

STUDENT 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 Goornong 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 Goornong 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 Goornong 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* (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).

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 Goornong 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 Goornong Primary School.
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Goornong Primary School for particular activities.

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

Goornong 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 approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Goornong Primary School parents are committed 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 will communicate with the relevant staff at Goornong 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. However, our school understands that this is not always possible.

Supporting and promoting attendance

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

Our school also promotes student attendance by explaining to parents the importance of regular attendance and punctuality at parent/teacher forums, in the newsletter and in our enrolment information pack.

Recording attendance

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

- Meet legislative requirements.
- Discharge Goornong Primary School's duty of care for all students.

Classroom teachers make the role using the UEducateUs system by 9.30am each morning and again at 2.15pm after lunch.

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 Goornong Primary School of absences by completing an Absence Note in UEducateUs or by notifying their child's teacher by phone or in person.

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, Goornong Primary School will notify parents by a notification in UEducateUs. If no explanation for the absence is subsequently provided, Goornong Primary School 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 for whatever reason, 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.

Goornong Primary School 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 Goornong Primary School 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 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

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 five days, Goornong Primary School will endeavour to work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- Following DET attendance guidelines.
- 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

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 Goornong 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 in the North-West Victoria Region 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.

Evaluation:

Date Reviewed	16.05.2022	
Approved By	School Council	
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)		
Communication Procedures	<u>Parents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mentioned in school newsletter.▪ Via school website.	<u>Staff</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Via Induction Pack.
Next Review Date	May 2025	

Appendix 1: Student Absence Flow Chart

Teachers are to mark the attendance roll for their class each morning prior to 9.30am using the UEducateUs attendance program; and again at 2.15pm.

Where a student has an unexplained absence, the UEducateUs program will automatically send a message to the student's parent notifying them of the unexplained absence and requesting an explanation for the absence.

If the parent provides an explanation and the classroom teacher has no concern, classroom teacher is to record the reason for the absence in the UEducateUs program.

Where a parent does not provide an explanation for the absence, the classroom teacher should attempt to contact the parent by phone as soon as practicable on the same day as the absence.

Possible Outcomes at this stage

- 1) The student is flagged as 'attendance risk' and attendance is monitored.
- 2) A parent meeting is arranged to attempt to improve the student's attendance.
- 3) DET procedures implemented if attendance deteriorates.

If the classroom teacher has a concern or the parent does not provide an explanation, this is to be reported to the school principal via email.

School principal to follow-up with parent/carer and initial strategies put in place to improve the student's attendance.



EVERY DAY COUNTS

Appendix 2: Codes for Student Absences

Code	Description	Further details of types of absence
100	Present	
111	Late arrival at School	Arrived late with parent approval**
112	Early departure from School	Departed early with parent approval**
200	Medical	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason
201	Illness	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason. Includes: sent home unwell, sports injuries
202	Accident	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason Includes: injury at school
203	Counselling	Student receiving counselling externally.
205	Medical Appointment	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason. Includes: speech pathologist, optometrist.
206	Hospitalised	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason.
207	Quarantine	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason. Includes: school sores, head lice, chicken pox.
208	Refusal	Parent approved** and gave this reason. Use when parent is working with the school to address the issue underlying the school refusal.
209	Dentist	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason; Includes: orthodontist.
210	Medical/Welfare	Includes: welfare activities, custody problem, DHS intervention, foster care, court attendance. Note: Possible overlap with 200 Medical and 203 Counselling.
211	Bereavement	Includes: funeral, death in family, absence due to a death. Guidelines specify that principals should usually approve these absences.
401	Suspension	Suspended and not permitted to attend school.
500	Unexplained	No parent approval** and no reason from parent or student. May be used on first day of absence and changed once explanation is provided. Unexplained is the default absence code when marking attendance in CASES21.
600	Educational	Students attending an educational activity organised by the school. Includes: Alternate setting, language centre, social adjustment centre, music class, Brain Gym, attending a poetry competition, external examinations.
604	Excursion	Excursion which is curriculum related.
605	Special Event	Includes: special school students attending Variety Club event.
606	Camp	Camp which is curriculum or school related.
607	Other Educational Activity	Includes: orientation day (e.g. Yr 6 students attending sec school), exchange program/student, transition days.
611	Sports	Includes: sporting activity out of school, sports day, training for sports day.
701	Exit	Student is exiting, but until paper work is processed, any absences recorded under Exit.
802	Exempt	Includes: End of year and some students (e.g. Yr. 11 & 12) permitted to leave school early, Prep attendance not required, Prep transition start, student is part-time and therefore not required to be there some of the time (e.g. home schooling student with partial enrolment at school, part-time at a special school and part-time at a regular school, member of school community dies and students told can stay home or attend funeral as they wish, transition to adult setting, approved exemption for short-term employment in the entertainment industry under Min Order 411.
804	Extended Family Holidays	Parent approved** and gave this reason. Used where parent has requested approval and principal has

		granted. If this process is not followed, then record under Parent Choice Unauthorised. Includes: student is taken out of school during term to go on a family holiday.
805	Religious/Cultural Observance	Parent approved** and gave this reason Includes: student is kept away from school for a religious or cultural observance reason.
806	Parent Choice Unauthorised	Includes where : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the parent has provided no explanation for the absence ▪ the student was absent due to participating in leisure or social activities (such as a shopping trip, or visiting friends or relatives) ▪ approval had not been sought in advance or in accordance with school policy ▪ the conditions of approval have not been met (e.g. Student Absence Learning Plan for a family holiday not completed).
807	Parent Choice School Approved	Parent approved** gave a reason that is not health related, or religious/cultural observance, or family holiday and sought approval from the principal. Includes: special circumstances, unavoidable cause, unforeseen circumstances, and family member ill.
901	Industrial Action	Taken by school staff affecting students being able to attend school
902	Facility Damage	Includes: power was going off for a day and students told to stay home. Damage from Storms etc.
903	Weather	Extreme weather conditions
904	Staff Meeting	Includes: curriculum day, planning day, student free day, report writing day, parent teacher interviews, prep interviewing/testing day
910	Natural Disaster – Bushfire	Bushfire
911	Natural Disaster – Flood	Flood
912	Natural Disaster – Earthquake	Earthquake
919	Natural Disaster - Other	Other Natural Disaster