



Help for Non-English Speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Kalinda Primary School on (03) 9876 3289.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

In accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the Department of Education and Training (DET) Schools Policy Advisory Guide and the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements, Kalinda PS sets minimum class time and attendance rules. These are aimed to allow sufficient class time for all students to successfully complete required tasks and set work.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted). It is Kalinda Primary School's (Kalinda PS) responsibility to make every effort to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without any unnecessary absences. The school also requires that post-compulsory aged students also attend school unless a valid reason exists.

Daily attendance is important for all 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 young people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Kalinda PS students are therefore required to attend all scheduled classes or any other timetabled program.

The purpose of this policy is to

- ensure all Kalinda PS students of compulsory school age 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 Kalinda PS has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.
 - the need to provide acceptable explanations and/or supporting evidence for non-attendance.

This policy applies to all students at Kalinda PS.

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 Kalinda PS, parents and staff 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* (Commonwealth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

Supporting And Promoting Attendance

Kalinda PS's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

General Guidelines

Students are expected to attend Kalinda PS 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 at Kalinda PS, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Kalinda PS for particular activities.

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

- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics contributing significantly to student failure at school.
- Kalinda PS 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.
- All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
- Students should commit to attending school every day, arriving on time and be prepared to learn.
- Students are encouraged approach their class teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- Kalinda PS parents should commit 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 have a responsibility to communicate with the relevant staff at Kalinda PS about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- Parents have a responsibility 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.
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.
- Parents of students who are to be absent are required to telephone the school before 9:00am to report the absence. The absence is then to be confirmed in writing by a note from parents.
- Absences due to school-based extra-curricular activities will be included as an approved absence.
- Written explanations from parents/guardians will be accepted to explain absences for students in all year levels at Kalinda PS.
- Attendance will be checked for each scheduled class and at all school approved activities.
- School teachers, Principals and/or Administration staff will make contact with parents/guardians if attendance falls below the required level of 80% or if a student is absent for more than three consecutive days.
- All class teachers will mark the electronic roll using Compass within the first thirty minutes of beginning in the morning and again in the first thirty minutes after lunch
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance
- Parents will be informed as soon as possible of a student being marked absent from class
- All notes to explain non-attendance must be passed to the classroom teacher immediately following the absence.



- Kalinda PS 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.
- Kalinda PS also promotes student attendance by provision of before-school and after-school care, breakfast clubs and a variety of other school programs
- The Principal has responsibility for these actions.

Recording Attendance

Kalinda PS records attendance twice every day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Kalinda PS's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded electronically using Compass by classroom teachers within the first thirty minutes of beginning in the morning and again in the first thirty minutes after lunch

- The electronic roll marking report 'Student Attendance Detail Report' will be used as the record of attendance. This attendance record will be uploaded onto CASES21.
- DET and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and Training and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.
- 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 Kalinda PS of absences by:

- contacting the front office if it is an unplanned absence
- informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned 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, Kalinda PS will notify parents by SMS/push notification message.

Kalinda PS 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 (eg. due to incorrect contact details), the Kalinda PS 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.

- Kalinda PS 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 Kalinda PS 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 the causes for school refusal and to 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.

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 three days, Kalinda PS 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 teachers and student wellbeing staff.

No Reasonable Excuse Provided

For all absences where the Principal has determined that a parent has not provided a reasonable excuse, or the parent has been requested to provide a reasonable excuse and has refused to do so, the school must notify the parent in writing that the absences have been recorded as such. Principals should take care to ensure that, wherever possible, this letter or email is addressed to the parent who has been deemed responsible for the child's absence on the relevant day(s).

If the Principal decides that no reasonable excuse has been provided for an absence, the absence must be recorded as such.

The parent must be informed that this means:

- They may not have met their obligations under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

Referral to Designated School Attendance Officer

At Kalinda PS we understand that from time to time 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,

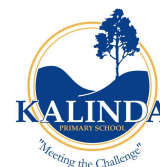
If Kalinda PS decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the North East Victoria Regional Office for further action.

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.

Exemptions from Attendance

Students are expected to attend normal school hours every day of each term. The Principal or Regional Director (depending upon the circumstances) may authorize an exemption and provide written approval for student attendance to be exempt or reduced to less than full time with reference to DET guidelines.



Other approved tuition

- Distance education (via enrolment at **Virtual School Victoria**)
- Wannik Education Strategy for Koorie Students
- Registered home schooling

Home Schooling

In Victoria home schooling is a recognized alternative to attending government or non-government school. Parents interested in home schooling must register with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 requires that all children of compulsory school age (6- 17) are enrolled in a school or registered for home schooling. Students registered for home schooling are eligible to partially enrol at their local government school for specific activities agreed on by the school and the student's family.

RELATED POLICIES & LINKS

- School Attendance Guidelines
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: Attendance
- School intranet
- Procedures for submission of work requirements Policy
- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Key Learning Area Policies
- Excursions, Incursions and Camps Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2026