

Rationale

The Education Act legislation requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) and resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless formally exempt for valid reasons. Bayview College requires also that students enrolled in post-compulsory years attend school unless a valid reason exists. Attendance has a direct impact on student achievement.

Aims

To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

Implementation

Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean that students miss important stages in the development of their learning, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult and sometimes impossible.

Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure and disengagement at school. Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and are absent only if ill or if necessary, for other reasons approved by the school.

Independent students not living with parents/guardians are also required to provide notes and other required documentation for absences, especially senior students who require this documentation to meet VCAA requirements.

The roll is marked at Care Group and then every period during the school day. The school monitors and investigates student absences.

Parents and carers must notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible on the day of absence using the one of the following methods, including PAM, Skoolbag, by telephone or by email.

In the case of unexplained Absences from School, Bayview will contact parents/carers on the same day of an unexplained student absence. This supports student safety and wellbeing. Bayview needs to know when and why a student is absent, and parents/carers need to know if their child is not at school. Prompt communication also promotes daily school attendance.

Ongoing unexplained absence or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a meeting to discuss strategies to support an increase in attendance and maximise student learning.

If the situation continues the matter is referred in the first instance to the Year Level Coordinator, subsequently to the Deputy Principal and ultimately to the Principal.

Unresolved attendance issues for students of compulsory school may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Education. The Principal ensures that all student absences are recorded, kept on the College SIMON database and communicated to the relevant authorities as required.

Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and the wider community each year as part of the College Annual Report.

Schools and parents/carers working together

Building positive and collaborative relationships through clear communications with parents/carers is critical to the successful implementation of the same-day notification requirement. The responsibility for attendance needs to be underpinned by a shared understanding and clear expectations about the procedures for monitoring, recording and follow-up of student attendance as outlined in the school's attendance policy.

Working in partnership, below sets out the responsibilities of Bayview and families in helping to co-manage individual student attendance.

Students with General Attendance below 90% will work with staff to ensure that attendance levels are improved. Whilst making parents/carers and students aware, the school then seeks to implement a support structure to help students attend well. This is carried out through the Student Wellbeing Team.

If a student has attendance between 81%-90%, they will be supported by the Level Co-ordinator, Wellbeing Co-ordinator and Deputy Principal who will work with them to agree strategies for increasing attendance levels.

If a student has General Attendance between 71%-80%, the family will be supported by through the referral to external support networks as determined by the Wellbeing Team who will work with them to agree strategies for increasing attendance levels.

If a student has General Attendance less than 70%, is viewed as being at serious risk then support from Navigator, Child First, DFFH and the Department of Education will be requested.

Associated Documentation

- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Fees Policy
- Scholarships and Bursaries Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct