



ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Ms. Susanne Phillips, the EAL Coordinator or a member of the Principal Team.

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, parents, and carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- Explain to school staff and parents, and carers the key practices and procedures of Kurunjang Secondary College has in place to support, monitor, and maintain attendance as well as, record, monitor, and follow up student absences

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.

Rationale

All schools in Victoria are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environments for all students, which address their learning needs. Research shows that regular attendance is integral to successful academic, employment and social outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that students, staff, and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of regular student attendance as there is no safe number of days that a student can be absent.

Kurunjang Secondary College:

- States that students are required to achieve a 90% attendance rate to satisfy course requirements
- Is committed to promoting the key messages of the state-wide initiative **Every Day Counts** ([Appendix 1](#))
- Believes that 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
- Will monitor, communicate, and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance

- Believes that truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- Believes that attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the college community

Responsibilities:

Kurunjang Secondary College parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the college and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant House staff about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents/Carers:

- Ensure that their child attends school on time, every school day for the program in which they are enrolled
- Check attendance for their child on Compass regularly and update attendance where alerted
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences, that is, any time during which a student is not attending or participating in their educational program (see [Response to Absence Guide for Parents Appendix 2](#))
- Contact your child's House Team prior to any planned absence so this can be appropriately planned for. For all explained and approved absences such as extended period of illness, the school will provide an absence learning plan with schoolwork suitable to complete whilst at home. For all explained and unapproved absences such as family holidays, the school is not obligated to provide schoolwork and will do so only at their discretion.
- On the day of absence, the parent/carer must contact the House Team prior to 9.00 am alerting the school of absence.
- Upon return to school, a written explanation of an absence must be provided. A medical certificate or statutory declaration must be provided in the event of 2 or more consecutive days of absence due to illness.
- Parents will contact child's House Team staff in the event a student is refusing to attend school or if issues arise that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Parents will initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child's attendance or participation in their educational program.
- Parents will provide written explanation (signed and dated) to their child's House Team in the event their child signs in late to school or if their child is required to leave school early (Refer to [Arriving Late & Early Departure Procedures Appendix 3](#))
- Parents will provide the College Administration Office of any change of contact details information as soon as possible to ensure accuracy. In the event of an emergency, it is essential to have accurate contact information.

Students:

- Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, students must attend school each day. They must be on time and have all necessary equipment.

- Must attend all classes on time and if they are required to leave the classroom for a valid reason, must obtain a note from their teacher
- Never leave the College during school hours without obtaining appropriate approval (Refer to **Arriving Late & Early Departure Appendix 3**)
- Report to the Compass kiosk in the event arrival at school is after 9.00 am to sign in and provide their written note from parents/carers to explaining their lateness their House Team Office immediately
- The House Team will issue students who arrive late with a note to attend class late
- Must ensure all missed schoolwork is completed
- Regularly discuss attendance with House team, Wellbeing team or Assistant Principal
- Ensure attendance reflected on Compass is accurate and report any inconsistencies to their House Team.

Kurunjang Secondary College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to meet legislative requirements, discharge its duty of care for all students, and meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students.

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of every lesson/period using Compass which will be uploaded to CASES21 which is the Department of Education's primary database.

If students attend a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record their attendance at the beginning, during, and the end of the activity.

College:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Kurunjang Secondary College Attendance Policy and Procedures (including the procedures for late arrival, early departure, and truanting) and make this publicly available to parents/carers through the College's website and newsletters
- Monitor attendance daily via teachers marking rolls in each class with an SMS being sent home in the event a student is not present at school by 9.20 am.
- The House Team and House Assistant will notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence, followed up in writing, on a daily basis.
- Student with two or more lates will receive lunchtime detention to catch up on all missed learning.
- Where lateness persists, students will receive afterschool detentions.
- The House Admin Staff will provide the Assistant Principals a weekly report of unexplained student absences, twice per term a report will be generated for Home Group teachers to discuss with students.
- The House Team will support attendance by maintaining regular contact with families to discuss any issues or necessary supports for regular attendance.
- If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details), the school will contact any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file to liaise with the family.

- Supports offered will assist students in their attendance through discussion, parent support, attendance meetings, attendance support plans and referral pathways.
- School work will be provided to students who have explained and approved absences for an extended period of time (e.g., medical reason) but only at the school's discretion in the event of explained and unapproved absences (e.g., family holidays).
- Will acknowledge students with perfect attendance in assemblies, award certificates, and bestow other rewards as appropriate.
- The House Team will notify the Department of Education Attendance Officer of ongoing absenteeism as per the staged response requirement.
- Conduct unannounced home visits in the event of not being able to contact families regarding ongoing attendance issues.
- Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

Documentation for College staff:

Absences will be recorded as either an '**explained**' or '**unexplained**' absence. An explained absence is one in which the parent/carer has provided an explanation of the absence in writing to the school following an absence. Unexplained absences are recorded when written notification has not been received by the school.

Explained absences:

- Written explanation of absence provided to the school
- Medical certificate or professional attendance notice provided to the school

Unexplained absences:

- No written explanation of absence has been received by the school

Both explained and unexplained absences can be considered '**approved**' and '**unapproved**' according to the *Education Reform Act (2006)*.

Approved absences:

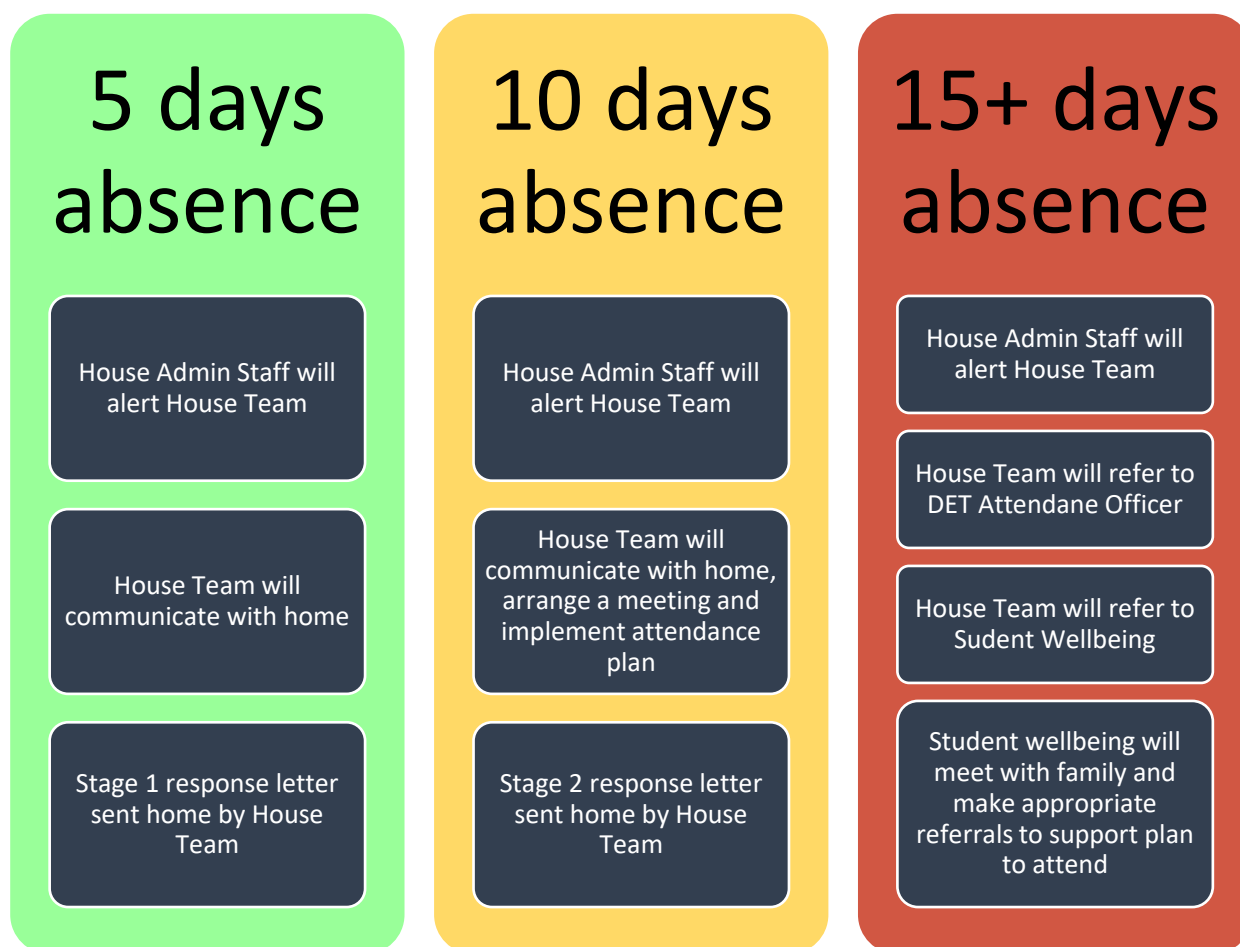
- Medical reason – where a child is unwell enough to seek support from a medical professional
- Funeral / Bereavement leave

Unapproved absences:

- Extended medical absence without medical certificate from medical professional
- Family holiday
- Day off for shopping, birthday or to visit with relatives

Regular attendance letters will be sent home via home group with students, at least once per term indicating absences. Parents/carers are responsible for the explanation of absences and student explanations will be accepted only in the event of independent living circumstances.

Procedures for Stage Response Letters



Referral to Regional Office School Attendance Office

If Kurunjang Secondary College 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 Office in the Southwestern 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 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

Reporting and Monitoring Attendance:

At Kurunjang Secondary College, student absence, lateness, or truanting are taken seriously. The school will continue to monitor absences and send out notifications via SMS each morning a child does not arrive at school by 9.20 am. Parents / carers can monitor their child's attendance via Compass.

Two or more late arrivals within the one term without an explained and approved reason, a lunch time detention with the House Team will be issued.

If lateness still continues, a meeting with parents will be requested and an attendance plan put in place (see **Process for Attendance Plan (staff only)** appendix 4, and **Student Attendance Improvement Plan** appendix 5).

Where the college leadership team deems that a temporary modified timetable is warranted for a student based on evidence, consultation with parent/carer, and student, a request for a Temporary Modified Timetable may be sought with the approval of the Assistant Principal for Student and College Operations (see **Request for Temporary Timetable Modification** appendix 6). Attendance of core subjects should be the focus of modified timetables.

Where there is planned absence (such as in the event of medical intervention, an attendance plan will be created with expectations of schoolwork completed whilst away (see **Planned Absence Plan** appendix 7). Parents should be aware that the school is not obligated to provide work for students who are absent due to extended period of time due to family holidays and therefore this will only occur at the discretion of the House Team.

Where students display truant behaviour, the school will work together with families to support their child's re-engagement. Parents/carers can access their child's attendance information at any time using their Compass log in and are encouraged to do so. In addition to this information access, letters of absences will be sent home to families at least once per term indicating absences from school. Students found to be truanting will be managed in accordance with the College's values based expected behaviours and issued with appropriate consequences for non-compliance.

Reviews, Responses, and Special Considerations

Exemptions to the Attendance Policy may be sought on the grounds of disability as defined by the DET Disability and Impairment Guidelines.

A student whose attendance falls below 95% may seek a review or special consideration if their promotion to the next year level is at risk. A detailed written request must be made to the College Principal outlining the reasons. Any certificates from Health Care Professionals supporting a claim must be attached to a written request. A Panel will convene to consider such requests.

Definitions

Explained Absence	An absence that is explained with a signed and dated written notice to the school indicating a reason for an absence.
Unexplained Absence	An absence without any explanation from parent / carer.
Approved Absence	An absence that is explained with a signed and dated written notice to the school indicating an approved reason for an absence (such as a health care appointment or bereavement).
Unapproved Absence	An absence that is explained with a signed and dated written notice to the school indicating an unapproved reason for an absence (such as picking up relatives from the airport or celebrating a birthday).
Truancy	Non-attendance at school where both family and the school believe they should be.
Attendance Plan	A plan for improving attendance or a plan for expected absence.

EVERY DAY COUNTS

SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your teenager's education.

Students learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them behind.

SCHOOL IS BETTER WHEN YOUR TEENAGER IS THERE

Why it is important

We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school every day.

Students develop good habits by going to school every day – habits that are necessary to succeed after school, whether in the workplace or in further study.

Missing school can have a significant impact on students academically and socially. It can affect their test results, including VCE & VCAL, and, just as importantly, it can affect their relationships with other students, and lead to social isolation.

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind and can affect their educational outcomes.

Each missed day is associated with falling behind in subject topics and assessment tasks, and lead to fewer subject choices and may impact on achievement in years 11 and 12 and post-school pathways.

Getting in early

It is never too late to improve attendance. Even in the middle years, when school can seem the most challenging for students and when attendance rates can be at their lowest, going to school more often can make a substantial difference. **Every day counts.**

Schools are there to help – if you are having attendance issues with your child, speak to your school about ways to address those issues.

IN VICTORIA SCHOOL IS COMPULSORY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 6 – 17 YEARS

Student Absences

The main reasons for absence are:

Sickness – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they are ill. It is vital that they are only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and setting good sleep patterns, eating well, and exercising regularly can make a significant difference.

Family holidays - It is vital that holidays are planned during school holidays where possible, and not during the term. If you are planning to go on holiday during term time, make sure that you talk to your school in advance, and work with them to develop an absence learning plan.

“Day off” – Think twice before letting your teenager have a “day off” as they could fall behind their classmates – everyday counts.

Truancy – This is when students choose not to go to school without their parent's permission or skip out of school during the day. There can be several reasons for truancy; the best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together.

While all absences can affect academic performance, DET's statistics show that unexcused absences are a much stronger indicator of lower reading and maths achievement.

School refusal - School refusing children experience significant emotional distress not only when going to school but also at the thought of going to school; they may be absent from school for weeks or even months at a time. School refusal differs from truancy as children stay home with the knowledge of the parents and despite their best efforts to encourage their child to go to school. See: [My child or teenager has anxiety](#)

BEING AWAY FROM SCHOOL FOR 1 DAY A FORTNIGHT EQUALS MISSING 1.5 YEARS OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOL

If your teenager is away

If for any reason your teenager must miss school, there are things you can do with your school to ensure they do not fall behind:

Inform the school via your teen's Form/Home Room teacher or Year Level Coordinator

Find out what work your teenager needs to do to keep up.

Develop an absence learning plan with your teenager's teacher and ensure they complete the plan.

Remember, everyday counts. If your teenager must miss school, speak with your home room teacher or year level coordinator as early as possible.

Openly communicating with your teenager's school about all absences is an effective way to prevent attendance issues being escalated to a School Attendance Officer. A School Attendance Officer is a Department of Education and Training Regional Director who has authority to follow up attendance issues. Chronic or ongoing attendance issues that are escalated can lead to an Infringement Notice being issued to parent/s.

If you are having attendance issues with your teenager, please let the year level coordinator, wellbeing coordinator, principal or other relevant staff member know so you can work together to get your teen to school every day.

TOP ATTENDANCE TIPS FOR PARENTS

Schools want to work in partnership with parents – act early if you have any concerns by contacting your child's school and asking for advice and support

Remember that everyday counts

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes and their social connectedness

Talk positively about school and the importance of attending every day

Open and prompt communication with your child's school about all absences is a good idea

Avoid making routine medical and dental appointments during the school day or planning family holidays during the term

Seek help from your school if you are concerned about your child's attendance and wellbeing. Schools want to work in partnership with parents to support student attendance and wellbeing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information and resources to help address attendance issues, visit: [Student attendance](#).

Appendix 2

Response to Absence Guide for Parents

Student is Absent one day or more.

Notify the House Team Absence Line prior to the beginning of the school day.

Follow up with an explanation of absence in writing, with evidence for all medical reasons, this may include Medical Certificates, Certificates of Attendance, or a Statutory Declaration if you are unable to see a Health Care Professional in time.

Please note that where possible, students attending specialist appointments where they are not unwell, should still attend school for the remainder of the school day.

Your child's absence will be recorded as either an '**explained**' or '**unexplained**' absence. An explained absence is one in which the parent/carer has provided an explanation of the absence in writing to the school following an absence. Unexplained absences are recorded when written notification has not been received by the school.

Both explained and unexplained absences can be considered '**approved**' and '**unapproved**' according to the *Education Reform Act (2006)*.

Approved absences:

- Medical reason – where a child is unwell enough to seek support from a medical professional
- Funeral / Bereavement leave

Unapproved absences:

- Extended medical absence without medical certificate from medical professional
- Family holiday
- Day off for shopping, birthday or to visit with relatives

Arriving Late and Early Departure

Arriving Late to School

Students

- Arrive at the General Office and sign in via Compass Kiosk
- The Kiosk print out must be taken to the House office for verification and signing prior to attending class
- Provide the House Team staff with written explanation of late arrival from parent/ carer on day or the following day.

Parent / carer

- Provide a written explanation of late arrival either at the time, or the next school day
- Provide the school with medical certificate or professional attendance letter following an appointment during school time

Early Departure from School

Students

- Provide a written note from parent/carer to the House Team signed and dated, prior to the beginning of the school day
- Alert their teacher should they need to leave during class time, at the beginning of the class – students will have an early departure note from House Team
- Need to arrive at the office at time of departure with their belongings

Parent / carer

- A written letter signed and dated must be provided to the school for early departure unless an emergency situation arises
- In the event of an emergency, a parent/carer may contact the House Team to arrange collection of their child. Identifying information may be requested in order to clarify phone calls.
- A parent / carer must be present to collect their child from the front office where students are to be signed out. Photo ID will be required.

Please note:

- Student absence will not be recorded as approved where they leave early except in the instance of an appointment such as medical, dental, or other like professionals, or in the event of bereavement.
- **Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure appointment times fall outside of school hours as best they can.**

Appendix 4



Process for Attendance Plan (staff only)

- Student is identified for attendance review by teaching staff or House Assistant.
- Parent/carer is contacted by House Attendant to book meeting.
- House Attendant will request to School Operations for planning and booking meeting and meeting room.
- House Coordinator or Assistant Principal will chair meeting, Wellbeing staff will attend where needed.

Meeting

Use the 'Reasons for absence' document as a guide for discussion.

Ask Questions such as -

- 'Is STUDENT A experiencing any barriers in coming to school?'
- 'Is transport a concern for your family?'
- 'Is STUDENT A experiencing any medical or wellbeing concerns?'
- 'Is maintaining good sleep a problem?'
- 'Are you (STUDENT A) feeling disconnected from your friends, teachers?'
- 'Are you (STUDENT A) finding it hard to keep up academically?'
- 'Are you struggling with motivation to get to school?'
- 'Are you comfortable to attend wellbeing office at school to ask for assistance?'
- 'Can we refer to any outside wellbeing agencies to help support your family?'

Student Attendance Improvement Plan document to be completed – **all fields**.

Use **NA** for fields not applicable.

If the need for a modified timetable is identified, please complete the template, and pass a copy of the plan and template to **AGO** for approval and inform the parent we will confirm details via a telephone call or email.

Pass all completed documents to House Attendant for scanning and filing.

House Attendant will review attendance for those on plans and Modified Timetables weekly and report back if further action is required by House Teams and Wellbeing.

Appendix 5



Student Attendance Improvement Plan

Student Attendance Improvement Plans are implemented to support the education of students who are absent from school frequently or for an extended period of time. **Student Attendance Improvement Plans** should be developed collaboratively by teachers, students, and their parent/carer.

Student Attendance Plans must be developed for:

- students who are **under 95% attendance** at school for the current year
 - students who have been identified as needing assistance with their attendance
- It may also be useful to develop a **Return to School Plan** for students who have been absent from school for an extended period.

Student Name -	
Home Group -	Date -
Attendees at Meeting -	
Objectives of Meeting -	
Background Information relating to recent attendance -	

Strengths and interests of the student relating to school -

Reasons why student finds it hard to attend -

Work Habits when present at school.

Class Effort -

Homework -

Class Behaviour -

Attendance Goals – (School attendance policy states 95%)

Actions student will take to achieve their attendance goals -

School Staff actions to support attendance goals -

Parent actions to support student attendance goals -

The plan will be monitored in the following way -

Plan start Date

Review Date

Student Name Print -

Student Sign -

Date -

Parent Name Print -

Parent Sign -

Date -

House Team Name -

House Sign -

Date -

Appendix 6



Request for Temporary Timetable Modification

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
HG					
P1					
P2					
P3					
P4					
P5					

**Please insert Exempt into the table where student will be offsite. Fill out the remaining table with the classes the student will attend. Preference must be given to core subjects.*

Student Name		
Home Group	Date	
Reasons for request -		
Student supports in place to move ahead -		
Planned start date -		Review Date -
Parent Name Print -	Parent Sign -	Date -
House Team Name -	House Sign -	Date -
Ms. Aylin Gökmen – Assistant Principal College Operations	Aylin Gökmen Sign -	Date -
Modified Timetable adjusted on Compass -	Admin team Sign -	Date -

Appendix 7



Planned Student Absence Plan

Planned Student Absence Plans are implemented to support the education of students who are planning on being absent from school for an extended period of time due to an approved absence, or as supported by the College. Student Absence Plans should be developed collaboratively by teachers, students, and their parent.

Student Absence Plans must be developed for:

- students who are likely to be absent for a significant period of time due to medical intervention
- students who will be absent for a significant period of time and the school decides they will support the learning during period of absence
-

It may also be useful to develop a Return to School Plan for students who have been absent from school for an extended period prior to returning.

Student Name:	
Home Group:	Date:
Reason for absence:	
First date of absence	Likely return date
Reasonable attendance expectations set by the school:	

Support options available to student:		
Outcomes for the student to achieve:		
Resources the student may find useful:		
Agreed role of parents/carers in supporting the absence learning program:		
School Support Group Members:		
Student Name Print -	Student Sign -	Date -
Parent Name Print -	Parent Sign -	Date -
House Team Name -	House Sign -	Date -

Review Meeting Date: