

Attendance Policy



SUZANNE CORY
HIGH SCHOOL



Rationale

In Victoria, it is compulsory for children and young people aged 6 – 17 years to attend school. All students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and activities every school day of each term. It is important that students develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. School attendance helps students develop social skills, such as friendship building, teamwork, communication skills and healthy self-esteem. Students who regularly miss school are at risk of missing out on learning the basic building blocks of each subject and may experience long term difficulties with their learning.

School attendance is mandated under the *Education Training and Reform Act 2006*. It is the responsibility of parents, guardians or anyone who have parental responsibility for a child to ensure they attend school on a regular basis. Parents are legally required to ensure their child attends school every day and to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school unless an exemption from attendance has been granted or an exception to their attendance applies.

Suzanne Cory High School encourages students to achieve to the best of their abilities. Therefore, it is expected that all students take full advantage of their educational opportunities, including regular attendance, completion of all set work and consistently working to their full potential. Good attendance and success go hand in hand. Students who have a good attendance record are more likely to achieve high results.

Aim

To maximize student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that students required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

Purpose

- Students must achieve a 90% attendance rate to satisfy course requirements at all year levels. No more than 10% unapproved absences is acceptable. For students to succeed at school and to achieve their potential, research evidence points to the need for them to consistently attend their scheduled classes, to be punctual to school and classes and to actively engage in required work.
- Maximise the attendance of all students to enhance the opportunities for success at school.
- Support families in achieving regular attendance for their children.
- Identify and support all students at risk of non-attendance.
- Ensure the efficiency and accuracy of data collection for school, legal and audit requirements.



Implementation

- This policy provides clear roles and responsibilities for all students, parents/carers and staff.
- Maximising attendance is dependent upon effective working partnerships between the school, parents/carers and the students.
- The school will work collaboratively with the parent/carer to implement a range of effective attendance strategies to maximize and support opportunities for all students.
- Staff will be responsible for monitoring and investigating student absences.
- This policy is informed by Department of Education policy regarding student attendance requirements.

Guide to categorising absence (Attendance Works, 2017):





Definitions and References

Approved and unapproved absences

Absences are classified as either *approved by the school* or *unapproved by the school*:

Approved by the school absences include:

- Illness with a medical certificate
- Attendance at an approved school activity (e.g. meeting with a member of student support services, instrumental music, camp, excursion or school sporting event).
- Suspension from school (internal or external).
- Exceptional personal family circumstances (e.g. funeral, family illness of parent or sibling). This is to be accompanied with a statutory declaration and/or the appropriate certificate

All students are required to provide a medical certificate or Statutory Declaration if absent on the day of a SAC, SAT (VCE Units 3 and 4) or assessment task (VCE Units 1 and 2, Year 10 and Year 9). This needs to be shown to the classroom teacher and passed on to the Head of House with the appropriate paperwork.

All other absences are unapproved by the school:

This includes:

- “parent choice” and “truancy” on compass
- A statement obtained from the Doctor after the day of illness
- Family holidays
- Illness with a note from the parent/carer or parent phone call to the attendance officer
- Appointments which could be made out of school hours, including driving lessons/tests, interviews
- Family arrangements, such as helping at home or at parent’s place of work
- Part-time or casual work

Request for Extended Absence

1. Parents and students must complete the “extended absence from school form” at least 4 weeks in advance for the absence to be considered for approval.
2. Students who undertake extended absences without the appropriate school approval may not complete the units successfully.
3. Where approval is granted, students MUST see their teachers to complete the “Work to be completed form”.

Students doing VCE units are unlikely to be granted this, due to VCAA requirements for 90% attendance.



Attendance Rates

Attendance rates will be calculated as a percentage:

The number of classes attended divided by the total number of classes. This will take into consideration the total number of approved absences. Therefore, only unapproved absences will decrease rates.

A large number of approved absences may still result in non-completion of a VCE unit or unsatisfactory completion of a year of study e.g. long period of illness or

Consequences of Unsatisfactory Attendance Rates

Students not achieving the attendance rate of 90% will be closely monitored by specific support structures in the school. Action will be taken in line with the schools at risk procedures.

A VCE student not achieving an attendance rate of 90% for a subject will receive an N for that unit. The outcome and communication of this result will be made in conjunction with the student, teacher, parent, Head of House and a member of student support services.

A middle school student not achieving an attendance rate of 90% will be ineligible for early access into a VCE Unit 3/4 subject in Year 11.

All students with unsatisfactory attendance run the risk of being excluded from school extra-curricular activities such as Socials, Formals and Celebration Days

Commencement Program

The Commencement Program held at the end of the year is **compulsory** for all students. Students start on the following year's work. During this time school work and assessment tasks are given. Students who miss out on this may be disadvantaged.

Attendance at these classes will be counted in the following years attendance rate.



Lateness

Regular attendance at Suzanne Cory High School is important for students to reach their potential. Students should endeavour to be at school on time, every day. It is critical that students arrive at classes on time as it makes it very difficult for lesson to run and other students to learn if there are students arriving late.

Students are required at school at **8.40 am for an 8.50 start**. Students are responsible for having their name marked off in each class they attend. If they are late the school is required to record the reason as a way of ensuring that students are absent from school only when they are sick or have another good reason for missing school.

If a student arrives to school after 8.50am they are to sign in at the Compass kiosk.

Students who are late more than three times per cycle without a valid reason will receive a detention.

Examples of acceptable reasons for lateness are:

- ☐ Infrequent transport difficulties on the way to school
- ☐ Other unavoidable family and personal reasons, as advised

Examples of unacceptable reasons for lateness are:

- ☐ Truancy
- ☐ Frequent transport difficulties on the way to school
- ☐ Sleeping in
- ☐ No reason provided
- ☐ Appointments which could be made out of school hours, including driving lessons/tests, interviews
- ☐ Other avoidable and insufficient reasons

Three times late to class will automatically convert into a lesson missed and count against overall attendance.



Notification of an Extended Absence from School

Extended absences from school can have a very serious negative effect on student learning. Of course, some extended absences are unavoidable, such as illness or a serious family situation. However, families should consider the impact of long-term absences that are within their control, such as overseas travel. Extended absences have a particularly serious impact on educational progress in the senior years of schooling and become critical in VCE, as there are specific VCAA requirements for attendance. Extended absences taken without the Principal's approval will put a student's ability to successfully complete that year level at risk.

If you wish to **apply for approval** for an **extended absence** please complete the form below and submit the request to school reception **at least 4 weeks in advance** of the proposed absence.

If approval for an extended absence is granted:

- Students need to see each teacher so that they can fill in a "Work to be Completed" form
- On return from the absence, the student may be requested to attend an interview with their respective teacher and Head of House to support their transition back into classes

Request for approval of an extended student absence:

Name of Student: _____

Home group: _____

Period of absence: _____

Reason for absence:

(Please attach evidence to this form.)

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

School use only:

Approval for extended absence granted: YES / NO

Approval granted by: _____ (Head of House)

Date: _____

Office staff input to compass: Name of staff member: _____ Date: _____



WORK TO BE COMPLETED FORM – TO BE FILLED IN PRIOR TO ABSENCE

Absence work for _____ **HG** _____

Teachers please be informed that this student will be absent from your classes for the following time –
from _____ to _____.

Could you please include on this sheet the work that you want the student to do during this time. Please state if the student will miss any SACs or assessment tasks and explain if this absence will affect this student's overall satisfactory result in your subject.

SUBJECT	WORK TO BE COMPLETED WHILE ABSENT	ABSENCES – total number of periods	TEACHER SIGNATURE

Signatures: Parent _____ Student _____ HOH _____ Date: _____