



NUMURKAH SECONDARY COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approval Date	12 October 2021	Approved by:	School Council
Review Cycle:	3-4 years	Next review Date	October 2025
Responsible for Review	School Leadership	Initial Endorsement Date:	March 2019

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 Numurkah Secondary College 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 Numurkah Secondary College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#) and with the [Numurkah Secondary College Attendance Strategy](#) (appendix 1)

This policy does not replace or change the obligations of *Numurkah Secondary College* 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 11 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.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Numurkah Secondary College's [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Numurkah Secondary College will record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge our school's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teacher at the start of each lesson/period 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 NSC of absences by:

- contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence, informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned absence. Parents may also enter the absence in COMPASS.

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, Numurkah Secondary College will notify parents by SMS. The College 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.

Numurkah 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 the 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
- 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, *Numurkah Secondary College* 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 Numurkah 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 our Regional Office (NEVR) for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to 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.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- Numurkah Secondary College Attendance Strategy (appendix 1)

Numurkah Secondary College Attendance Strategy

Establishing a guide for attendance:

Attendance plays a key role in setting students up for success

Regular attendees: miss less than 10 days a year (approx. less than 5% absence)

Risk of chronic absence: miss between 10 and 20 days a year (approx. 5-10% absence)

Chronically absent: miss 20+ days (approx. 10-15% absence; average 1 day per fortnight)

Severe chronic absence: miss 30+ days a year (approx. over 15% absence). This cohort is at high risk of becoming an Early Leaver. Students who go on to be chronically absent in their later years of schooling on average have higher absence rates than their peers in primary school, starting as early as Grade Prep. It is never too early or too late to establish positive attendance habits.

Attendance plays a key role in setting students up for success in later years

NSC Attendance guidelines	
WHO	PROCESS
Whole school prevention	<p>Respectful Relationships Respectful Relationships (education.vic.gov.au) Contact: Simone Nolan, Project Lead Simone.Nolan@education.vic.gov.au Laura Powell, Liaison Officer Laura.Powell@education.vic.gov.au</p> <p>School Wide Positive Behaviour Behaviour — Students: Advice education.vic.gov.au</p>
Classroom teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome students, (especially those who have been away) building positive relationship. Consistency with roll marking. Allow at least 5 minutes for students to arrive prior to marking the roll. This allows time for slower students (if student is persistently late flag this with Year Level Leader)
Office/ Lorraine Madex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily text to students who are absent and adjust absence where required Check in with AP regarding ongoing attendance concerns and audit
Homeroom teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge students who have had extended absence (great to see you here) make them feel valued and missed. Celebrate student attendance each day. Let YLL or complete wellbeing referral if there are concerns
Year Level Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set aside a period for weekly attendance check. Contact home about unexplained absence identified in weekly check (via phone/text or email). Return attendance report with absence reason to Office (Lorraine) <p>Identify Students with unexplained absence for 3-5 days over 2 weeks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contact home and record on compass Refer to wellbeing if there are concerns

	<p>Students with 10 or more days absent or below 90%</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phone home to set an attendance SSG with parents and LT/AP 2. Once Attendance SSG is confirmed send home attendance letter 2, confirming Attendance SSG time. 3. Notify LT/AP of concerns and determine next steps <p>Celebrate all student attendance each day, welcome back students who have re-engaged at school and have been working towards increased attendance. In weekly Year Level assemblies celebrate students with 95% attendance. Certificates/canteen vouchers/prize draws.</p>
<p>Wellbeing School Psychologist, Chaplin and Nurse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive referrals for students that are displaying a consistent pattern of school non-attendance. • Participate in the SSG that is focussing on Attendance • Focus on identifying barriers to participation. • Key intervention is the development of Attendance Plan.
<p>Leading teachers and Assistant Principal (Engagement and Wellbeing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee and support the actions of the YLL • Key intervention is the development of Attendance Plan. • Include an agenda item in YLL meetings that tracks students with poor attendance. • Support YLL in SSG • Key intervention is the development of Attendance Plan. • Oversee letters going home to students at the end of each term for students with less than 90% attendance • Include information on school newsletters focussing on the importance of attendance • Ensure school attendance policy is included in school enrolment packs <p>If efforts to make contact and engage with student and family are not successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice through consult with SSS team regarding attendance barriers. Fatmatta (NSC SSS support) Fatmatta.DumbuyaMunu@education.vic.gov.au, Jo Madden SSS Team Leader Johanna.Madden@education.vic.gov.au • If attendance continues to decline seek advise through consult with SWEO Misti Gow Misti.Gow@education.vic.gov.au or HWSO Desley Byers Desley.Byers@education.vic.gov.au • If all above avenues have not seen an improvement and a student's attendance declines to 30% or below consideration of a referral to the Navigator Program is recommended. You can contact David Bennett David.Bennett@education.vic.gov.au for a consult, or referral directly on line https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/behaviour/engagement/Pages/navigator.aspx • If the school have exhausted all strategies for addressing a student's chronic absence (prior to a Navigator referral) and deems it appropriate they can make a referral to a School Attendance Officer • You will find the referral template https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/resources towards the bottom of the page under Referring to a school Attendance officer – Referrals can be emailed directly to Desley Byers & Misti Gow

Does your child have a chance of being successful?

1 or 2 days a week doesn't seem much but.....

If your child misses....	That equals....	Which is.....	and over 13 years of schooling that's...	Which means the best your child might perform is ...
1 day per fortnight	20 Days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years	Equal to finishing in grade 11
1 day per week	40 Days	8 weeks	Over 2.5 years	Equal to finishing in grade 10
2 days per week	80 Days	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years	Equal to finishing in grade 7
3 days per week	120 Days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years	Equal to finishing at grade 4

EVERY DAY COUNTS!

Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Everyday Counts

<https://www.telethonkids.org.au/our-research/research-topics/school-attendance>

Attendance and Missing School

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/attendance-missing-school.aspx>

- [Why going to school is important](#)
- [What to do if your child can't go to school](#)
- [If your child misses a lot of school](#)
- [Example situations](#)
- [Children who refuse to go to school](#)
- [Students with a disability](#)
- [Tips to help improve your child's attendance](#)
- [Get advice](#)

Attendance Improvement Strategies

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/guidance/7-attendance-improvement-strategies>

Student Attendance Guidance

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/website/PAL/attendance-student-attendance-guidance.pdf>

Further resources to address common drivers of absence

- **Bullying:** see DET bullying [guidance](#) and [resources](#).
- **Mental health:** see DET [Mental Health Toolkit](#)
- **Disability:** see DET disability [guidance and resources](#).
- **Culturally inclusive practices:**
 - DET's [practice notes on Koorie cultural inclusion](#)
 - [Information for Koorie families on missing school for cultural reasons](#)
 - [Information for schools on coding cultural absences](#)
 - [School's in for Refugees](#) developed by [Foundation House](#) in partnership with DET
 - [Schools Standing Up to Racism](#) by the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

More information

- Department of Education and Training [attendance policy and guidance](#).
- The Queensland government's Every Day Counts website is a useful source of [research](#), [including case studies](#) and [resources](#) to support attendance.
- The US based [Attendance Works](#) website contains a range of [resources to improve attendance](#).