



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Florence Street Blackburn 3130

#### **RATIONALE**

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from six 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.

#### **AIMS**

The aim 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 Blackburn Lake Primary School has in place to
  - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
  - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

This policy applies to all students at Blackburn Lake Primary School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's. It does not replace or change the obligations of Blackburn Lake Primary School, 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.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Students are expected to attend Blackburn Lake Primary School 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 Blackburn Lake Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Blackburn Lake Primary School for particular activities.

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

Blackburn Lake Primary School 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.

Blackburn Lake Primary School 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 Blackburn Lake Primary School 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**

Blackburn Lake Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance through:

- provision of an engaging curriculum, commitment to building positive relationships with and between students (for example through the TRRAC values and other pro-social programs);
- intervention and extension programs;
- externally provided before and after school care
- a range of extracurricular options.

### **Recording attendance**

Blackburn Lake Primary School must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Blackburn Lake Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by the supervising teacher before 9:15 am and after lunch using [CASES21/eCASES or compatible third party software e.g. 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 must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify Blackburn Lake Primary School of absences by:

- Logging into Blackburn Lake Primary School's online portal (e.g. COMPASS), clicking on "Add attendance note" and entering the relevant details;
- If COMPASS access is not possible, ringing or otherwise contacting the school (e.g. emailing the teacher);
- Where the absence is not for the full school day, logging into the Kiosk at Reception, ensuring that the printout slip is given to either the teacher or front office staff when collecting or dropping off their child.

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, Blackburn Lake Primary School will notify parents by electronic (e.g. SMS, email), telephone or other available method of notification. Blackburn Lake Primary School will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

Blackburn Lake Primary School 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 a parent has not communicated their child's absence, the absence will be marked as Not Present: 'unexplained 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 for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- Illness → Student is not at school due to illness
- Dentist → Includes dentist orthodontist or similar
- Bereavement → Includes funeral, death in the family, absence due to a death
- Truancy/School Refusal → Parent knows about absence but does not approve, or parent does not know about absence
- Parent Choice → Parent explained, with a reason that is not health/religious/cultural/holiday related. Includes special circumstances unavoidable cause, unforeseen circumstances, family member ill.
- Family Holiday → Student is away on family holiday
- Religious/Cultural observance → Student is kept away from school for a religious or cultural reason.

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file. Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

### **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, Blackburn Lake Primary School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, and may implement 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/insert appropriate terminology for your school].

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**

If Blackburn Lake Primary School 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 North Eastern 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.

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed within three years.

### **MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)

**RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

**PRINCIPAL:** Loisia Steed      **SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT:** Dan Watts