

Attendance Policy

Please note this policy is mandatory and staff are required to adhere to the content

Summary

Table 1 - Document details

Publication date	May 2023
Review date	May 2026
Related legislation/applicable section of legislation	Attendance Work Flow Document
Related policies, procedures, guidelines, standards, frameworks	<u>Exemption from School Attendance and Enrolment Policy</u>
Approved by	Principal
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Noted by	School Council
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1. 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/carers the key practices and procedures Rowville Secondary College has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Rowville Secondary College.

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 Rowville Secondary College parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

3. POLICY DETAIL

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 Rowville Secondary College during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance and enrolment for the student (*please refer to the 'Exemption from School Attendance and Enrolment' Department Policy for further information*)
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Rowville Secondary College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Rowville Secondary College for particular activities.

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

Rowville Secondary College 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.

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/carers to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

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

Rowville Secondary College parents/carers 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/carers will communicate with the relevant staff at Rowville Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents/carers 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.

3.1 Supporting and promoting attendance

Rowville Secondary Colleges *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

The College also employs a 'Student Engagement Officer' at both the East and West campus. Part of the role of the student engagement officer is student attendance.

Additionally, student attendance is supported through Rowville Secondary Colleges House Structure, in particular the Learning Mentor system.

3.2 Recording attendance

Rowville Secondary College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Rowville Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded electronically by the classroom teacher using the COMPASS management system. These rolls are marked for Learning Mentor sessions as well as each of the 4 periods within the school day. Attendance data via the COMPASS system is live and can be accessed at any time by all staff and parents/carers alike. If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

3.3 Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents/carers should notify Rowville Secondary College of absences by:

- contacting the school's reception and/or student attendance phone line
- entering the absence via COMPASS

If a student is absent on a particular day (as recorded during LM and period 1) and the school has not been previously notified by a parent/carer, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Rowville Secondary College will notify parents/carers via our text message service (this notification is sent at 10:45am).

If contact cannot be made with the parent/carer (due to incorrect parent/carer 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.

Rowville Secondary College 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 Rowville Secondary College considers that the parent/carer 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/carer 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/carer notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file. Parents/carers will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

3.4 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, Rowville Secondary College will work collaboratively with parents/carers, 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 Learning Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from relevant Learning Mentor, House Leader or Wellbeing coordinator

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.

3.5 Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Rowville Secondary College 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 East Victorian Region for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent/carer, 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/carer 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.

4. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- This policy will be reviewed in May 2026
- This policy will be approved by the College Principal through consultation with the RSC School Council
- This policy will be monitored and evaluated by the RSC Policy and Planning Sub-committee

5. COMMUNICATIONS

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Discussed at parent/carer information nights/sessions
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

6. DEFINITIONS

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.