

TRAFALGAR HIGH SCHOOL

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 example 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 Trafalgar High 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 Trafalgar High 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* 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 Trafalgar High 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 Trafalgar High School, or
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Trafalgar high school for particular activities.

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

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

Trafalgar High 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 Trafalgar High 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

Trafalgar High School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- A form assembly for all students every morning, whereby attendance is checked
- Roll marking at the commencement of every period
- Compass SMS messages sent to parents/guardians when there is an unexplained absence
- Celebrations and rewards for students with 90% + attendance at year level assemblies
- Attendance meetings with Assistant Principals and/or Sub-School leaders where there are attendance concerns
- School policy for VCE and VCAL students that 90% attendance is required for a successful pass

Recording attendance

Trafalgar High School must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- Meet legislative requirements
- Discharge Trafalgar high school's duty of care for all students
- Meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by classroom teacher at the start of each period using Compass.

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 Trafalgar High School of absences by:

- Scheduled absences (such as medical/dental appointments) must advise the school's absence line on 5633 1733 prior to 9:30am on the day of the appointment if the school has not already been notified
 - Other student absences must be parent/guardian approved (via Compass or phone the absence line) prior to 9.30am on the day of absence.
- Late Arrival - If a student arrives at school late the student must provide consent (either written, recorded on Compass or via absence line) from a parent/guardian and sign in at the office. This will be recorded on Compass and the student then proceeds to class. If notification of a late arrival is not provided from a parent/guardian, the student will be marked as unexplained, even if signed in at the office.
- Early Departure - If a student is required to leave school prior to 3.25pm, consent (either written, recorded on Compass or via absence line) must be provided by parents/guardians prior to 9:30am. If written, students need to keep the note to show their teacher to leave class, then hand the note to the office on departure. If a parent/guardian is not aware prior to the school day that their child is required to leave early they must call ahead to let the office staff know.
- Collecting students early – parents should collect students directly from the office. Students will not be allowed to sign out of the school without clear and direct permission from a legal guardian. The office will not make announcements during class time to withdraw students or to deliver messages unless urgent determined by the office staff.

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, Trafalgar High School will notify parents by SMS message. Trafalgar High 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.

Trafalgar High 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 Trafalgar High 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.

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, Trafalgar High 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 Plan
- Implementing an Individual Education Plan
- Implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- Arranging for assistance from relevant student wellbeing staff and year level coordinators.

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 Trafalgar High 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 Moe 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.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was ratified at the School Council Meeting held at Trafalgar High School;

Date: 26/08/2020

Scheduled for review in: 4 years



Signed:
School Council President
Tanya Megaw



Signed:
Principal
Jane Mersey