AIMS/PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES/EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Daily school attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they don’t fall behind both socially and developmentally. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age.

School participation is important as it 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 which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from six till their seventeenth birthday unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted by the Education Department.

This policy provides the framework to a whole-school approach to the engagement of students in their learning and school life.

It is to be read in conjunction with:
ESC College Staged Response to Non-attendance and Late Arrival to School
DET School Attendance Guidelines 2014
DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014
College VCE Attendance Policy
Application for Absence from School Travel or Other

POLICY STATEMENT

- Emerald Secondary College expects students to maintain a 100% attendance rate
- The Emerald Secondary College Attendance and Lates’ Policy aims to promote a 100% attendance and focus on arrival at school on time, and outlines the responsibilities that students, families, teachers and the school have in assisting students to achieve these foci
- To develop a shared understanding of the importance of attending school all day, every day amongst the Emerald Secondary College Community
- To quickly and consistently follow up student non-attendance and late arrival to ensure students are not placed in unsafe situations, or have their future employability and life choices impacted.
• To provide clear guidelines to parents taking students out of school

Implementation:

Responsibilities

Sub-School Admin Support Person
• Monitor each student’s attendance and punctuality
• Maintain accurate attendance records

Classroom Teacher
• Mark class roll accurately within the first 10 minutes of class
• Monitor student attendance in classes
• Promptly relay any attendance concerns to Year Level Coordinator/Sub School Leader as they arise

Homegroup Teacher
• Support the Year Level Coordinator / Sub School Leader by following up on unapproved lates and absences by making contact with home
• Provide information to the Sub-School Admin Support Person from parents regarding absences / lates

Year Level Coordinator/Sub School Leader
• Address attendance/late to school/punctuality concerns early through attendance/punctuality improvement strategies
• Determine the appropriate follow up to ensure the student’s education and wellbeing are supported following a school absence
• Coordinate Student Absence Learning Plan if absence is planned and approved
• Identify students who are at risk of disengaging from school
• Make a referral to the School Attendance Officer as required
• Ensure processes are in place to document further enforcement proceedings around non-attendance including referral to the School Attendance Officer, issuing of a school attendance Notice, infringement notice (and any appeal), court proceedings

Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator
• Make DHS/ChildFIRST notifications where appropriate and in consultation with YLC/SSL and school leadership
• Refer the student to engagement programs, supports or interventions (eg Headspace), explore alternative settings

Assistant Principal
• Manage escalation of attendance concerns as per College Staged Response to Non-Attendance and Late Arrival to School

Principal/Principal Nominee/School Leadership responsibilities:
• Ensure that Compass is used to record student attendance and late arrival to school
• Ensure student attendance and late arrival to school are recorded accurately in every class and a reason given for each absence is recorded in writing
Consider the explanation given for an absence and whether it is reasonable in accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Report the annual rates of student attendance for the year to the school community at least once a year

Ensure that processes are in place to document non-attendance strategies at whole school level

Ensure that processes are in place to document non-attendance strategies at individual level in student’s file e.g. home visits, phone calls, Attendance SSG’s, SOCS referrals, DHS/childFIRST notifications

**Student responsibilities:**
- Attend school every school day
- Arrive at school and classes on time and be prepared
- Talk to a teacher if there are issues that might impact on their ability to attend school/class

**Parent responsibilities:**
- Ensure student attends school every day when instruction is offered
- Ensure student arrives at school by 8.50am
- Provide a timely & valid explanation for a student’s absence/lateness by contacting the school in writing or by Compass, phone, email or note about a student’s ongoing medical condition that may result in ongoing absence or medical appointments during school hours
- Alert the school early to issues that may impact on a student’s attendance
- Work in partnership with the school to address attendance concerns
- Provide the school with advanced notice if there is a planned up-coming school absence. If the absence is for four or more consecutive school days as a result of a parent agreed absence e.g. holiday, sport camp etc. then parents are required to submit an ‘Application for Absence from School Travel or Other.’ This form must be submitted by parents at least two weeks prior to the absence.

Parents should note: **VCAA guidelines state that the only approved absence at VCE is on two grounds – Religious & Medical. Parents who take their child out of school risk compromising their son/daughters VCE certificate on the grounds of the minimum attendance requirements not being met.**

**Strategies**

At Emerald Secondary College we promote 100% attendance and timely arrival of students to school at a whole school level by:
- Articulating high expectations of attendance to all members of the College community
- Creating safe, supportive learning environments which promote success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning
- Adopting consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence
- Implementing data-driven attendance improvement strategies
- Providing early identification and supportive intervention for students at risk of poor attendance
- Linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise program and individual support
- Accessing specialist support for individual students with identified behavioural, health or social issues
- Providing a staged response to non-attendance
- Supporting students to return to school after absences

At Emerald Secondary College we promote 100% attendance and arrival at school on time at an individual level through a range of strategies including:
- Implementing attendance improvement strategies consistent with the Staged Response for Non-Attendance, e.g. Rewards-based Attendance Contracts, Attendance SSG meetings, Student Absence Learning Plans, formally notifying families of low attendance through College attendance letters etc.

**Additional Resources:**
Emerald Secondary College Staged Response to Non-Attendance and Late Arrival to School
Emerald Secondary College Return to School Plan
Emerald Secondary College Student Absence Learning Plan
DEECD School Attendance Guidelines 2014
Click On Wellbeing- Improving Attendance Practice Guide
Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY STAKEHOLDERS / PERSONS AFFECTED</th>
<th>Staff, Students &amp; Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERSON/GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY REVIEW</td>
<td>Student Management Team, Prin Team,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVIEW CYCLE</td>
<td>2 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Last Reviewed: October 2016</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Next review Date: October 2018</td>
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Application for Absence from School
Travel or Other
The following application form must be completed for any student who is going to be away from school days for four or more school days (in a row). The form will need to be completed by the student’s parents at least two weeks prior to the absence and should be handed in at the general office.

**Note:** one application per family if multiple children involved.

**Parent Acknowledgement**
I understand that I am responsible for my son/daughter(s) supervision during the period of absence, which also includes the completion of any required school work set by the teaching staff. I also understand that I need to play a part in ensuring that my son/daughter collects any work required to be completed.

**Students in VCE (Yr 11 & 12)**
I understand that the period of absence will in fact count towards absences from school and I understand that this may impact on their absence percentage as VCE level as per the college VCE attendance policy. VCAA guidelines state that the only approved absence at VCE is on two grounds – Religious & Medical. Parents who take their child out of school risk compromising their son/daughters VCE certificate on the grounds of the minimum attendance requirements not being met.

**Student(s) Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given name(s):</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Email Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Contact No:</td>
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**Absence Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of absence applied for:</th>
<th>Start date:</th>
<th>End date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of School Days</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Absence (please circle)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Holiday</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exceptional Domestic Circumstance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport Leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: (please list):</td>
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Note: where the reason for the application for absence exceeds 20 school days, documentation such as travel documentation may be requested.

Signature of Parent/Guardian ____________________________ Date ____________

**Office Use Only**

Absence Approved by Principal: Y / N Form Processed / Family Contacted: Y / N

Date:  

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