

Dinjerra Primary School

Attendance Policy

Research shows that a vibrant and positive school culture with a shared enthusiasm for learning is key to successful student outcomes. Intentional design and creative and thoughtful planning are essential to achieving this.

A high quality Student Engagement Policy that reflects the school community's aspirations and the unique local context of the school is critical to developing a positive school culture and supporting a school council's strategic aims.

Developing a Student Engagement policy can support schools to address their legal obligations under relevant legislation including:

- The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected attributes (characteristics) including race, religion, disability, sex, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic), which requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services. Charter decisions in schools include decisions around enrolment, attendance, responding to behaviour concerns (including preventing the escalation of behaviours), the making of adjustments for students with disabilities, preventing and responding to bullying, use of restrictive practices including restraint, and decisions to suspend or expel a student. Rights protected by the Charter include the protection of families and children (including promoting the best interests of the child), the right to equality, and cultural and religious rights.
- The Disability Standards for Education 2005, which clarify and make more explicit the obligations on schools and the rights of students under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth). The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimisation.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), which states that all Victorians, irrespective of the education and training institution they attend, where they live or their social or economic status, should have access to a high quality education that—

- realises their learning potential and maximises their education and training achievement;
- promotes enthusiasm for lifelong learning;
- allows parents to take an active part in their child's education and training.

Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular school attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development. A shared approach to student attendance is the most effective strategy in promoting full attendance and maximising full learning opportunities.

Students will:

- attend all of each school day, 9.00 am to 3.15 pm Monday to Friday.
- be punctual when arriving at school and at the end of recess and lunch
- provide a written signed note from parents/carers for absence.

Parents will:

- ensure their child/children attend school every day provide a written note or telephone explanation, detailing the reason/s for any absences. These notes and telephone records are to be retained in each teacher's roll.
- sign the 'late-book' with a valid reason if their child is late.
- work collaboratively with the school where absence and lateness are a concern.

Class teachers will:

- mark the attendance roll (electronically) at the beginning of the school day and after lunch
- promote and follow up with students/parents, notes for absence where no verbal or written communication has been received. Teachers are expected to maintain a record of contact attempts.
- bring to the attention of the Assistant Principal and or the Primary Welfare Officer any students who are frequently late and/or whose attendance is irregular and any students who do not provide adequate explanations
- make contact with the family of student who remains absent after 2 consecutive days to establish cause of absence

Administrative staff will:

- ensure attendance data is entered into CASES21 daily;
- prepare attendance, absence and early leaving records to form part of each Child's half-year and end of year progress reports to parents;
- inform classroom teachers of verbal absence communication
- present the Assistant Principal and the Primary Welfare Officer with computer generated reports Week 3 and Week 7 each term
- provide class teachers with blank absence templates that can be sent home

The Assistant Principal and the Primary Welfare Officer will:

- monitor attendance and lateness using data '*Absence records are to be carefully and regularly scrutinised to identify any action and support needed*' Student Attendance Guidelines.
- implement whole school approaches to maximise student attendance and punctuality.
- support students with high absences and lateness through communication with the teacher, the student and the parent/carer to implement a negotiated plan
- as absence from school is often indicative of other problems including disengagement from school and family issues, the support strategies employed will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Support strategies may include:

- Contacting the parent/s
- Education and support for parents and/or students
- Home visits
- Formation of a support group for the student
- Referral to external support agencies

8th August 2017

This policy was ratified by School Council on ...