Attendance Policy 2025 - 2029



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Hampton Park Secondary College on 03 8795 9400.

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 Hampton Park Secondary 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 Hampton Park Secondary 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 Hampton Park Secondary College, parents/carers and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

Definition

Parent/Carer – 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 Hampton Park Secondary 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 Hampton Park Secondary College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Hampton Park Secondary College for particular activities.

Both schools and parent/carers have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

Hampton Park Secondary 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.

Hampton Park Secondary 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.

Parent/Carers will communicate with the relevant staff at Hampton Park Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parent/Carers 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

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

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- regularly communicating with our families and community about the importance of attendance – through our website, compass, our News Hamper, social media platforms and via written communication home regularly
- making phone calls home every day to those families whose students are not in attendance
- implementing a cohesive and consistent attendance and engagement policy and whole school process which ensures all appropriate steps are taken to re-engage our students
- regularly communicating with our community the roles they play in support of student attendance – to ensure a shared approach
- running mentor sessions every week to support student engagement and attendance
- expanding the subjects we have on offer to support engagement and attendance, where students have voice and agency over the subjects they choose
- engaging families in attendance support meetings where required and developing attendance support plans
- running a regular breakfast club to support students
- running daily lunchtime clubs to support engagement
- expanding our student support services team to ensure wrap around support of our students

- running regular team around the learner meetings, where attendance is a focus, to ensure adequate supports are in place
- running regular celebrations and recognition for those students who have attended over 95% and for those who have shown improved attendance
- implementing a values awards system where students are recognised for their outstanding attendance and engagement

Recording attendance

Hampton Park Secondary College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Hampton Park Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each lesson/period on Compass.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent/carer must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents/Carers should notify Hampton Park Secondary College of absences by:

- parent/carers of students who are absent are required to telephone the school before 9:00am to report the absence or use the Compass portal
- all student absences are to be recorded each period by teachers, including students who arrive to class and to school late
- parent/carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are only absent if ill or necessary
- Parent/carers have a further responsibility to access the Compass portal explaining why an absence has occurred
- House Leadership Teams will be responsible for monitoring and investigating student absences, including lateness to school and class
- Parent/carers have access to the Compass portal to monitor student attendance in all classes
- the Department of Education and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records

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, Hampton Park Secondary College will notify parent/carers by SMS/push notification message. Hampton Park Secondary College will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent/carer to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent/carers (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.

Hampton Park Secondary 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/carer meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Hampton Park Secondary College considers that the parent/carer has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

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

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent/carer 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, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent/carer 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/carer notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents /Carers be notified if an absence has not been approved.

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, we will work collaboratively with parent/carers, 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 support staff at our college, such as our student support services team

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, we will endeavour to provide this support when it is required

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Hampton Park Secondary 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 for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent/carer, 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/carer 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.

Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent/carer information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

More Information

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

Policy review and approval

Policy Last Reviewed	November 2025
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next Reviewal Date	November 2029