

1. Rationale

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

2. Aims

Riddells Creek Primary School focuses on student engagement being the basis for learning and continues to build the understanding that full attendance is a key to engagement and maximises every student's ability to learn and our teachers' ability to teach effectively.

2.1 All students should attend school each day

2.2 All students should consistently arrive at school on time to begin learning at 8.55am

2.3 RCPS should communicate to our community the importance of the link between punctuality and attendance, and maximising student ability to learn

2.4 RCPS encourage parents/carers to seek advice from the class teacher or Assistant Principal about getting their children to school on time for every school day.

3. Implementation

It is the school's responsibility to:

3.1.1 maintain attendance records, including daily attendance, lateness records and store explained absence notes;

3.1.2 monitor and follow up unexplained absences;

3.1.3 contact families for clarification of unexplained absences;

3.1.4 If RCPS 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. 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. Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

3.1.5 provide information for parents/care givers that education is a sequential process and that absence can mean students miss important stages of learning;

3.1.6 promote the philosophy of "It's Not OK to Be Away" and "It's Not Great to be Late". As part of "It's Not OK to Be Away", a Traffic Light record of student attendance is attached to pupil reports each semester (Appendix II);

3.1.7 provide pro-forma absence/lateness notes requesting explanations for each unexplained absence or late arrival;

3.1.8 use Compass to record attendance in accordance with DEECD Attendance Reporting System

3.1.9 ensure parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absence for *more than 5 days* or lateness are contacted, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences;

3.1.9 follow up on unresolved and prolonged absence issues that may be reported by the Principal to Child First or the Department of Human Services as deemed appropriate and the Regional Office in Bendigo.

3.1.10 report aggregated student attendance data to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

It is the Parents/Carers responsibility to:

3.2.1 ensure their child attends school every day and is consistently punctual;

3.2.2 advise the school (email, phone, Compass note) as soon as possible when their child is absent or late to school;

3.2.3 advise the Principal/delegate if they need support to get their child to school on time for every school day;

3.2.4 communicate with their child's teacher/office to advise them of the dates and duration of extended holidays prior to the holiday/extended absence; and

3.2.5 sign in/out of the school students arriving late or departing early and present the Late Arrival/Early Departure slip to their child's classroom teacher.

It is the student's responsibility to:

3.3.1 attend school every day that the school is open, unless they are ill;

3.3.2 arrive at each session on time and ready to learn

3.4 The attendance roll, which is a legal document, is marked on Compass at the beginning of each day and again after lunch. CRTs will be responsible for marking the online roll.

4. Guidelines

2.1 The Attendance Policy is based on DEET's The School Attendance Guidelines, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/attendance.aspx>

2.2 The Attendance Roll is marked in accordance with the DEET Attendance Reporting System CASES21.

5. Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle, at least once every three years.

Approved by the school council on June 7th 2018.