



# Heidelberg Primary School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 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 Heidelberg Primary School 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 Heidelberg Primary School.

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 Heidelberg 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* 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 Heidelberg 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 Heidelberg Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Heidelberg Primary School for particular activities.

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

Heidelberg 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.

Heidelberg 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 Heidelberg 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**

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

### **Recording attendance**

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

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

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of the school day at 9.00am and after lunch at 1.50pm using 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 on the day of the absence.

Parents should notify Heidelberg Primary School of absences by:

- logging on to Compass to add an attendance note, and record the absence themselves, or
- contacting the office

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, Heidelberg Primary School will notify parents by SMS.

Heidelberg Primary School will generate an unexplained absence report weekly. Any student with an unexplained absence will receive a letter sent home with the student for the parent to fill out, sign

and return.

Heidelberg Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence, for example:

- 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

Parents will see an attendance alert when logged on to Compass if an absence has not been explained.

### **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, Heidelberg Primary School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate. Strategies to improve attendance, will include:

- 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 and DET regional Student Support Service Officers. 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 Heidelberg 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 Western Regional Office for further action.

### **MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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

### **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated in August 2019 and is scheduled for review in August 2022.