



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 Prahran 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 Prahran 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 Prahran 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 academically. 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 Prahran 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 Prahran High School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Prahran High School for particular activities.

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

Prahran High School believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and we are committed to working with our school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

Our school will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is declining and will work with these students and their families to improve their attendance through a range of interventions, supports and reasonable adjustments.

Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend school every day, on time, ready to learn - Arrive at class on time - Notify teachers via email regarding absences and complete missed work, as appropriate
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support attendance and routines at home to promote high levels of school attendance - Notify the school regarding absences via Compass - Communicate openly regarding extended absences due to medical reasons, including mental health concerns, family holidays, cultural leave etc - Plan appointments, holidays and other activities outside of regular school hours/terms - Respond to communications related to attendance in a timely manner - Support the implementation of an Attendance Improvement Plan as needed
Prahran High School	<p>Classroom Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accurately mark the role in the first ten minutes of every learning session <p>Year Level Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow up single session absences - Support development of Attendance Improvement Plans <p>Head of School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow up three days or more absences in a week with phone call/email - Refer students to Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team with problematic attendance patterns

Please refer to the Attendance Processes and Responsibilities for further explanation.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Prahran High School's *Student Wellbeing, Engagement and Relationships Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by encouraging students to participate in our Life@PHS Clubs program: e.g. Fitness Club, Breakfast Club and Homework Club/s.

Recording attendance

At our school, teachers are required to mark their class rolls through Compass, accurately, at the beginning of every Learning Session. We have four Learning Sessions each day and the roll is required to be marked in each.

This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Prahran High School's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students (detail follows)

We expect that rolls are marked in Compass within the first 10 minutes of each Learning Session. This is vital as our system then has various triggers which follow up absences with families in real time so it is critical that we have accurate roll information each and every session.

Parents will receive an SMS message if their child has not been marked present at school by 10.00am.

Families and students are encouraged to view attendance records at any time through the Compass portal. Any perceived inaccuracies should be immediately reported to Reception or the relevant Mentor Teacher.

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

If a student is absent from school, where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify Prahran High School of absences by entering the details using the Compass portal.

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, Prahran High School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing a Student Support Group
- establishing a Complex Care Team
- implementing a Return to School Plan or an Attendance Improvement Plan
- implementing or updating an Individual Education Plan

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, Prahran High School will endeavour to provide this support. This support will be led by the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team leaders and will often involve a referral to Navigator or to our Youth Worker-Intensive Attendance Support.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Prahran 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 South-East Victoria Regional Office for support.

VCE AND VM ATTENDANCE POLICY

The VCE and VM Attendance Policy of Prahran High School requires students to maintain a minimum of 90% attendance of scheduled classes to gain satisfactory completion of a VCE Unit of Study. This includes VCE Vocational Major subjects.

Students and families should note that:

- Only approved absences and approved school activities (sports, excursions etc.) will be considered as legitimate absences for meeting the minimum of 90% attendance rule.
- Failure to meet attendance requirements may result in students receiving an N for their VCE Units even if students have satisfactorily completed all assessment tasks.

Approved Absences

Absences will be approved at the discretion of the Head of Senior School, where there is a valid reason for the absence and where appropriate documentation has been provided. Examples of situations where absences will be approved are:

- Medical or health reasons (including mental health), where a medical certificate has been provided that covers the entire period of the absence
- Funerals and/or grievance; providing written notice (by email or hard copy) is provided to the school in advance of the absence
- To attend extracurricular activities (including sports and music) that involve competition or performance at an elite level; this might include state or national championships, or to attend external AMEB examinations; providing written notice has been provided to the school in advance of the absence

In all cases, the decision to approve an absence will be made at the discretion of the school.

Unapproved Absences

If a reason is not provided for an absence, or the reason provided is not acceptable for it to be deemed an 'approved absence' (examples of this might include absence due to social reasons, staying home to study, sleeping in, missing the bus, etc), then the absence will be considered an 'unapproved absence' and not a legitimate absence for meeting the VCE attendance requirement. This also applies to notes for lateness.

Absences and VCE SACs

If a student misses a VCE SAC and an approved absence is granted, an alternate opportunity will be provided for students to submit or complete the task without penalty.

Where students miss SACs without an approved absence, they will need to complete the school's redemption process. For VCE 3-4 Units this will mean receiving a score of 0 for the assigned task. It is therefore imperative that students seek approval as soon as they are aware of any absence that may cause them to miss a SAC or assessment.

Personal Study Sessions

Times when students do not have timetabled classes are called Personal Study Sessions. These sessions are not 'free' time, nor a time for socialising. They are an extension of class time and can be used to:

- complete homework
- see teachers for assistance
- revise class work
- prepare for SACs
- work on production tasks or folios in folio-based subjects

Designated Personal Study Areas

Senior School students at Prahran High School are permitted to use the Library, the Study Corrals and small break-out spaces throughout the school, the Rooftop Garden or the Student Lounge – 3.06, for their Personal Study Sessions. In 2024, there will be a further designated Personal Study space for students also.

Designated personal study areas exist to promote a culture of rich and deep learning, personal responsibility and kindness to others and their needs. Students are expected to work quietly in these areas and respect the right of their peers to study in an environment free from noise and distraction.

Senior School Personal Study sessions on-site will not be actively supervised by a teacher. Students are expected to manage their Personal Study time responsibly and positively.

Where a student has a Personal Study allocation in Learning Session 1, at the beginning of their school day, they may study at home or at school for that session. They must then arrive to school by 10:15 am to begin Learning Session 2, where the roll will be marked as normal.

Where a student has a Personal Study allocation in Learning Session 4 or 5, at the end of their school day, they may leave school and study at home for that session. If students leave school for Personal Study, they must sign out with their ID cards, using the Compass kiosk at the main entrance.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings or meetings, as required
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Distributed and explained to families at an annual Senior School Information Session
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Information for parents and students on supervision before and after school is available on our school website and reminders are sent annually in our school newsletter

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Prahran High School Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct, Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Relationships Policy, Duty of Care Policy and the Statement of School Values and Philosophy.

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was revised in November 2023 and approved by the Principal. This policy will be reviewed before October 2026.

ATTENDANCE PROCESSES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities below are designed to support our PHS Attendance Policy and our Senior School Administrative Policy. This system is designed to ensure that school attendance is closely monitored, parent accountability is maintained and early interventions are applied in case of emerging attendance concerns.

Daily

- Teachers accurately mark rolls in each session, in the first 10 minutes.
- Families of students who are marked as absent by 10am will receive an automated text message alerting them.
- Daily summary of attendance and lateness provided to Year level Coordinators (YLCs) and Heads of School (HoS) by Attendance Officer.
- YLCs follow up single session absences with teachers and students.

Weekly

- Weekly summary of attendance generated via Compass and reviewed by HoS.
- Term-to-date summary of attendance generated and reviewed by Assistant Principal Positive Climate for Learning (AP-PCL).
- Students with three or more full days absent for the week will be contacted by phone, regardless of reason provided, by HoS.
- HoS ensure communications and outcomes are documented on Compass.
- HoS and/or YLC meets with families and develops Attendance Improvement Plan for students with below 80% attendance (and others as necessary).
- AP-PCL reviews term-to-date summary of attendance and raises with HoS and/or Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team (SWET) students of concern.

Termly

- HoS reviews Attendance Improvement Plans and reviews relevant data to determine if there have been improvements.
- HoS receives support from SWET as required for additional follow up or suggestions for improvement.
- AP-PLC reviews trends of data and presents to Principal Team.
- AP-PLC notifies DET of ongoing attendance concerns and steps taken to improve attendance.
- AP-PLC and Attendance Officer distribute Unexplained Absence Letters to families.

How do we support attendance improvement?

- Meet with families where attendance has dropped below 80%
- Develop Attendance Improvement Plan with student and family
- Determine which additional internal supports are available and required (for example, Art Therapy, Adventure Club, EAL support, responding to social conflict, KESO involvement, timetable changes)
- Determine which additional external supports are available and required (for example, Stonnington Youth Services Youth Worker, health referrals, headspace, Orange Door, extended family)
- Consider if there are welfare or safety concerns within the family and notify Child Protection as appropriate
- Determine review dates for Attendance Improvement Plans and schedule meeting times to review with family and student
- Ensure a positive climate for learning within our school, with engaging, relevant curriculum