



# 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 Botanic Ridge Primary 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 Botanic Ridge 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 Botanic Ridge Primary 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 Botanic Ridge 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 in Botanic Ridge Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Botanic Ridge Primary School for particular activities.

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

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

Botanic Ridge Primary 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 Botanic Ridge Primary 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**

Botanic Ridge Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance through our school wide positive behaviour framework.

### **Recording attendance**

Botanic Ridge Primary School must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Botanic Ridge Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of the school day and after lunch 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.

### **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 Botanic Ridge Primary School of absences by:

- submitting an attendance note via Compass
- Phoning the school
- Sending in a handwritten note upon the return of the child

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, Botanic Ridge Primary School will notify parents by SMS/push notification message via Compass/telephone/or email if necessary. Botanic Ridge Primary 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.

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.

Botanic Ridge Primary 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 Botanic Ridge Primary 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, Botanic Ridge Primary 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 drawn from the school, from the Department of Education and outside agencies

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 Botanic Ridge 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 Southern 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.

### MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

### REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on 16/03/2020 and is scheduled for review in March 2023



**Botanic Ridge**

Dear

??/??/??

It has been brought to my attention that your child \_\_\_\_\_ has been absent from school recently and we have not received communication from you explaining the reason for these absences.

The date/s of the absences are:

**It is a Department of Education and Training (DET) requirement that parents provide the school with an explanation for all student absences.**

Therefore, you are required to provide an explanation for the above absence/s from school as soon as possible.

Should you require some support regarding your child’s absence from school please contact the school. At Botanic Ridge Primary School every day counts.

Yours sincerely,

Staff Name (Home group teacher)

Staff Signature

Please complete and return to school

 \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Home group \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Absence \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



**Botanic Ridge**

Dear

??/??/??

Following our previous contact on ??/??/?? concerning \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance it has been brought to my attention that \_\_\_\_\_ has continued to be absent from school. These absences have not been explained by you as required by the Department of Education and Training (DET). The date/s of the absence/s recorded by the school's system are attached.

Our school attendance policy, which is supported by the DET's School Attendance Guidelines, requires that we address non-attendance. The unexplained absences to date may also mean that you may not have met your obligations under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. An accumulation of these absences could lead to a notice from the DET and possibly a fine.

I have attempted to contact/contacted you on \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss this matter.

I am very concerned about this emerging pattern of non-attendance and *[insert statement about specific concerns for the student and an offer of individualised support]*

I am requesting that you contact the school to make an appointment with me or Principal Lisa Vandenbosch to discuss possible solutions for improving \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance. In partnership we can work to ensure that your child can participate fully in *his/her* learning.

For further support you might like to contact the Parentline Victoria 13 22 89/  
[www.parentline.vic.gov.au](http://www.parentline.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

Tobin Cuss  
**Assistant Principal**



Botanic Ridge

Dear

??/??/??

----- has continued not to attend school regularly.

Up to the date of this letter, ----- has not attended for ----- days this year out of a possible ----- which means s/he have only been at school for -----% of the current school year.

Prior to sending this letter the following actions have been undertaken by the school to promote your child's attendance and participation in their education:

*[Select from this list]*

- Phone calls home
- Letters home
- Individual Education Plan taking into account individual support needs
- Home visit by a staff member or Koorie Education Support Officer
- Referral to Youth Connections
- Referral to the school's Student Wellbeing Officer or Coordinator
- Recommended referral to a Schools Student Support Officer
- Student Attendance Support Group
- Creation of a Supported Attendance Plan

**According to the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* a child must attend school until the compulsory school age of 17. This means that you may not have met your obligations under the Act and an accumulation of these absences could lead to a notice from a School Attendance Officer and possibly a fine.**

Every endeavour must be made to ensure ----- can participate fully in education. At Botanic Ridge Primary School every day counts. Poor patterns of attendance place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential. Such students are often disadvantaged in the choices they are able to make in later life.

**I am requesting that you contact me within 7 days to arrange an Attendance Student Support Group meeting with a view to working in partnership with you to develop a support plan so that ----- can participate fully in his/her education.**

For further support you might like to contact the Parentline Victoria 13 22 89/  
[www.parentline.vic.gov.au](http://www.parentline.vic.gov.au).

Ongoing attendance issues are referred to the Principal in accordance with our Attendance and Engagement Policies.

Yours sincerely,

Tobin Cuss

**Assistant Principal**



**Botanic Ridge**

Dear

??/??/??

It has been brought to my attention that ----- has not been attending school regularly. Up to the date of this letter, ----- has now not attended for ----- which means s/he has only been at school for -----% of the current school year.

Prior to sending this letter the following actions have been undertaken by the school to promote your child's attendance and participation in their education:

*[Select from this list]*

- Phone calls home
- Letters home
- Individual Learning Plan taking into account individual support needs
- Home visit by a staff member, Assistant Principal or Koorie Education Support Officer
- Referral to the school's Student Wellbeing Officer or Coordinator
- Recommended referral to a Schools Student Support Officer
- Student Attendance Support Group to establish causes of non-attendance
- Creation of a Supported Attendance Plan
- Formal notification to Department of Human Services Child Protection

**I would like to remind you that the Education Training and Reform Act 2006 states that schooling is compulsory for students aged from 6 – 17 years. This means that you may not have met your obligations under the Act and an accumulation of these absences could lead to a notice from the School Attendance Officer and possibly a fine.**

Every endeavour must be made to ensure ----- can participate fully in education. Poor patterns of attendance place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential. Such students are often disadvantaged in the choices they are able to make in later life.

I am requesting that you contact me within 7 days to arrange an Attendance Student Support Group meeting with a view to working in partnership with you to develop a support plan so that ----- can participate fully in his/her education.

**Ongoing attendance issues will be referred to the Department of Education and Training School Attendance Officer.**

For further support you might like to contact Parentline Victoria 13 22 89/  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/parentline.aspx>

Yours Sincerely,

Tobin Cuss

**Assistant Principal**

Attendance Stage 5.doc





**Botanic Ridge**

Dear

??/??/??

I write in reference to the letter dated --/--/-- relating to the poor attendance record for your son/daughter, -----.

The Department requires schools to closely monitor student attendance and respond where there are unexplained absences or absence levels are of concern. We have invited you, on three occasions, to discuss and develop a plan to improve -----'s attendance.

**This matter will now be referred to the School Attendance Officer**

Please contact the school if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Vandebosch  
**Principal**

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