



# Eaglehawk North Primary School

## ATTENDANCE Policy

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction
2. ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
3. explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Eaglehawk North 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 Eaglehawk North 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 Eaglehawk North 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 Eaglehawk North 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 Eaglehawk North Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Eaglehawk North Primary School for particular activities.

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

Eaglehawk North 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 with additional complexities 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.

Eaglehawk North 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 Eaglehawk North 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.

### Supporting and promoting attendance

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

Our school also promotes student attendance by focused programs such as our: School Wide Positive Behaviour Program, Breakfast Club and Before and After School Care program.

### Recording attendance

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

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Eaglehawk North Primary School's duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teachers by 9:30am and by 12:30pm via Sentral. If a CRT is in place in the classroom, a hard copy roll will be marked at the same time and forwarded to the office to be recorded on Sentral. If students attend a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. Parents should notify Eaglehawk North Primary School of absences by contacting reception if it is an unplanned/planned.

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, Eaglehawk North Primary School will notify parents by via Sentral push notification message. Eaglehawk North 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 (due to incorrect contact details), 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.

Eaglehawk North 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 Eaglehawk North Primary School considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**parent choice-School Approved**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**parent choice-unauthorised**'.

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, Eaglehawk North Primary School 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 Attendance 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 Eaglehawk North 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 Bendigo 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.

## COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website [www.ehnps.vic.edu.au](http://www.ehnps.vic.edu.au)
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included on our Sentral
- Discussed at annual staff meetings
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

<b>Student's Name:</b>		<b>Year/Form:</b>		<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	
<b>Attendees at meeting:</b>					
<b>Objectives of meeting:</b>					
E.g. to support the student to improve their school attendance and to ensure she/he continues to achieve academically and feels socially connected to her/his peers.					
<b>Background (attendance data):</b>					
E.g. Over the past month/term the student has missed x days of school					
Analyse the student data and investigate relationship to such factors as day of the week, time of day, class/subject/year level, timetable, gender/cultural groups, family obligations/commitments/issues					
<b>The following areas are strengths &amp; interests of the student:</b>					
Outline the student's strengths and interests so that the plan can use these as a means of engaging the student					
<b>The reasons the student finds it hard to get to school:</b>					
<b>Student's attendance goal for the next three weeks:</b>					
<b>Week 1:</b>					

**Week 2:**

**Week 3:**

**The student will take the following actions to achieve their goal:**

Amongst other things consider:

- Packing their bag the night before
- Joining a lunchtime club

**Staff will take the following actions to help the student achieve these goals:**

Amongst other things consider:

- Introducing daily reward system and a weekly rewards system (see below)
- Making home visits
- Making adjustments to curriculum e.g. concentrating on core or favorite subjects for a period of time, modifying conditions of tests, providing additional scaffolds, a temporary reduction in homework
- Arranging for a staged return or temporary part time attendance
- Sending a letter home at the end of the three weeks with attendance summary/congratulatory letter when attendance achieved
- Making referrals to SSS or community agencies/supports
- Identifying a school-based support person
- Encouraging access to and engagement in recess & lunchtime activities/clubs

**Student's parents/carers will**

Amongst other things, consider:

- Setting homebased rewards for going to school
- Introducing morning and bedtime routines
- Reducing access to technology in the bedroom
- Openly communicating with the school
- Accessing support from community agencies
- Providing support with homework
- Arranging a visit to the family GP for a check-up

**Implementation start date:**

**Review date:**

Other factors to consider:

- The important role relationships play in increasing connectedness/engagement
- Identifying a supportive staff member who can check in with the student

- Whether the student is visiting first aid as a way of avoiding class or going home
- Whether the student is avoiding particular specialist classes eg. PE, Chinese, Music, Art
- Any concerns the student may have around using the school toilets or change rooms
- Building social connections and ensuring the student feels safe in the yard
- Conducting comprehensive learning assessments and additional supports or adjustments
- Arranging for additional family support via community services
- Avoiding particular classroom topics: reading, writing, maths

**Week 1 - My goal this week is to attend 3 days**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Achieved
Sticker						Eaglebuck
Positive experience at school						
What did mum/dad enjoy hearing about?						

**I am working towards the following goals**

At home	At School	Achieved
Weekly goal: 15 minutes on the computer at home	Weekly goal: e.g. 15 minutes on the computer	
Super goal: A trip to the zoo	Super goal: e.g. one on one basketball time	

**Week 2 - My goal this week is to attend 3 days**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Achieved
Sticker						Eaglebuck
Positive experience at school						
What did mum/dad enjoy hearing about?						

**I am working towards the following goals**

At home	At School	Achieved
Weekly goal:	Weekly goal:	Eaglebuck
Super goal:	Super goal:	

**Week 3 - My goal this week is to attend 3 days**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Achieved
Sticker						
Positive experience at school						

What did mum/dad enjoy hearing about?						
<b>I am working towards the following goals</b>						
<b>At home</b>		<b>At School</b>			<b>Achieved</b>	
Weekly goal:		Weekly goal:				
Super goal:		Super goal:				