



Aiming High

Showing Respect

Being Safe

Valuing Community

## Attendance Policy

### 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 Example School has in place to
  - i. support, monitor and maintain student attendance
  - ii. record, monitor and follow up student absences.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Manor Lakes P-12 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 Manor Lakes P-12 College 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 Manor Lakes P-12 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 Manor Lakes P-12 College for particular activities.



**Mission:**

*Manor Lakes College will create a vibrant and harmonious community of responsible learners who have a confident belief in their ability to learn, grow and succeed.*

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

Manor Lakes P-12 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.

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 approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Manor Lakes P-12 College 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 Manor Lakes P-12 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.

## **Supporting and promoting attendance**

Manor Lakes P-12 College [Student Wellbeing, Engagement and Inclusion Policy](#) supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance through a variety of systems and programmes including:

- [Manor Lakes P-12 College Stage Response to Attendance](#)
- [Referrals to region for 5 un-consecutive unexplained absences](#)
- [Referrals to region for whereabouts unknown](#)
- providing mentors for students who are at risk and develop an individual education plan.
- access specialist support by making appropriate referrals to students support services or external allied health professionals and community agencies and organisations
- set up an attendance student support group meeting to explore the reasons for a student's absences and to develop an attendance improvement plan or a return to school plan
- breakfast club
- address barriers to attendance such as bullying and friendship issues as guided by the Manor Lakes P-12 [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- before and after school care facilities on campus
- homework club
- provide or arrange for material aid to students who require uniform (uniform bank), stationery and/or textbooks
- special interest lunchtime clubs established and promoted
- after school sport programmes offered (huddle)



- Partnership with Manor Lakes Community Centre to re-engage at risk students

## Recording attendance

**Manor Lakes P-12 College P-6** staff must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Manor Lakes P-12 College duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teacher] at the start of the school day and after lunch using CASES21/eCASES or compatible third party software.

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

All staff will be familiar with [CASES21 codes and descriptions](#)

**Manor Lakes P-12 College 7-12** staff must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Manor Lakes P-12 College 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 CASES21/eCASES/or compatible third party software.

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

## 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 Manor Lakes P-12 College of absences by:

- Logging on to Compass and adding an approval/attendance note
- Contacting reception on (03) 9741 4202 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, Manor Lakes P-12 College will notify parents by SMS/push notification message. Manor Lakes P-12 College will attempt to contact parent 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, 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 Manor Lakes P-12 College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**explained absence**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexplained absence**'.



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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**

Manor Lakes P-12 College implements improvement strategies when a student has been absent more than five days in a term for any reason including parent-approved health-related absences. Improvement strategies are also implemented where:

- the absence is having a significant impact on a student's educational attainment, achievement and development - this will depend on number of days absent, number of consecutive days, reason for the absence, time of year, age of the student and the type of learning that will occur outside school
- the student has been truanting (absent without parental consent)
- a parent reports that a student refuses to attend school
- there has been no explanation for the student's absence
- a parent repeatedly fails to provide a reasonable excuse

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, Manor Lakes P-12 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 Welfare Staff, Coordinators or Assistant Principals
- 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 Manor Lakes P-12 College decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance as directed by the college's [staged response plan](#), we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the Western Metropolitan Area for further action.



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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.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- [School intranet](#)

## **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated on 27/08/2018 and is scheduled for review in [08/2021].