

## Attendance Policy

*Rossbourne School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)*

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to

- Explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Rossbourne School has in place to support, monitor and maintain student attendance as well as to record, monitor and follow up student absences.
- Ensure that students, staff and parents/carers at Rossbourne School have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Rossbourne School.

### 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.

### 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).

Students are expected to attend Rossbourne 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 at Rossbourne School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment at Rossbourne School for particular activities

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

Rossbourne School believes that 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.

The 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 need to be 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.

Rossbourne School parents need to be 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 should communicate with the relevant staff at Rossbourne School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents should 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**

See Rossbourne School *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* in relation to support of student attendance through comprehensive learning and wellbeing programs.

### **Recording attendance**

Rossbourne School records attendance in every class (regulation is twice a day). By doing this Rossbourne will:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Rossbourne School's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by respective class teachers at the commencement of each lesson/period using the prescribed software (2020 SEQTA).

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 Rossbourne School of absences by either:

- contacting reception if it is an unplanned absence,
- informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned absence

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, Rossbourne School will notify parents by telephone or email. The 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.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (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.

Rossbourne 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 School Attendance guidelines.

If Rossbourne School considers that the parent 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 for a student's absence and 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 ceremonies.
- 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.

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

- establishing a Student Support Group around attendance
- 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. 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.

If a student no longer requires, benefits from, or responds to, the special education provision offered by Rossbourne School it may be considered by staff that another educational or workplace setting would better meet his/her particular educational, employment and/or behavioural needs – see *Rossbourne School Exclusion from School Policy*.

### ***Other related policies***

### **Student Wellbeing and Engagement.**

***This policy will be reviewed as part of the Rossbourne School policy review cycle  
September 2020***