



BUCKLEY PARK COLLEGE

Attendance Policy

Developed: June 2014

Revised: June 2023

Review Date: June 2027

Endorsed by school council 19/06/2023

Help for non-English speakers



If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact a member of the Principal class on 9331 9999

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 Buckley Park 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 Buckley Park College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Buckley Park 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 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 Buckley Park College during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Buckley Park College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Buckley Park College for particular activities.

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

Buckley Park 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 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 a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

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

Parents 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.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Buckley Park College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Buckley Park College staff must record attendance in every class or activity. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Buckley Park College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students. (Full details of attendance requirements in the Later Years can be located in the '*Later Years policy*' accessed through the school website and acknowledged by parents and students through Compass).

Attendance will be recorded by the 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 and approved for that particular activity.

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. Parents notify the school through Compass on any occasion that students are absent from part or all of the school day. It is preferred that parents notify the school prior to the absence using the Notes/Approval tab. The reason for the absence can also be entered by parents after the fact using the Unexplained tab. Further explanation of parents using Compass for attendance can be found in the '*Attendance guide for parents*' located under school documentation 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, Buckley Park College will notify parents by SMS. This will be sent at 9:30 am on the day of the absence.

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.

Buckley Park 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 Buckley Park College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**approved absence**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unapproved 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
- 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

It is the legal responsibility of a parent to notify the school that their child will not be in attendance for a particular reason. If no explanation is provided by the parent within 5 school days of an absence, it will be recorded on the students file as "Truancy". Parents will be able to change this on Compass if it is incorrect.

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, Buckley Park 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 and Navigator referral

If Buckley Park 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 South Western region 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.
- Buckley Park College may make a referral to the Navigator program for students that have experienced school refusal or low attendance due to a range of issues. If successful, students will be assigned a case manager to support the student back into school, other pathways or supportive services.

Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website and through school policy manual on Compass
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Presented to students in briefings
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

More information and resources

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)

Review cycle and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 3-4 year review cycle or if guidelines change.