



POLICY	ATTENDANCE
DATE	September 2022
SCHOOL COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT	N/A
REVIEW DATE	September 2025

PURPOSE

To ensure all students enrolled at Blackburn English Language School (ELS) attend school every day that the school is open for instruction.

- To ensure all 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 Blackburn ELS 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 Blackburn ELS.
- 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 Blackburn ELS, 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 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.

The school's policy on student attendance is responsive to its legislative requirements and its responsibility to support newly-arrived families as they begin the settlement process in Australia.

The school aims to educate newly arrived parents/guardians and to develop a partnership in its approach to student attendance that highlights both school and parent/guardian responsibilities.

Whilst the school acknowledges full attendance by students in the program poses a challenge for some parents/guardians as they are confronted by a range of settlement issues, the expectation remains that all enrolled students attend school on every day of instruction. The school has a structure and process for the effective communication of this expectation to all parents and carers.

Students are expected to attend Blackburn ELS during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student (medical appointment, mainstream school transition visit etc)

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

Blackburn ELS 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 approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Blackburn ELS 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 Blackburn ELS 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

Blackburn ELS' *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by: Recording absences on progress and transition reports, following up absences on a daily basis (in first language if possible), breakfast club program at the Maroondah campus.

Recording attendance

Attendance is recorded on Compass every day at the beginning of period one and period five and aggregated using CASES 21. Any lateness to class is recorded on Compass and followed up by the relevant class teacher/sector coordinator.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Home Group/class teachers are responsible for ensuring a student brings an absence note from a parent/guardian on the day of return to school. This note may be in first language. Absence note proformas in the student diary (secondary) may be used for this purpose.

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 Blackburn ELS of absences by:

- Contacting the office by 9am on the day of 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, Blackburn ELS will notify parents by a phone call. Blackburn ELS 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.

Blackburn ELS 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 Blackburn ELS 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 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

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, Blackburn ELS 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 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,

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Blackburn ELS 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 NEVR for further action.

COMMUNICATION

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

- At enrolment, parents/guardians are informed of the school's Attendance Policy.
- A translated copy of the Attendance Policy is included in the handbook given to all parents/guardians at enrolment.
- The Attendance Policy is reiterated to all parents/guardians at the information session for new families, held at the school each term in week three.
- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

Policy last reviewed	September 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2025