



ATTENDANCE Policy

Rationale:

- The *Education Act* requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Regional Director.

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.

Aims:

- This policy applies to all students at Morang South Primary School.
- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.
- To ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.
- To explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Morang South Primary School has in place to:
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). This policy does not replace or change the obligations of Morang South Primary School, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Implementation:

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. Research shows that students who regularly attend school have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes and higher incomes across their lives. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance from an early age. School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and positive participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Morang South 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 Morang South Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Morang South Primary School for particular activities.

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

Morang South 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. All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult. Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.

Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence - shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.

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' commitment to attending school every day, arriving on time and being prepared for learning is valued and promoted. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Morang South Primary School parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered. They are required to communicate openly with the school in providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Morang South 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.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.

Parents have a further responsibility to provide a record of absence through the student management app (uEducateUs). Alternatively, a written note or to return a completed Absence Form (See Form 1 below) to the school explaining why an absence has occurred is accepted.

Parents are required to keep the school informed of up to date contact details in order that SMS notifications are able to be received. This can be done through the student management app (uEducateUs).

STUDENT ABSENCE NOTE Form 1

Please phone, email, use this note *or* complete the Student Absence form on our school App update-ed if your child was absent

Phone: 9404 1548

Email: absences@morangsouthps.vic.edu.au

Student Name: **Class:**.....

Home group:

Teacher:

Date Absence: (Inclusive)

From:...../...../..... to:...../...../.....

REASON FOR ABSENCE:

Illness/unwell, injury

Appointment

Holiday

Other (please

specify).....

.....

.....

*For additional comments please write on back of this form

Signed:.....**Date:**...../...../.....

Name:.....

Relationship to Student:.....

This note must be given to the classroom teacher on return to school.

The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. (See Form 2 below).

MORANG SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Form 2

STUDENT ABSENCES

Date.....

Dear Parent / Guardian,

It has been brought to my attention that your child
..... has been absent from school recently and has
not yet provided a recorded reason/s explaining the absence.

The date/s of the absence/s are:

It is a Department of Education requirement that students provide a note from
parents explaining all absences.

Therefore, you are required to provide a recorded reason covering the above
absence/s from school as soon as possible.

Staff Signature.....

Supporting and promoting attendance

Morang South Primary School *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- creating safe and supportive learning environments
- sending a uEducatUs generated SMS to the primary parent/carer when a reason for absence has not been recorded by 11am
- reporting on absence as part of the Semester School Report
- including class attendance rates in the school newsletter
- giving out certificate at assembly for students with high attendance
- ensuring curriculum programs are highly engaging, relevant and promote curiosity

- developing positive relationships, including implementation of the Kids Matter framework and Respectful Relationships program
- following up with families in regard to high levels of absenteeism and providing support around issues of non-attendance or school refusal
- reporting aggregated student attendance data to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

Recording attendance

Morang South Primary School must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Morang South Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by the classroom teachers which is aggregated on our CASES21/eCASES database and/or in other compatible third party software and communicated to the Department of Education.

The Department of Education and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.

The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.

The principal will ensure parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences are contacted, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.

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 Morang South Primary School of absences by:

- recording absence on the student management app (uEducateUs)
- informing the classroom teacher if there 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, Morang South Primary School will notify parents by SMS. Parents are asked to contact the school ASAP if they have concerns about the absence, or are required to update the unexplained absence with a recorded reason through the student management app (uEducateUs)

Morang South 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 any parent meeting based on their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Morang South 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

The Principal may approve the following reason for absence, however these will be identified as 'unapproved extended family holiday' for School Report purposes:

- extended 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, Morang South 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 an Attendance Improvement 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/school psychologist

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.

Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance may result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported to child and family service systems or the Department of Human Services.

Student Absence Learning Plans may be implemented to support the education of students who are absent from school for an extended period. Student Absence Learning Plans will be provided for students:

- who are planning principal approved extended absences from school, for example for a family holiday
- suspended for more than three days
- subject to an expulsion appeal process

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Morang South 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 Western Victorian Region for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to communicate 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 enrolment in an educational setting can be identified for the student.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year policy review cycle in conjunction with the School Review.

Date Implemented	
Author	Principal
(To be)Noted By	School Council
Date Reviewed	
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Review Date	
Related Policies & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Policy Advisory Guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide