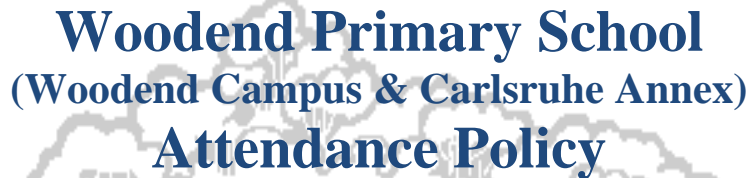


# Woodend Primary School

## (Woodend Campus & Carlsruhe Annex)

### Attendance Policy



#### **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 Woodend 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 Woodend 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 Woodend 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 Woodend 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 Woodend Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Woodend Primary School for particular activities.
- The student is unwell.

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

Woodend 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.

Woodend Primary School parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Woodend Primary School 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:**

Woodend Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by regular celebrations of attendance and expectation reminders at Assembly.

### **Recording attendance**

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

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

Attendance will be recorded by the Classroom or Specialist teachers at 9.00 a.m. and 1.50 p.m. 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 Woodend Primary School of absences by:

- COMPASS
- Phoning the school

If a student is not present when the roll is marked at 9.00 a.m. on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained.

If a student arrives late to school, they will be marked as "late" or absent by the class teacher. Parents are required to sign in students who arrive late or alternatively, phone the school to advise they have arrived slightly late and may have missed the roll.

Woodend Primary School will notify parents of all students with an unexplained absence for that day, by SMS via COMPASS

Each day the parents of all students with unexplained absences will be notified by Woodend Primary School by SMS via compass at approximately 10.15 a.m.

If no explanation or contact has been received from parents, Woodend Primary School will attempt to contact parents by midday at the latest, on the same day as the unexplained absence.

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.

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school of the absence, the absence will continue to be recorded as unexplained.

At the end of each calendar month, a letter will be sent home by post to all families with students who still have any remaining unexplained absence.

Woodend Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. 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 the Principal considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked with the relative code or as "Parent Choice – Authorised".

If the Principal determines that no **reasonable excuse** has been provided for their child's absence the absence will be marked as "Parent Choice – Unauthorised".

If parents provide a reason which has not been excused by the Principal, the absence will be recorded as "Parent Choice – Unauthorised".

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 (Koorie Students only)
- 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

The Principal will generally NOT excuse:

- Going shopping
- Visiting friends or relatives
- Absences to celebrate birthdays

### **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, Woodend Primary School 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 DET personnel ie DET Psychologist, DET Koori Officer, Child first

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 Woodend Primary School 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 at the North Western Regional Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer 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.

#### **More information and resources:**

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

#### **Review Cycle and Evaluation:**

This policy was reviewed and endorsed in September 2019.  
This policy is scheduled for review in September 2022.