



MONTEREY SECONDARY COLLEGE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Sub School Leader of your child's Year level

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 Monterey 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 Monterey 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 Monterey 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 Monterey 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 enrollment with another school and has only a partial enrollment in Monterey Secondary College.
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrollment in Monterey Secondary College for particular activities.
- Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.
- Monterey 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 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.
- Monterey Secondary College 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 Monterey 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

Monterey Secondary College's Student Engagement Wellbeing Policy supports student attendance.

Our school has a number of programs that support attendance including:

- School Breakfast Club Program
- Project O (focus on female students)
- The Classroom Behaviour Continuum

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 Monterey Secondary College of absences by 10.30am on the day of absence by:

- Contacting the attendance officer directly on 9781 7700
- SMS the attendance officer on 0417171068
- Provide a signed written note/medical certificate to the attendance officer on students return to school

- Emailing monterey.sc@education.vic.gov.au
- Placing a notification of absence on the COMPASS portal [COMPASS https://monterey-vic.compass.education](https://monterey-vic.compass.education)

Our college uses SMS/text to contact parents/carers regarding unexplained student absence.

Please notify the school of any changes of contact details at your earliest convenience as this will form a vital part in our attendance monitoring process.

Please remember it is your responsibility to contact us to provide an explanation for your child's absence from school and where possible, please inform us in advance of upcoming absences.

This system also promotes daily school attendance. Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. They learn new things every day – missing school puts them behind.

All students are expected to arrive on time for school at 8.55am and attend homegroup. Regular attendance has a positive effect on student learning.

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, Monterey Secondary College will notify parents by SMS:

1st Text message at 11.00 am

"Attendance alert Monterey records show that student was absent period 1 & 2"

2nd Text Message at 2.30pm

"Attendance alert Monterey records show that student was absent period 5"

Monterey Secondary College will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

Monterey 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 Monterey Secondary School 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'.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally approve:

- 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
- 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 5 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'parent choice unauthorised' and recorded on the student's file until parents notify the school of the reason for the absence or provide a medical certificate.

"Students who do not engage in mainstream classes at Monterey Secondary College for a period of 30 days will be moved into an Outreach Program until a further attendance plan is made through a student support group meeting"

Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

Attendance process

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, Monterey 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 or Attendance Plan
- Implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- implementing an individual learning plan
- Arranging for assistance from relevant student wellbeing staff and external support services

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 Monterey 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 South Eastern 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
- measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown:
 - the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

Student Support Group Meetings (SSGs)

When conducted in response to attendance concerns, these could take the format of:

- Students meeting sub school leaders, Assistant Principals or Principal
- Students meeting the wellbeing team for counselling or other reasons
- Parents will be provided (with a minimum of 5 days warning) notice of a pending SSG meeting including the agenda/attendance list as well as an invitation to contribute to the agenda. This should be forwarded by express mail.
- These meetings will not exceed 30 minutes and will not be subject to parental requests to reschedule unless it can be demonstrated that the parent has a legitimate reason for not being able to attend and has shown a preparedness to attend the SSG meeting.
- It will also be noted within this document that the meeting will proceed and be minuted irrespective of the parent's attendance. Minutes will be sent home by express post/registered mail and a hard copy retained in the students file.

- In the instance of parent/carer non-attendance all parties will discuss and act in the best instance of the young person.

All actions will be recorded on the school portal system COMPASS by the subschool leader and/or Assistant Principal.

Educational programs

Educational programs run by external agencies such as project O will need to set up events and ensure accurate enrolments and rolls are taken to avoid discrepancies with attendance.

Custom classes

These should be set up for the following:

- Engagement programs
- Instrumental programs
- The teacher or ES staff member will enrol students when they join the session to ensure accurate rolls and tracking of students while at school.

Process for tracking Student attendance

- Tracking of student attendance will be completed by the attendance officer in conjunction with the sub school leaders
- The assistant principal in charge will monitor attendance on a weekly basis and check for discrepancies on COMPASS and the Panorama Report.

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,

Expectations-Students are expected to:

- Attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
- Arrive on time for every class.
- Provide a written explanation from their/parents' carers to the attendance officer when they have been absent from school. In addition, VCE students are required to provide the written explanation/medical certificate to the senior school coordinator in order to obtain a gold pass which in turn needs to be signed off by all subject teachers.
- Remain on the school premises during school hours unless they have permission from both the school and parents/carers to leave the school.
- Work with their teachers to develop learning activities to be included in the Student Absence Learning plan to be completed during a prolonged absence.
- Work with the school to adhere to goals and strategies listed as part of the student absence staged response process when absences have been of concern.

Expectations – Monterey Secondary College. The college will:

- Promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures.
- Develop and maintain effective systems to record and monitor attendance.
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded in every class.
- Maintain accurate attendance records on cases 21.
- Ensure prompt processing of student transfers by immediately contacting the students transferring school upon the student's enrolment at their new school.
- Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly to identify students at risk and to enable the provision of prompt targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance in accordance with the colleges staged response to absenteeism plan.
- Monitor and follow up all individual cases of student absence promptly and consistently.
- Pursue and record an explanation for every absence.

- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time.
- Convene where necessary student support meetings in accordance with the colleges staged response plans for student absenteeism.
- Provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/carers has not been possible. This may include notification to DHS /SMR.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- 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	November 2023
Approved by	Peter Langham (Principal)
Next scheduled review date	December 2026