

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is essential to ensure students learn and that they form good relationships. The Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 and Education and Training Reform (School Attendance) Regulations 2013 requires that children of school age (six to seventeen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless formally exempt. Lake Bolac College requires that post-compulsory aged students also attend school unless there is a valid reason not to attend. The College utilises a combination of strategies to monitor attendance and, where necessary, to resolve non-attendance issues.

AIMS

The College aims to:

- Promote attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures
- Develop and implement rigorous and effective systems to record and monitor absences
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded in every class in a timely manner
- Maintain accurate attendance records on the College attendance system - Compass
- Ensure the prompt processing of student transfers upon the student's enrolment at their new school
- Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly and provide timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school
- Monitor and follow up student absences, ensuring wherever possible that parents/carers are aware of student absence
- 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 student support group meetings with parents/carers and students when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the College, leading to the development of Individual Learning Plans (ILP) to improve the student's attendance
- Provide ongoing intensive support for students if communication with parents/carers has not been possible or if the student's attendance pattern continues to be a problem after the initial student support group meeting
- Refer persistent non-attendance to the South West Victoria Region of DET.
- Provide members of the College community with attendance information that highlights the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders as outlined below:

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

Teachers are to:

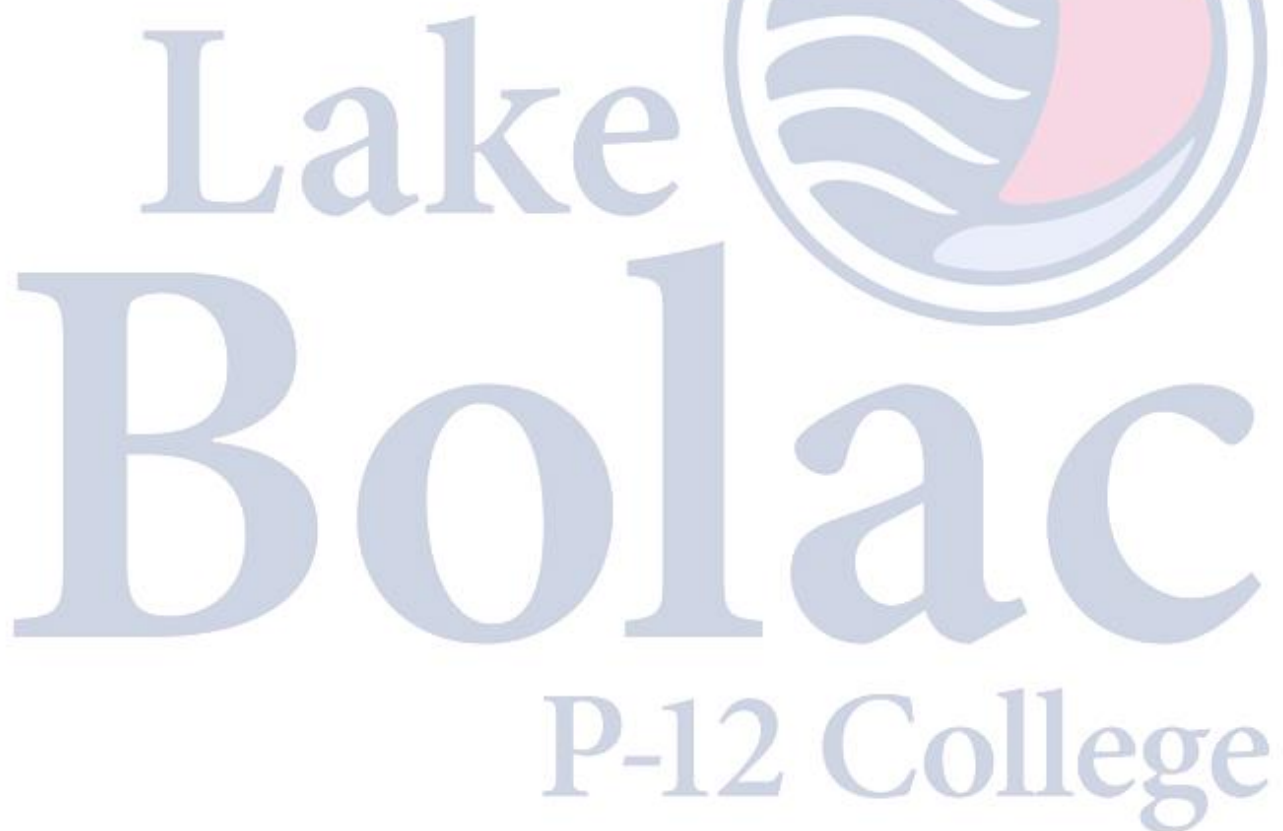
- Promote attendance through clear statements of expectations
- Ensure that student attendance is recorded in a timely manner every class using Compass
- Maintain accurate attendance records on Compass
- Monitor and follow up student absences/lateness to class
- Notify Leading Teachers if a student is absent without notice for more than two lessons or displays a regular pattern of absenteeism
- Work collaboratively with Leading Teachers, 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

Students are to:

- Attend school at all times when it is a designated school day
- VCE students are required to maintain the specified attendance rate in accordance with both the College and VCAA guidelines
- Arrive on time to school and to every class
- Go to the General Office to sign in/sign out. In all cases, students should have a note or communication (Compass, phone or email) from home explaining the late/early arrival.
- Ensure their parent/carer provides an explanation for an absence. This can be done by note, email, Compass or phone
- Remain on school premises during school time unless they have permission to leave the school from both the school and their parents/carers
- Work with their teachers to develop/obtain learning activities to be included in a Student Absence Learning Plan for completion during a prolonged absence
- Work cooperatively with the College to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent.

Parents/carers are to:

- Ensure that their child attends school at all times when it is a designated school day
- Promote and support their child to attend and participate at school
- Ensure that their child is on time for school each day
- Notify the College by phone, Compass message, email or note
 - of their child's absence as soon as possible
 - in advance of an absence of any length that is planned
 - of the need for an early leavers pass or late pass for their child
- To avoid, as far as possible, student appointments during school time as well as other extended absences including family holidays
- Advise the Leading Teachers or Principal if their child is reluctant to attend school
- Support their child's learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school
- Work cooperatively with the College in supporting their child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence
- Ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up-to-date



APPENDIX 1 - INDIVIDUAL TASKS REQUIRED TO MONITOR ATTENDANCE

OFFICE MANAGER

- Enter daily absence data generated via phone calls, parent emails or general information from College staff in regard to absences
- Notify Leading Teachers and the Principal of any extended student absences
- Check on Compass to ensure that the SMS messages to parents have been sent each day
- Communicate with parents re unapproved absences on daily/weekly basis and update information on Compass
- Monitor patterns of non-attendance and pass on any relevant or important attendance information to the Principal or other college staff where appropriate
- Enter attendance data for scheduled absences that are not covered under Events - ie VET courses, numeracy or literacy programs, welfare activities, year level exams or excursions or other activities as required
- Check event entries on a regular basis to ensure there is no issue with start or duration times that may generate unapproved absences or incorrect SMS messages to parents. Follow up with relevant staff if required
- Ensure that information for exiting students is updated and classes removed from Compass
- Assist staff with any Compass related enquiries or problems related to the inputting of student attendance data for rolls, classes or activities
- Monitor unmarked rolls and send a reminder to teachers if they remain unmarked for a considerable length of time as some of these rolls may need to be cancelled.
- Upload attendance data into Cases at the end of each month and generate report for Principal
- At the start of Term 1 each year, the Office Manager will print off Class Lists and produce a Master List of classes for checking during an Emergency Drill
- Reprint lists as required to update any class changes
- Sign students in and out of Compass as necessary throughout the day

TEACHERS

- It is a legal requirement for staff to mark the roll on Compass during the first 10 minutes of the class
- Update the roll during the lesson if a student is late to class
- Inform the Principal of a student's ongoing patterns of non-attendance in classes - in particular for VCE students whose attendance has dropped below 80%.
- Cancel VCE classes that did not run for appropriate reasons
- The organising teacher should enter class activities/excursions on Compass ensuring that times, dates and sessions are correct. If unsure check with the Office Manager.
- Provide Office Manager with the lists of students who are attending external and internal courses e.g. VET, SBA, Work Experience
- Mark Event rolls at the beginning of the activity or excursion. If unable to do so contact the Office Manager for assistance
- If taking an Extra ensure the roll is marked at the beginning of the lesson
- Avoid letting students leave the classroom unless they have a legitimate reason

LEADING TEACHERS

- Monitor attendance on a regular basis for patterns of whole day absences and period non- attendance
- Liaise with Office Manager on any issues that can impact a student's attendance on a regular basis
- In conjunction with Wellbeing and Office Manager, case manage students whose attendance patterns are of concern or have ongoing issues that prevent them attending school on a regular basis
- Inform the Office Manager of any changes to student schedules that relate to subject changes and free periods so that unapproved absences are not generated
- Establish an Attendance Support Group for students where their attendance pattern is of concern and liaise with and subsequently involve Student Services staff when deemed necessary
- Liaise with the Principal regarding attendance issues
- In consultation with teachers, student and parent/guardian, develop a Student Absence Learning Plan for students that are absent for an extended period of time and review that plan as required

Private Car Use Policy

WELLBEING

- Liaise with the Principal, Leading Teachers and Office Manager in relation to any students who are identified as having attendance issues or are at risk for any reason so that the attendance can be monitored on a daily/weekly basis
- Advise key staff and the Office Manager if students are attending external programs and the start and end times of the course
- Keep the Principal, Leading Teachers and Office Manager updated on any changes to the arrangements in place for monitored students.
- Advise the Principal, Leading Teachers and Office Manager of any support plans that have been initiated for students and provide details of the times, period attendance and the duration of the arrangements.
- Ensure that all student visits to welfare are reported to the Office Manager so they are recorded in a timely manner so that unapproved absences and SMS messages are not generated

BUSINESS MANAGER

- Set up and maintain the Compass attendance system throughout the year
- Work with Compass personnel regarding College requirements and updates to software
- Communicate with staff regarding updates on the attendance system as required
- Provide/arrange for professional development for relevant staff regarding the use of Compass as required during the year
- Create attendance monitoring facilities for monitoring attendance in alternative programs
- Liaise with the Principal, Leading Teachers and Office Manager regarding attendance issues as required

PRINCIPAL

- Oversee attendance procedures
- Support staff in implementing attendance procedures
- Monitor school attendance rates

This policy was ratified by School Council in August 2017.

Lake
Bolac
P-12 College

The logo for Lake Bolac P-12 College is a circular emblem. It features a stylized blue wave on the left side and a red and white crescent shape on the right side, all enclosed within a blue circular border.

APPENDIX 2 – LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are required to ensure their child attends school and to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and the principal must record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent. The principal must be able to determine from the records if the excuse given was reasonable in terms of the parent meeting their legal obligations.

Parents should inform the school of the reason for their child's absence so that the school can:

- determine if the child's absence needs to be excused by the principal, in line with school policy and these guidelines
- determine the appropriate follow up to ensure the child's education and wellbeing is supported
- record if the parent has a reasonable excuse for not meeting their obligation to ensure their child attends school each day

Where possible, parents should inform the school in advance of upcoming absences.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The school must record student attendance twice per day in primary schools and in every class in secondary schools and record, in writing, the reason given for each absence. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge schools' duty of care for all students
- assist calculation of the school's funding
- enable the school governing body (school council in government schools) to report on student attendance annually
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) requirements (for VCE students)

All registered schools must ensure their system for recording student attendance meets the requirements above. Government schools must use only CASES21, eCASES21 or third party software which is compatible with CASES21 to record student attendance.

Accurate and comprehensive student attendance records, including the reasons for any absences, also allow schools to monitor the effectiveness of attendance improvement strategies and measure achievement against attendance targets. It also provides evidence for any further enforcement proceedings including issue of an Infringement Notice (and any appeal) and court proceedings if it appears a parent may not have met their legal obligations to ensure their child attends school.

All schools must report the annual rates of student attendance for the year to the school community at least once a year. Schools are also required to report information about student enrolment and attendance for funding requirements.

The Department collects information on student attendance through extraction of data from CASES21 and publishes attendance rates in its annual report.

For the purposes of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the enforcement system, the Department will collect information about the use of School Attendance Notices and School Enrolment Notices.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal will determine if the excuse provided for an absence is reasonable for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. A principal should use their discretion in making this decision.

The principal or their nominee must record:

- student attendance twice per day in primary schools and in every class in secondary schools for every student enrolled at the school
- the excuse given for an absence and whether this is reasonable in accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- an absence as unexplained if no excuse has been given and change the attendance record once an excuse is provided or established
- a student is present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction

To meet duty of care responsibilities, the school attendance records should indicate whether the student was physically present in a classroom, or not present but attending a school-approved activity. In the latter situation, the teacher or staff member in charge of the activity should record attendance and ensure parents are notified of any absences in the same manner as for regular absences from school.

All students enrolled in the school are required to have their attendance recorded, even if they only attend the school premises part time. Attendance for the times the student is not expected to attend should be recorded so it does not count towards the absences for the school (government schools should use code 602 Exempt in CASES21).

The attendance of students at curriculum programs outside school premises needs to be recorded by the provider and reported back and recorded by the school. Schools manage absences in conjunction with the provider of re-engagement programs or approved education provider.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

In addition to accurately and consistently recording student attendance and absence, principals should ensure school attendance data is regularly monitored and analysed to identify student absence patterns on a school, class and individual basis.

The Student Mapping Tool is available to all government schools and can be used for early identification of students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school. Once identified as being at risk of poor attendance, students should be provided with timely targeted support to improve attendance or address underlying issues. Referral to Student Support Services, a Student Wellbeing Coordinator or a Primary Welfare Officer is recommended.

For more information, see: Student Mapping Tool

EXEMPTIONS FROM ATTENDANCE

Where a student:

- has reached 6 years but has not started school and will be enrolled in a second year of kindergarten; or
- has not reached 17 years but will leave school; or
- is absent from school due to employment in the entertainment industry and certain conditions are met, an exemption from attendance can be sought.

The process for applying for these exemptions is outlined in the School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG). Non-government schools are also advised to follow these procedures. For more information, see: Attendance - Exemption Application Process

An exemption is not required for these absences, but if there is no exemption the student's absences will count towards the school's absences for reporting purposes. For example, a student with an exemption from attendance for one day per week, who attends the four days per week they are expected to attend, would have 100 per cent attendance, whereas if no exemption was in place the student would have 80 per cent attendance.

Schools should advise parents when an exemption from attendance is required and support parents to apply for the exemption. Schools and parents may also agree to seek an exemption so that a student's absences do not count towards the school's total absences for reporting purposes.