



ATTENDANCE POLICY

BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

12 - 14 Florence Street Blackburn 3130

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 / carers the key practices and procedures Blackburn Lake Primary School (BLPS) 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 BLPS.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of BLPS, parents 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 BLPS 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 BLPS, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in BLPS for particular activities.

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

BLPS 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 support programs.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

BLPS parents / caers 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 / carers will communicate with the relevant staff at BLPS about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents / caers 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

BLPS [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) provides strategies to support student attendance.

Recording Attendance

BLPS must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge BLPS's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of the school day and after lunch using the Compass Student Management Platform.

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 BLPS of absences by:

- logging the absence for their child on Compass, the school student management platform.
- where possible, for a planned or an extended absence, communicate their child's absence to their child's classroom teacher via email.

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, BLPS will notify parents / carers by SMS notification message.

BLPS will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable explanation** for the purposes of the parent / carer meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If BLPS considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable explanation** for their child's absence, the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

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

The Principal has the discretion to determine the explanation given by a parent for a student's absence as reasonable or not. 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 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.

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.

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, BLPS will work collaboratively with parents / carers, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing a 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

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional support 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 BLPS determines 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 Victoria Region (NEVR) Office for further action.

If 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 explanation 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:

- Included in staff induction processes
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL REVIEW CYCLE

Policy last reviewed	May 2023
Consultation	Staff School Council
Approved by	Principal David Dowson
Next scheduled review date	May 2026