

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Statewide Vision Resource Centre

This Statewide Vision Resource Centre policy is available in braille hard copy and etext format from our administration upon request.

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 Statewide Vision Resource Centre has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students who attend Support Skills and DOT Power Programs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Statewide Vision Resource Centre, 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).

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 the Statewide Vision Resource Centre on allocated Fridays and Tuesdays during normal school hours each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from the parents from attending our programs
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Support Skills and DOT Power programs for activities.

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

Statewide Vision Resource Centre 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 centre 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 our programs on a Friday, arriving on time, and are prepared to learn. Our students and parents are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Our parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend our program on a Friday on time when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the centre and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Statewide Vision Resource Centre about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the centre to address any concerns.

Parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from the allocated program and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments, and other activities outside of centre hours.

Supporting and promoting attendance

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre [Child Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) supports student attendance.

Recording attendance

Statewide Vision Resource Centre must record student attendance when the students are onsite. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Statewide Vision Resource Centre's duty of care for all students attending our programs

Attendance will be recorded by the Leading Teacher at the start of the program day and after lunch.

If students are in attendance at an 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 centre.

Parents should notify Statewide Vision Resource Centre of absences via the Leading Teacher. If a parent is unable to email the Leading Teacher, parents may call the office to submit the absence.

If a student is absent on a particular day and the centre has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Statewide Vision Resource Centre will notify parents by SMS. Statewide Vision Resource Centre 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 centre will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the centre, where possible, on the day of the unexplained absence.

Statewide Vision Resource Centre will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The Assistant 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 Statewide Vision Resource Centre 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 Assistant Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Assistant 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 our programs
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the centre in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the centre 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 one term, Statewide Vision Resource Centre 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 SVRC plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period

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 Statewide Vision Resource Centre 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 centre, the Assistant Principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from our program 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 program days; or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our centre's website
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Hard copy available from our administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Approved by	Next scheduled review date
November 2022	Principal	November 2024