has an injury while at school must first report to the First Aid Officer at the General Office.

The school will then contact the parent to collect their child, if it is deemed necessary. A student who is ill will then have their absence Early Leaver pass processed at the General Office.]