

Attendance Policy (2027)



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Morang South Primary School office on 9404 1548

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

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

Morang South 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.

Morang South 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 Morang South Primary School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents with students with high absenteeism due to medical needs will provide medical certificates to support reasons for absence. The school will liaise with medical professionals to determine suitable learning programs/schedules.

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. Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence - shopping excursions or birthday parties are not.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Morang South Primary School's *Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- creating safe and supportive learning environments
- sending a Compass generated SMS to the primary parent/carer when a reason for absence has not been recorded by 10am
- reporting on absence as part of the Semester School Report
- giving out certificates, at assembly, for students with high attendance
- ensuring curriculum programs are highly engaging, relevant and promote inquiry
- developing positive relationships, including implementation of the Respectful Relationships program

- following up with families in regard to high levels of absenteeism and providing support around issues of non-attendance or school refusal
- reporting aggregated student attendance data to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the Annual Report to Community
- providing a before school library club for those students at risk of school refusal or experiencing separation anxiety
- identifying 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.
- employment of Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader to support family and students

Recording attendance

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

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

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom/supervising teacher at the start of the school day and after lunch 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.

Parents should notify Morang South Primary School of absences by:

- recording their child's absence on the school's student management app – Compass
- or alternatively an email/written note to the classroom teacher
- informing the classroom teacher in writing if there 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, Morang South Primary School will notify parents by SMS. Parents are encouraged to ensure up-to-date contact details are provided to the school office.

Morang South Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. Where a parent nominates 'Parent Choice' the Principal (or delegate) 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 Morang South Primary School considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as an '**approved absence**'.

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

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments **are not** possible or available
- 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 in which the parent is actively addressing causes and provides evidence of this to support the student's regular return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance

The Principal may recognise reason for term-based family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance, however these will be identified as 'unapproved' absences.

If no explanation is provided by the parent, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's profile. Staff may contact parents in regard to 'unexplained absences' to establish or clarify circumstances or where there are multiple days of non-attendance without explanation.

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, Morang South Primary School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, which may 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 allied health professionals, DE student welfare or student attendance officer, or other relevant agencies

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 Morang South Primary School decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the North Eastern Metropolitan Region (NEMA) for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to make contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school or the student's whereabouts are unknown, the Principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer or other welfare agency if concerned.

Parents must provide the school with notification if students have been enrolled in an alternate educational setting. (e.g. new school)

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website

- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2023
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2027