

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the General Office.

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 Brinbeal 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 Brinbeal Secondary College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Brinbeal 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 Brinbeal 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 Brinbeal Secondary College, or

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

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

Brinbeal 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.

Brinbeal 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 Brinbeal 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

Brinbeal Secondary College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- Providing an inclusive learning environment
- Running a breakfast club
- Running lunchtime groups and activities to promote engagement and develop relationships
- Providing support through the Wellbeing Team

Recording attendance

Brinbeal Secondary College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Brinbeal Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance is recorded by the classroom teacher within the first 15 minutes of each lesson/period using Compass. If the teacher is not able to access Compass for any reason, a paper roll will be sent to the office.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity records them as being present.

Senior school attendance

Senior School students are expected to attend all scheduled classes unless they are unwell or participating in a school approved activity. To ensure good attendance habits and consistency for all students, attendance requirements for Year 10 subjects is the same as for VCE studies.

All VCE units involve at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction and students are expected to attend all classes in order to fulfil this requirement.

Family holidays should not be scheduled within term time, and families should be aware that approval from the Principal is required for any absence that is unrelated to illness or school-based activities. Approval will not be granted for VCE students if this impacts a student's ability to undertake a graded assessment or SAC.

Students who participate in studies outside the college, such as VET or VSL courses, are expected to adhere to the college's Attendance Policy, including attending all scheduled classes. Brinbeal Secondary College's Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring attendance at external organisations and sharing information with the relevant Head of Year for follow up if concerns arise.

Further details in relation to attendance and VCE completion are in our Senior School Handbook.

Senior students are required to remain on the school site during school hours. Students with study periods are required to attend the timetabled Senior Study Room. Every study session is timetabled as a formal 'study session' where supervision is provided, and attendance is recorded. Parents may provide consent for their child to leave the school grounds during study periods if they at the beginning or end of the day.

Students participating in study with external providers

Brinbeal Secondary College may enter arrangements with external providers to deliver part of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), or the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC). External providers may include:

- TAFE providers
- Private providers (RTOs)
- Registered schools, including both government and non-government that are also RTOs, and
- Learn Local providers that are also RTOs.

Brinbeal Secondary College will enter into a written agreement between the school and the external provider detailing the responsibilities of each party including how the attendance of students will be managed and monitored between the parties. Brinbeal Secondary College will appoint a member of staff to monitor the attendance on students studying with external providers upon entering into any agreement.

The external party must provide the services consistent with the department's Policies and Procedures on Supervision and Purchasing Secondary Courses and Vocational Training from External Providers.

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 Brinbeal Secondary College of absences by:

- Using the Compass app to provide parent approval and a reason for the absence.
- Contacting the General Office on 8001 3333 to notify of the absence.

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, Brinbeal Secondary College will notify parents by SMS. The SMS will contain a link for parents to be able to provide an attendance note. Brinbeal 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.

If the parent does not respond to the SMS by 2pm on the day of the absence, attendance follow-up will take on a staged approach as detailed below:

1. First day of unexplained absence: An email will be sent, by the Administration Team, to parents by

4pm requesting a reason for the absence. Parents can choose to reply to the email, use the Compass app or call the General Office.

2. Second day of unexplained absence: A phone call will be made by the mentor teacher to discuss the reason for the absence, remind parents of the importance of school and explain that work can be accessed via Teams.
3. Third day of unexplained absence: A phone call will be made by Student Engagement Leaders (SEL's) to the parent. The phone call will focus on support for the student and parent.
4. Fifth day of unapproved absence: A Student Support Group (SSG) meeting will be scheduled with the Student Engagement Leader (SEL) and Mentor Teacher to work with the student and parents to support improved attendance.
5. Further absences will result in regular SSG meetings and, if necessary, a referral to the School Attendance Officer as detailed below.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details) by the third day of absence, the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school.

Brinbeal 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 Brinbeal Secondary College 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. 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. Family holidays will not be excused for students in VCE.

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 (explained or unexplained), Brinbeal Secondary College will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing an Attendance SSG consisting of the Student Engagement Leaders (SEL's), Mentor Teacher, the student and parents. The SSG may also include a member of the Wellbeing Team and external supports.

- implementing an Attendance Improvement Plan and/or 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 the Wellbeing Team or external agencies

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 Brinbeal 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 Western Region for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact 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 is 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
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- 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](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2030