



Bentleigh Secondary College

Attendance Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure that all students enrolled at Bentleigh College 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 Example 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 Bentleigh Secondary College. 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 Bentleigh Secondary College, 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* (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

Policy

Schooling is compulsory for young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted). Bentleigh Secondary College is committed to supporting all students to achieve the highest attendance rates.

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.

- Bentleigh Secondary College 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 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 approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- Bentleigh Secondary College parents and carers 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 Bentleigh Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- Parents are to 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

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day. Bentleigh Secondary College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.



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Our school also promotes student attendance by providing breakfast club 2 days per week, having a range of clubs and lunchtime activities, active SRC, camps and excursions/incursions.

Recording Attendance

Students are expected to attend Bentleigh Secondary College as per their timetable from 8.30am to 3.10pm every day unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school/TAFE/Work placement and has only a partial enrolment in Bentleigh Secondary College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Bentleigh Secondary College for particular activities.

Attendance will be recorded by teachers at the beginning of each lesson on COMPASS. If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Teachers at Bentleigh Secondary College will record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Bentleigh Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Recording Absence

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify Bentleigh Secondary College of absences by recording the absence on COMPASS. If there are any technical issues, please contact the school on (03) 9579 1044 on any day a student is absent.

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, Bentleigh Secondary College will notify parents by SMS by 9.45am 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.

Bentleigh Secondary College 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 the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Bentleigh Secondary College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**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 approve:

- 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 completes a proforma and notifies the school **in advance**

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer 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.



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Guidelines

1. Minimum **95%** attendance is expected from all students. Appointments should be made outside of class times. This includes:
 - 8.30am VCE Classes
 - 8.30am Home Group and Assemblies (Years 7-9)
2. Students needing to leave school during the school day must have it logged on COMPASS. If the time of departure is during a lesson, the time will appear on COMPASS. They must sign out via COMPASS or the General Office before leaving the grounds.
3. Whole school activities including sports carnivals and excursions are compulsory. Non-attendance will result in an unapproved absence.
4. Students on excursions, at instrumental music and college extra curricula activities are counted as present. It is the student's responsibility to consult with the teachers of any classes missed to ensure they catch up with work set.
5. Where a student has completed work but there has been a substantial breach of attendance requirements the student may receive an unsatisfactory result for a unit or assessment task.
6. A student whose attendance is affected by prolonged illness or personal issue may be eligible for special provision, provided medical documentation is supplied.
7. Where a student's attendance is at risk of falling below the 95% requirement **and** they are not eligible for attendance accommodations, an appropriate action plan will need to be negotiated between the school and the family.

Late Arrival- Learning Starts at 8:30 or 9:00am

Students who are late to school need to report to the General Office and sign in through Compass to obtain a late pass. Parents have 24 hours to approve this lateness. If there is no approval registered on COMPASS, consequences will be issued by their HOYL.

Late to other classes

Students who are late to other classes during the day with no valid reason will be issued consequences by the respective teacher. Repeat offenses will be referred to their HOYL.

Managing Non-Attendance and Supporting Student Engagement

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance. Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency we will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- 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 our Wellbeing team
- arranging external agencies as needed

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If we have 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 South East Regional Office for further action. This may occur if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse 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.



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Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook
- Discussed at annual staff meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from the General Office upon request

Further Information and Resources

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

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	December 2023
Ratified by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2027