



ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE:

In accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the Department of Education and Training (DET) Schools Policy Advisory Guide and the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements, Melba College sets minimum class time and attendance rules. These are aimed to allow sufficient class time for all students to successfully complete required tasks and set work.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted). It is Melba College responsibility to make every effort to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without any unnecessary absences. The school also requires that post-compulsory aged students also attend school unless a valid reason exists.

Daily attendance is important for all 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.

Melba College students are therefore required to attend all scheduled classes, whether participating in Years 7 to 10, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Vocational Education and Training (VET), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or any other timetabled program.

The purpose of this policy is to

- ensure all Melba College students of compulsory school age 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 Melba College has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.
 - the need to provide acceptable explanations and/or supporting evidence for non-attendance.

This policy applies to all students at Melba College.

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 Melba College, parents and staff 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.

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING ATTENDANCE:

Melba College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Students are expected to attend Melba College 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 in Melba College for particular activities.

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

- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics contributing significantly to student failure at school.
- Melba College 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.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Students should commit to attending school every day, arriving on time and be prepared to learn.
- Students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- Melba College parents should commit 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 Melba College 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.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.
- Parents of students who are to be absent are required to telephone the school before 9:00am to report the absence. The absence is then to be confirmed in writing by a note from parents.
- Absences due to school-based extra-curricular activities will be included as an approved absence.
- Written explanations from parents/guardians will be accepted to explain absences for students in Years 7 to 10.
- Attendance will be checked for each scheduled class and at all school approved activities.
- School Year Level Leaders will make contact with parents/guardians if attendance falls below the required level of 90% *
- All class teachers will mark the electronic roll on Compass within the first ten minutes of every lesson
- School Year Level Leaders will be responsible for monitoring attendance
- Parents will be informed as soon as possible of a student being marked absent from class

- All notes to explain non-attendance or missed Assessment Tasks must be passed to the Year Level Leader immediately following the absence.
- Where a student has breached the attendance rules set out above, a meeting with parents/guardians will be scheduled at the first available instance to develop a student attendance plan
- The Year Level Coordinator has responsibility for these actions
- Melba College 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.
- Our school also promotes student attendance by provision of breakfast clubs and a variety of other school programs.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE:

Melba College records attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Melba College'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 lesson/period using Compass.
- The electronic roll marking report 'Student Attendance Detail Report' will be used as the record of attendance. This attendance record will be uploaded onto CASES21.
- DET and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- 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.
- If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Additional Attendance Requirements for students in VCE and VCAL

- All students are expected to attend all classes.
- A minimum of 90% * attendance of scheduled classes required for successful completion of a course of study or unit of work.
- Attendance below 90% * may result in the unsatisfactory completion of a course of study or unit of work.
- A Medical Certificate is required for all absences of students in either VCE or VCAL
- Missed Outcome Tasks at Year 11 and 12 will not be able to be re-sat if a Medical Certificate is not provided.
- Explanations of the attendance requirements will be made available to staff, students and parents. The policy will be set out in Information Handbooks and will be explained verbally to students.
- Independent students not living with parents or guardians are also required to provide notes and/or Medical Certificates.
- Students in Year 10 undertaking a VCE class must provide a medical certificate if absent from a scheduled VCE class.
- Special Provision is available to senior students in cases of extended absence due to illness or special circumstances. The student is responsible for applying for this.

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 Melba College of absences by:

- contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence, informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned absence

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, Melba College will notify parents by SMS/push notification message.

Melba College 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 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.

- Melba College 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 Melba College 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, Melba College 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 Sub-school Leader, Year Level Coordinator and student wellbeing staff.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

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,

If Melba College 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.

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.

RELATED POLICIES & LINKS:

- School Attendance Guidelines
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: Attendance
- School intranet
- Procedures for submission of work requirements Policy
- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Key Learning Area Policies
- Excursions, Incursions and Camps Policy

Policy Reviewed by School Council	Person Responsible for Policy	Next School Council Review
2019	Assistant Principal Compliance	2020

The 90% attendance * will be review by College Council in last meeting of 2019