

# Attendance Policy



## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to

- ensure all students enrolled in Parktone Primary School attend every day that the school is open for instruction and they are physically able
- 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 Parktone 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 Parktone 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 Parktone 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 Parktone Primary School during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- absence is required to maintain the health of the school community (refer to Department of Education and Training Infection Diseases Policy)
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Parktone Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Parktone Primary School for particular activities.

Parktone Primary School is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance. Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

Students are expected to attend school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Parents and students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Parents are expected to ensure 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 Parktone 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.

Parktone Primary School staff 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**

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

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

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each day and after lunch each afternoon using the online Compass Student Management tool or, where this is not possible, send a paper roll to the school office.

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 Parktone Primary School of absences by:

- logging onto the online Compass Student Management tool
- contacting the school office, or
- contacting the classroom teacher

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, Parktone Primary School will notify parents by SMS through the online Compass Student Management tool. Parktone 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.

Absences without explanation from parents will be followed up initially by the classroom teacher. Teachers will contact the parents by telephone or by arranging a meeting time to discuss regular attendance and punctuality. Parents who are unable to be contacted by phone or who do not attend a meeting organised by the teacher will be followed up with a phone call by the principal (on their nominee). If contact is unsuccessful the principal (on nominee) will mail a letter requesting a meeting.

Parktone Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal (or their nominee) 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 Parktone 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 (or their nominee) has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal (or nominee) 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, Parktone 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.

### **MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)

### **EVALUATION**

Annual absenteeism records will be compared e.g. Year levels and individual children who have had high rates of absenteeism to assess the effectiveness of this policy and its implementation. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated in June 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2021.