



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Rationale:**

The *Education Act* requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless formally exempt. Ararat College requires that post-compulsory aged students also attend school unless a valid reason exists.

### **Aims:**

- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend Ararat College do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

### **Beliefs:**

- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.
- Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.

### **Implementation:**

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary. Parents have a further responsibility to provide an explanation to the school as to why an absence has occurred, such as a written letter, phone call, or text message.
- Parents or guardians of students who are to be absent are required to telephone, text or provide a note to the school before 9:00am to report the absence.
- Independent students not living with parents or guardians are also required to provide notes, or an explanation to the relevant Coordinator or office staff.
- Regular attendance will be promoted and valued in regular communication with students and parents, in assemblies, the Concord and other forums.
- Form Assembly teachers will be responsible for monitoring and investigating student absences within their cohort of the form group. They are to:
  - Ask students to bring a parent-signed letter or remind their parents to contact the school for all unexplained absences.
  - Send a letter home after 5 unexplained absences and record that a letter was sent in the Notes section of the Student Management Tool (SMT).
  - Pass on absence letters to the school office.

- Coordinators will:
  - Send a letter home after 10 unexplained absences or follow up with a phone call.
  - If sending a letter does not resolve the unexplained absences, a phone call will be made, and if necessary, a Student Support Meeting (SSG) will be organised.
  - Ongoing unexplained absences, or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues for students required to attend will result in year level failure and may be reported to the Department of Human Services.
  - All correspondence with parents should be recorded on SMT.
- All student absences will be recorded each period by teachers, then aggregated on the CASES database and communicated to the Department of Education.
- At the conclusion of Term 1 and 3 an attendance report will be sent home for all students stating the student's current attendance percentage and the impact that this attendance is having on their educational and social opportunities at school.
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report. This data will be analysed regularly for patterns and areas to address.
- Senior School Additions and Variations:
  - The Senior School Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing Year 12 attendance with the assistance of Year 12 form teachers as required.
  - Year 10 and 11 Coordinators will be responsible for attendance at the relevant Year level. They will ensure form teachers do the following:
    - When a student has reached 5 unexplained absences, a phone call will be made home or a letter will be sent home, asking parents to explain the reason for the absences. A phone call should be attempted first to ensure quick follow up.
    - If the phone call or letter has not resolved the absences issue, an SSG will be organised to meet with parents and the student.
    - For chronic absences, alternative pathways will be part of a discussion at an SSG, such as a change of course, modified program, or attendance at Central Connect (College outreach program for disengaged students).
    - Unresolved attendance issues of post-compulsory students may result in their expulsion from school.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

**This policy was last ratified by School Council in May 2014**