

Attendance Policy

At Hallam Senior College we believe that:

- Every student can learn
- Every student can achieve
- Every student can succeed
- Every student can excel

Everyone has a role in and is responsible for improving student outcomes

Rationale:

School attendance is compulsory for children and young people between the ages of six and seventeen (www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages.aspx). Consistent, high levels of student attendance encourages effective learning and the clear and consistent authentication of work. Consistent, high levels of student attendance promotes the wellbeing and engagement of students. 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.

Aims:

- Maximise student attendance in all programs and certificates (Year 10, VCE, VET & VCAL)
- Adopt a whole school community approach to attendance including adherence to our Guiding Principles
- Maintain accurate attendance data for all students
- Provide timely response to absenteeism that supports the wellbeing and engagement of our students
- Improve retention rates through regular monitoring of student attendance and the management of attendance related issues

Our guiding principles:

- It is a whole school community responsibility to promote consistent attendance, Teachers, students and parents/ carers each have a role to play in promoting consistent attendance
- Teachers will develop a curriculum which is challenging and engaging
- Student attendance will be monitored daily by sub schools and initiate a response to student absenteeism that is consistent with wellbeing & engagement guidelines
- Consistent attendance in classes and engagement in school activities enhances academic and personal growth
- A minimum of 95% attendance is expected, enabling satisfactory completion of all outcomes, as well as authentication of the work by the teacher
- Consistent, student attendance supports the development of the necessary skills and knowledge required for successful completion of work, including the authentication of that work.

Attendance Policy Implementation:

- Student attendance will be recorded on-line (Compass) at the beginning of each lesson by the class teacher
- Designated staff will undertake specific responsibilities in relation to the monitoring and improvement of student attendance (see attached Attendance Improvement Procedure document)
- Parents/ guardians will be notified of student absences by daily SMS and other means when appropriate (for example accessing Compass online) and are encouraged to make frequent contact with the school
- Students are expected to complete work missed due to absence or lateness. These tasks may be completed at lunchtimes, after school in Study for Success or at prearranged times with teachers. Teachers will advise students of the school's process for completing work missed due to absence. Students who miss a VCE study assessment task need to have their absence approved if their rescheduled work is to be marked. This will mean that the student must have a medical certificate or other official document that would be considered a school approved absence.
- Excellent attendance or considerable improvement in attendance will be recognized through the school's positive recognition program.

Absences:

Absences are classified as either Approved or Unapproved. This means that the principal has decided that it is only acceptable to be absent from school for certain reasons.

Lateness:

The school does not give late passes unless a parent has made contact with the school to explain lateness in relation to medical/ legal/ wellbeing issues. Students who have "slept" in or missed a bus for example, would ordinarily go straight to class. Teachers will manage this situation according to their individual classroom management plan which may include detentions and demerit points.

Family Holidays:

The school discourages students from going on holiday during the school term because this can have a negative effect upon student learning and achievement. Family holidays will only be approved if the student has completed an Absence Learning Plan prior to the holiday. This requires the student's parent/guardian/ carer to contact the school at least four weeks before the holiday so that the Absence Learning Plan can be negotiated with the student's teachers. An Absence Learning Plan usually requires students to undertake set tasks whilst on holiday.

Approved reasons for absence	Documentation	Unapproved reasons for absence
Illness with Medical Certificate	Certificate or Statutory Declaration	Truancy
Medical /Dental appointment	Certificate or Statutory Declaration	Illness without a medical certificate
Funeral – notice from the paper & note from home	Letter from home / funeral notice from newspaper	Lateness to class
Legal reasons	Official document or letter	Shopping trips , birthdays
Family holiday – Absence learning plan must be completed prior to the holiday	Absence learning plan	Employment (other than work experience of Structured workplace learning)
Counselling	Certificate, Provider Letter or Statutory Declaration	
Religious /cultural observance	Letter from family/ School proforma	
School approved sport & co-curricula programs	Compass approvals	
Illness / accident / welfare with note from parent / carer – maximum of three days only per semester	Letter from family	
Learner's permits / driving tests	Vic Roads	Driving Lessons

Attendance Improvement Implementation:

What the teacher can do:

- Develop & implement curriculum which is challenging and engaging for students
- Accurately and consistently mark rolls, including lateness, at the beginning of the class
- Follow lateness with an appropriate consequence as per individual classroom management plan before referring to sub school staff
- Monitor individual student attendance and discuss with individual students
- Communicate with parents regularly regarding progress and attendance through formal reporting, phone & Compass communication
- Notify sub school when a student is consistently absent & there has been no information provided about the absence
- Show concern for students who have been absent and supply them with missed work. Allow the student reasonable time to catch up.
- Support students who require an Individual Learning Plan as part of the attendance reengagement process where applicable

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What students can do:

- Attend all timetabled classes and arrive on time
- Report to sick bay at the general office if you are sick during the school day
- Remain on school grounds at all times during the day unless you have a pass to leave school during your study periods at the end of the day
- Report to your Engagement Officer in the sub school if you have to leave school early for the day
- Speak to your Engagement Officer if you are experiencing issues that prevent you from coming to school or arriving at school on time
- Provide certificates or parental explanation for your absences
- Discuss with your teacher the work that you need to catch up on if you have been away
- Provide certificates for rescheduled assessment tasks as appropriate

What parents can do:

- Encourage your child to attend school everyday
- Notify your child's Engagement Officer, preferably in advance, if your son/ daughter is absent
- Notify your child's Engagement Officer, preferably in writing, if your child needs to leave early during the day
- Notify your child's Engagement Officer, sub school staff or Assistant Principal if you have concerns that might impact upon your child's attendance or wellbeing
- Provide certificates and explanations for absences
- Use Compass to track your son/ daughter's attendance and communicate with the school
- Make appointments for your son/ daughter after school hours
- Avoid organizing family holidays during the school term

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Ratified at Council: November 2016

Review: November 2019

References

It's Not OK to Be Away, Department of Education, 2004

Student Engagement Policy Guidelines, DEECD, 2009

Authors BOW, MUX, FAR, KIK & YAR