



St. Arnaud Secondary College

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 St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 St. Arnaud Secondary College.

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 St. Arnaud Secondary College, 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 St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 St. Arnaud Secondary College, or.
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in St. Arnaud Secondary College for particular activities.

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

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 need to be 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.

St. Arnaud Secondary College parents need to be 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 St. Arnaud Secondary College 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

St. Arnaud Secondary College's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by: the Resilience Project, breakfast club, wellbeing days, attendance posters around the school, Berry Street strategies, % attendance rates in newsletter each week and at assembly, attendance certificates, family/teacher mentor contact.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

St. Arnaud Secondary College staff must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements.
- discharge St. Arnaud Secondary College's duty of care for all students.
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for all 7-12 students.

Timely roll marking

- Rolls will be marked on Compass on a period-by-period basis by classroom teachers. Teachers should attempt to mark their roll in the first 10 minutes of class. It is a professional obligation that this requirement is met.

Lateness to class

- Students arriving late for school/class must go through the front office and fill in the late book and collect a late pass which must be given to the class teacher.
- Students arriving within five minutes of the beginning of a lesson will be marked "Present" on Compass. Students who arrive more than five minutes late to a class will be marked "Late" and their arrival time will be recorded on Compass. Only when students arrive in the last 10 minutes of a period will they be marked "Not Present" for that period.

If students attend a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Students leaving the College throughout the day must do so through the front office and must have evidence of parental approval. If returning, students must also go through the front office to let office staff know of their return.

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 St. Arnaud Secondary College of absences by:

- completing an attendance note stating the reason for the absence through the Compass portal or by
- contacting the College via phone or email 54 951 811
- written note

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, St. Arnaud Secondary College will notify parents by SMS in the morning (9.30am) and afternoon (1.45pm) on that day.

If a student is absent 2 days in a row without explanation, parents will be contacted by the Student Administrator. If a student is absent 3 days in a row without explanation, parents will be contacted by the Year Level Coordinator.

St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 St. Arnaud Secondary College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**approved absence**'.

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

Approved and unapproved reasons for absences

The following are approved reasons for absences:

- Illness – with provision of a medical certificate, where possible;
- Funeral;
- Job interview;
- Medical/dental/Centrelink appointments (which cannot be arranged out of class time) – please supply an appointment card, receipt, etc;
- Court appearance/court counselling;
- Health and Wellbeing counselling;
- Sport – College/State/National representation;
- The student is attending or observing a religious event or obligation.

The following are unapproved reasons for absences:

- Birthdays and/or sibling birthday
- Driving lessons;
- Holidays taken during school time;
- Personal issues (without further explanation);
- Personal appointments (without further explanation);
- Family matters/commitments (without further explanation);
- Preparing for presentation/debutant balls;
- Shopping;
- Chronic car or bike breakdown;
- Sleeping in or missing the bus;
- SAC/SAT preparation or completion of work for other classes;

- Part time work commitments;
- Supporting an upset friend (without further explanation);
- Timetable mix ups;
- Extension of holidays (unless notification to College has been given in advance and completed the work set by teachers);

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 approved.

ATTENDANCE, ACHIEVEMENT AND REPORTING

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, St. Arnaud Secondary College 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/counsellors

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.

Attendance Requirements

- 80% attendance is a requirement for all year levels Yr 7 to 12
- Years 7 to 10 attendance between 70 - 80% - teacher discretion if all work completed
- Attendance Above 80% Pass
- Below 70% Fail

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If St. Arnaud Secondary College 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 SW 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
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- To students through homegroup and assembly
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2023
Consultation	Staff College Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026