

# Attendance Policy

St. Georges Rd. Primary School



## 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 St Georges Road 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 St Georges Road 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 St Georges Road 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 St Georges Road 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 at St Georges Road Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in St Georges Road Primary School for particular activities.

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

St Georges Road 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.

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

St Georges Road 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 St Georges Road 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**

St Georges Road Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by: having a breakfast club daily and engaging activities for students during break times. We encourage attendance through positive reinforcement which include attendance awards, house points and prizes for students who are on time and present 100% of the time. We also celebrate student's attendance over the term and the class with the highest attendance has a lunch provided for them. The school provides students with food, uniform and bus passes to support them attending school.

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.

### **Recording attendance**

St Georges Road Primary School must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- St Georges Road Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teacher at 9.00am 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 St Georges Road Primary School of absences by any of the following options:

- phoning the school on 03 58 21 3383

- recording absent details on compass app
- emailing the school [st.georges.road.ps.shepparton@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:st.georges.road.ps.shepparton@education.vic.gov.au)
- a note signed by parent/guardian

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, St Georges Road Primary School will notify parents by SMS. St Georges Road 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.

St Georges Road 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 St Georges Road Primary School 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**

At St Georges Road Primary School attendance is monitored daily by the Attendance and Wellbeing Leader. The school uses compass and two tracking documents to record and monitor attendance. The two-week tracker records unexplained absences and follows clear protocols for actions that must be taken by the leader. The termly tracker flags consistent low attendance over a period of time and is used to update the school data wall. Both trackers use a flow chart of actions dependent on the severity of absenteeism. The flow charts are appended. In the leadership office a chronic absenteeism board will be utilised to discuss strategies and monitor progress.

When utilising the tracker, when absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, St Georges Road 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.
- 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 St Georges Road 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 North Eastern Regional Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to make 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.

### **School Improvement Team**

Attendance is a standing agenda item at the SIT meetings with a mid-term SIT meeting dedicated to attendance.

### **MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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

### **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and is scheduled for review in June 2027.



# St Georges Rd Primary School Student Attendance Monitoring Process



## Two Week Cycle



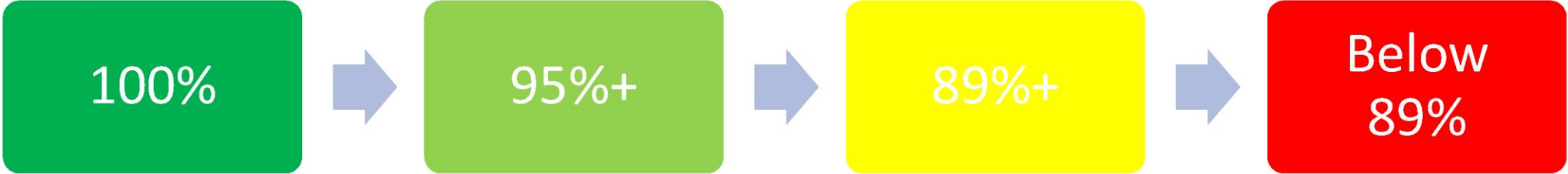
<p>SMS Text sent at 10 am to parent to notify them that student is absent.</p> <p>Phone call made by <b>Attendance Team</b> to record reason for absence.</p>	<p><b>Teachers</b> to notify leadership of students absence.</p> <p>Phone calls made by <b>Attendance Team Leader</b> to ALL contacts for student to record reasons for absences.</p>	<p>Home Visit completed by <b>Attendance Leader</b> if unexplained.</p> <p>Student to be discussed in KESO Attendance Meeting if identified as Aboriginal.</p> <p>Discussion and update about student at SIT leadership meeting.</p> <p>Phone calls made by <b>Attendance Team Leader</b> to ALL contacts for student to record reasons for absences.</p>	<p>Police Welfare Check requested if there are concerns.</p> <p>Referral to NEVR Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Student Support Group Meeting to discuss supports that can be put in place for family. To create an attendance improvement plan.</p>	<p>If 12 or over application for Navigator Program completed.</p> <p>Updates and discussions with NEVR Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Attendance Plan created to re-engage student.</p> <p>Child Protection report made by school.</p> <p>Student Support Group Meeting to discuss supports that can be put in place for family.</p>
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# St Georges Rd Primary School Student Attendance Monitoring Process



## Half Term Data Wall Tracker



<p><b>Certificate given to students to celebrate brilliant attendance.</b></p>	<p>Attendance sheet received with reports.</p>	<p>Phone calls made by <b>Attendance Team Leader</b> to ALL contacts for student to record reasons for absences.</p> <p>Student to be discussed in KESO Attendance Meeting if identified as Aboriginal.</p>	<p>Letter sent home to inform parents of half term attendance and DET guidelines.</p> <p><b>Teachers</b> to discuss with parents at parent teacher interviews.</p> <p>Added to the CHRONIC school action steps.</p> <p>Student Support Group Meeting to discuss supports that can be put in place for family. To create an attendance improvement plan.</p> <p>Student to be discussed in KESO Attendance Meeting if identified as Aboriginal.</p>
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