

# ATTENDANCE POLICY



## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction
2. ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
3. explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Charles La Trobe College has in place to
  - o support, monitor and maintain student attendance
  - o record, monitor and follow up student absences.
4. ensure that students reach their full learning potential whilst at school
5. create and promote a culture of strong relationships and high expectations of students and staff members
6. create and promote a culture of 100% attendance for all students and families

## Scope

This policy applies to all students at Charles La Trobe College, The Pavilion School and Olympic Village Primary School. Separate specific policy implementation for these settings is covered in appendices at the back of the policy.

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 Charles La Trobe 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.

Unless referred to separately, *Charles La Trobe College* refers to and includes the La Trobe Campus, the Deaf Facility, The Pavilion School Campuses and Olympic Village Primary School Campus.

## 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 Charles La Trobe College during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

1. there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
2. the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Charles La Trobe College, or

3. the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Charles La Trobe College for particular activities.

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

Charles La Trobe 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 approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Charles La Trobe 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 Charles La Trobe 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

Charles La Trobe College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

The appendices outline the different ways our school promotes student attendance.

### Recording attendance

In our Primary School settings Charles La Trobe College records student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

1. meet legislative requirements
2. discharge Charles La Trobe College's duty of care for all students

In our Secondary School settings Charles La Trobe College records student attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

1. meet legislative requirements
2. discharge Charles La Trobe College's duty of care for all students
3. meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Parents and carers can help us by making sure students are at school on time so that the roll may be marked accurately.

All students are expected to arrive on time at school, ready for lessons.

Site specific information on the recording of attendance can be found in Appendices A – C.

### 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 Charles La Trobe College of absences using one of the following options:

1. Placing a phone call to the relevant college campus and informing college reception of student name, class, year level and reason for absence.

2. Using the Mobile Compass App OR Compass Web Browser application to record a student 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, Charles La Trobe College will notify parents. Charles La Trobe 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.

Setting specific process:

- At *The Pavilion School*, Wellbeing Workers will contact every parent regarding non-attendance of their child – as close as possible to the start of class.
- At all other sites contact will be made by administration staff via phone or SMS.

Charles La Trobe 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 Charles La Trobe 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:

1. medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
2. bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
3. school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes and support the student's return to school
4. cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
5. 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 excused.

### Monitoring Attendance

Charles La Trobe undertakes regular monitoring of campus, cohort and individual attendance data using Compass Student Management System, and various DET Data Reports, for example Panorama.

Scheduled Monitoring:

1. At the end of each term cohort and individual attendance rates are forwarded to school leaders for each Year Level (La Trobe / Olympic Village) and Class (Pavilion).
2. Students with at risk attendance are flagged for follow-up by school leaders to the College Principal early in each succeeding term.

Improvements are celebrated and reported.

Reductions and areas of concern are flagged for processing under this policy.

### 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 three days, Charles La Trobe 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 and teachers.
- referral to DET Regional Health & Wellbeing Support Officer

On the third day of absence the classroom teacher, year level leader or member of the wellbeing team will place a phone call to parents / carers. The reason for absence will be recorded on compass.

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 Charles La Trobe 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 NWVR North Eastern Metropolitan Area 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.

### Celebrating Excellent Attendance

Excellent and improvement in attendance is celebrated each term during whole school assemblies. Students with excellent attendance are acknowledged and presented with certificates. They are also entered into a prize draw for various rewards.

- Excellent – 100%
- Good – 90%+
- Concerning – 80%+
- At risk – below 79%

### More information and resources

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- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Attendance](#)
- Improving Student Attendance: A Guide for School Leaders

### Review cycle and evaluation

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This policy was last updated on June 2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2023.

## Appendix A

### Site Specific Information for the **La Trobe Campus** and **The Deaf Facility**

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#### Supporting and promoting attendance

Charles La Trobe College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance through:

- Breakfast Club
- Lunchtime clubs and activities
- Year Level Leader roles
- Wellbeing Team
- The provision of tutoring in literacy and numeracy, and for Koori students

#### Recording Attendance

Secondary students at *La Trobe Campus* are expected to be moving towards their first class by 8.45am ready to start learning with all the necessary equipment from their locker for periods 1 & 2.

Primary students are expected to be ready to line up for class at 8.54am.

The bell goes at 8:54am and then the roll will be taken. After that, students must sign in at the front office. Students must manage their time to ensure that they are on time to every lesson.

|                                      | La Trobe Secondary   | La Trobe Primary  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>When is attendance recorded?</b>  | In the first ten minutes of every period                                 | By 9.20am, and again after lunch by 2.30pm                                  |
| <b>Who records attendance</b>        | Class Teacher<br>Classroom Relief Teacher (CRT)                          | Class Teacher<br>Specialist Class Teacher<br>Classroom Relief Teacher (CRT) |
| <b>Where is attendance recorded?</b> | Compass School Management System   |   |
| <b>School approved activities</b>    | The teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present. |   |

## Appendix B

### Site Specific Information for The Pavilion School

#### Supporting and promoting attendance

Charles La Trobe College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance through:

- Friday Learning Program
- Flexible Learning Options
- Reduced daily class timetables
- Triad approach to classroom arrangement, including the employment of Wellbeing Support and Class-based Education Support staff.

#### Recording Attendance

Students at *The Pavilion School* are expected to:

- Attend all of their timetabled classes
- Meet school expectations whilst at school
- Inform Pavilion staff when they cannot attend school

| The Pavilion School                  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>When is attendance recorded?</b>  | In the first ten minutes of every class                                  |
| <b>Who records attendance</b>        | Class Teacher<br>Classroom Relief Teacher (CRT)                          |
| <b>Where is attendance recorded?</b> | Compass School Management System   |
| <b>School approved activities</b>    | The teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present. |

#### Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

At *The Pavilion School*, when an observation of low attendance is made the following procedure is enacted:

1. **Assess:** An assessment is made by a student's allocated wellbeing worker and teacher that a student's attendance needs to be addressed. ***If a student's attendance is below 50 % then it is assumed that attendance/exit procedure must be followed.***
2. **Attendance Letter:** An attendance letter is sent to the student (see attendance letter on H Drive/admin/wellbeing).
3. **Student Support Group Meeting:** Allocated wellbeing counsellor will contact student and their parent/carer and ask them to come in for a meeting to discuss their attendance and to offer support.
4. **Home Visit:** If a student can't make it in for a meeting, then offer to visit them at home, if appropriate.
5. **Time To Improve:** The attendance letter or attendance contract gives the student 2 weeks to improve their attendance and/or to come in for a meeting to discuss and make a plan to improve attendance. ***This letter is attached to compass and put in their personal file.***
6. **D.E.T. Referral:** If a student is under 17 years, then discuss with Pavilion leaders a referral to DET attendance officer.
7. **Child Protection Referral:** If a student is under 17 years and there is either a) concerns for the student's safety and/or b) no contact is possible with the student or family then a referral is made to Child First or DHHS Child Protection.
8. **Exit Procedure:** If a student is still unable to attend a meeting or a class then continue with the exit procedure.

## Appendix C

### Site Specific Information for **Olympic Village Primary School**

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#### Supporting and promoting attendance

Charles La Trobe College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance through:

- Breakfast Club
- Wellbeing Team
- Student Support Group Meetings
- The employment of key education support staff roles
- The provision of tutoring in literacy and numeracy, and for Koori students

#### Recording Attendance

| Olympic Village Primary School       |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>When is attendance recorded?</b>  | By 9.20am, and again after lunch by 2.30pm                                  |
| <b>Who records attendance</b>        | Class Teacher<br>Specialist Class Teacher<br>Classroom Relief Teacher (CRT) |
| <b>Where is attendance recorded?</b> | Compass School Management System  |
| <b>School approved activities</b>    | The teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.    |