## ATTENDANCE DATA MATTERS

Research indicates there is a strong link between school attendance and engagement with student outcomes.

There are a number of support mechanisms to encourage better attendance, greater engagement and practices to improve engagement. These support mechanisms all rely on the confidence in the quality of the student attendance data across all levels of our system, both for individual students and classes, through to whole school data and the state-wide data against which schools can make meaningful comparisons.

### Data quality is important

Accurate attendance data is important. Schools regularly use attendance data for monitoring and target setting and the Department also uses the data for reporting, such as the:

* [Annual Report to the School Community](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/project/fiso/SitePages/AnnualReporting.aspx)
* [School Performance Reports](https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/forms/school/spreports/default.asp)
* [Regional Performance Reporting](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/RPF/default.aspx)

Aggregate level student attendance data are reported in the:

* [State Budget Paper No. 3](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/RSGAR/SchoolImprovementCycle/State%20Budget%20Paper%20No.%203)
* [Report on Government Services (RoGS)](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/RSGAR/SchoolImprovementCycle/Report%20on%20Government%20Services%20%28RoGS%29)
* [National Report on Schooling in Australia](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/RSGAR/SchoolImprovementCycle/National%20Report%20on%20Schooling%20in%20Australia)
* [My School](https://myschool.edu.au/)

From time to time, the Department is required to disclose attendance information for individual students under law (e.g. to assist with policy enquiry or coroner inquest).

### Legislative Requirements

The *Education Training and Reform Act 2006* states:

***2.1.1 Attendance at school***

It is the duty of the parent of a child of not less than 6 nor more than 17 years of age

1. to enrol the child at a registered school and to ensure the child attends the school at all times when the school is open for the child's instruction; or
2. to register the child for home schooling in accordance with the regulations and to

ensure that the child receives instruction in accordance with the registration.

***4.3.7 Attendance register in registered schools***

The principal or person in charge of a registered school at which children of compulsory school age attend must ensure that the attendance of those children is recorded in an attendance register in accordance with the [regulations](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/575C47EA02890DA4CA25717000217213/%24FILE/06-024a.pdf).

### Student Support Groups

When student attendance issues are identified and it becomes apparent that a student may require ongoing intensive support in order to remain engaged in school an **Attendance Student Support Group** should be convened by the principal (or nominee). For more information see: [Student Support Groups](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/supportgroups.aspx)

### Student Participation and Engagement

Schools are expected to provide safe, secure, supportive and engaging learning environments so that student participation can be maximised. For more information see: [Student Participation](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/participation.aspx)

A high quality Student Engagement Policy that reflects the school community’s aspirations and the unique local context of the school is critical to developing a positive school culture and supporting a school council’s strategic aims.

Some of the Department’s student engagement initiatives are outlined [here](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/pages/production.aspx#/app/content/1664/structure_&_governance%252Fgroups_and_divisions%252Fearly_childhood_and_school_education_group%252F%25E2%2580%258Bwellbeing,_health_and_engagement%25E2%2580%258B).

### Student Absence Learning Plan

Student Absence Learning Plans should be implemented to support the education of students who are absent from school for an extended period. They should be developed collaboratively by teachers, students and their parents.

* [Student Absence Learning Plan Template](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/collaboration/attendanceengagementparentbehaviour/attendance/Attendance%20and%20enrolment%20resources/Student%20Absence%20Learning%20Plan%20template.DOC)

Recording Attendance Data

Government schools are to use CASES21, eCASES21 or third party software which is deemed compatible with CASES21 to record student attendance. If third party software is used to record student attendance, the data must be uploaded to CASES21 weekly. [Chapter 3 of the CASES21 User Guide](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/bussys/cases21/User%20Guides/C21%20ADMINISTRATION%20User%20Guides/Chapter%2003%20Attendance.DOCX) details Importing Attendance Records.

Attendance Coding Advice

Pages 9 to 18 of the [CASES21 Guide](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/bussys/cases21/User%20Guides/C21%20ADMINISTRATION%20User%20Guides/Chapter%2003%20Attendance.DOCX) provide guidance on the correct codes to use. The guide also provides advice on how to check the accuracy of the data imported from External Electronic Roll Marking Systems.

Checking and Validating Data

There are two reports in the [School Information Portal](https://schoolportal.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx) that provide information on Student Attendance. The first report provides the Average Number of Absence Days per FTE by year levels. This is the official measure of student absence used for performance reporting. The second report provides information on the number of students absent against each Absence Type. This second report also allows you to view the data by Month, which is a good way to check whether your student absence data in CASES21 is up to date.

### Professional Learning

A number of modules are available for school staff to support capability building with CASES21. These modules and their dates are outlined [here](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/olt/Courses/Forms/Schoolsys.aspx?RootFolder=%2Folt%2FCourses%2FCASES21%20Administration%20and%20Timetabling%2FAttendances&FolderCTID=&View=%7bFE211D76-54BE-441A-86C4-3A8308BE8F88).

A data literacy module is also available as part of the [Strategic Management for school leaders](http://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/courses/strategic-management-for-school-leaders-data-literacy) course.

### Who can I contact for assistance?

* The **Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Division** can assist with policies on **student attendance and engagement**. Please contact: student.engagement@edumail.vic.gov.au
* **Regional Health and Wellbeing Teams** can provide advice on further attendance improvement strategies and support to schools to broker solutions for complex individual attendance cases. Please contact your regional office to speak to the team.
* The **Performance and Evaluation Division** can assist with understanding the data and identifying any potential **data quality issues.** Please contact: schoolperformancedata@edumail.vic.gov.au
* Assistance with using the **CASES21** system is offered through the **Information Technology Division Service Desk**. The Service Desk via Service Gateway can be contacted on: <https://servicegateway.eduweb.vic.gov.au> 1800 641 943 or servicedesk@edumail.vic.gov.au

