



Attendance Policy (2022 - 2024)

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<i>To be reviewed by</i>	Principal
<i>References</i>	Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide
<i>Approved by</i>	School Council
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Signature

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, and
- explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Castlemaine Secondary College 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 Castlemaine Secondary College (CSC).

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 CSC, parents/carers and Attendance Support Coordinator under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

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 Castlemaine Secondary 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 CSC, or



- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in CSC for particular activities.

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

CSC 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 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.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach their Mentor Teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Castlemaine Secondary College parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

For short term absences parents will communicate with the College through XUNO or by contacting the Attendance Support Coordinator. For longer term absenteeism families are encouraged to make contact with their student's Mentor Teacher and work in partnership with the College to address any concerns.

Parents/carers 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

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

Our school also promotes student attendance by the following strategies:

- providing students and families with regular information pertaining to the importance of maintaining high attendance.
- recognising students with high attendance at assemblies throughout the year.

Recording attendance

CSC will record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge CSC's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded on XUNO by the classroom teacher within the first 15 minutes of each lesson.

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 CSC of absences by:

- contacting the College's Attendance Support Coordinator on 54791150.
- entering attendance information through XUNO

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, Castlemaine Secondary College will notify parents by SMS. An SMS will be sent to families

- at the end of period 1 (which covers unexplained absences for period 1), and/or
- at the end of period 6 (which covers unexplained absences from periods 1 - 6)

Castlemaine Secondary 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 Castlemaine Secondary 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**'.

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 and/or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than three days, CSC will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance. The key personnel involved in supporting attendance will be the Mentor Teacher, Precinct Manager, Precinct Leader and Wellbeing Team.

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional support and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, CSC will endeavour to provide this support when it is required.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If CSC 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 the School Attendance Officer in the Bendigo Regional Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with 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.
- 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.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated in May 2022 and is scheduled for review in May 2024.