



MountClearCollege

Attendance policy at...

MOUNT CLEAR COLLEGE/GPlace

Purpose / Rationale

The aim of this policy is to encourage regular attendance at school by all students. For students to succeed at school and achieve their potential, research evidence points to the need for them to consistently attend their scheduled classes and actively engage in required activities and work.

To this end the College has pursued a number of strategies to make school more relevant and engaging for all students. These include such initiatives as restructuring and expanding the range of options available in the post-compulsory years, re-invigorating classroom practice through the use of Thinking Curriculum professional development, introducing a range of more practical and applied alternative curriculum options at Years 7-9, initiating an Accelerated Learning Program for selected students, instigating new literacy support strategies, putting in place improved student welfare structures and approaches, incorporating Year 7 and 8 Teaching Teams, and more.

While these initiatives have clearly had a beneficial impact on the attitudes and involvement of students, we believe that still more needs to be done to improve student attendance at and participation in school. We are aware that some students have significant levels of absenteeism which is a source of serious concern because of the impact on their learning and achievement.

Through this policy we are attempting to highlight the importance of attendance and change a 'mindset' where attendance is sometimes seen as discretionary, contrary to the Education Act 1958 for those under 15 years of age and contrary to VCE policy where a minimum attendance is necessary to meet the requirements of a course.

Attendance Requirements

- Students are required to attend school and all their classes, except where legitimate and serious reasons prevent such attendance.
- All students must maintain at least an **85% (85%=30 days absence per year) attendance rate** in order to receive a Certificate indicating the 'Satisfactory Completion' of a year level, which would normally lead to a recommendation to progress to the next year level.
- Exemptions or variations may be made to this policy for students with special circumstances, including students who enrol part way through a semester.
- Details of particular attendance requirements applying to VCE classes are provided at the beginning of the year to VCE students.

Implications of Not Meeting Attendance Requirements

If, due to excessive absences, a student is deemed to have not satisfactorily completed the year s/he will receive a Certificate indicating 'Unsatisfactory Completion' of the year and a re-enrolment interview will be required with the student / parent / guardian to discuss the options available to the student for the following year and strategies to improve future attendance. As the student has failed to complete the current year level satisfactorily, the school's recommendation will be, in most circumstances, to repeat the current year level.

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Types of Absence and Their Impact on These Requirements

Absences of all types – parentally approved, unapproved, suspensions and truancy – will normally count towards overall school absences (see below for some key exceptions). Parents / guardians must continue to formally notify the school by phone or in writing of an absence and the reason for this absence.

Key exceptions to this policy include (ie these absences will not automatically affect ‘Satisfactory Completion’ requirements):

- Medically certificated absences (Certificates must be submitted to the school. The College reserves the right to verify the authenticity of medical certificates. Where feasible, and particularly in situations of extended illness, catch up work should be set and completed).
- Extended family holidays (The Attendance Officer should be informed in writing ahead of time of such holiday arrangements. Where feasible, catch up work should be set and completed).
- Funerals and other major family events (notified prior to the event via a note or phone call)
- Legitimate appointments (notified prior to the event via a note or appointment card)
- College sanctioned activities (These include activities such as School Sport, Music lessons and performances, College productions, excursions and camps, work placements, student meetings, counselling, community involvement activities and others as determined by the Principal. The College Principal will make any final decision as to whether an activity is College sanctioned or not).

Redemptions

Students will have the opportunity to ‘redeem’ at least some of the days they have been absent by attending study sessions organised outside normal school hours. Such sessions may include organised after school study classes, student free days, times when Saturday morning detentions are organised, etcetera. Arrangements for attendance at these sessions would normally be made through the Mini-School Student Manager.

- Any student may redeem absences from school through attendance at these sessions.
- Students whose attendance falls below 85% during the year will be expected to attend these sessions.
- An essential requirement of any redemption is that any essential work for a subject (or any alternative tasks determined by the teacher) is completed satisfactorily.

Application for Exemptions

- While, as a general principle, this policy will apply to all students, the College may, at its discretion, grant automatic exemptions in the situation where the circumstances of the student clearly warrant such exemption.
- However, a student (or their parent / guardian) who has had significant certificated illness, experienced significant social or emotional difficulties, or where other exceptional circumstances exist, may also apply for or be given exemption from these attendance requirements.
- Such an application should be made in writing to the Principal stating the reasons for the exemption and providing evidence to support the request.
- The decision will be made by the Principal in consultation with other relevant staff. If it is deemed necessary, he/she may convene a panel to consider the application.

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Appeal Process

- A student / parent / guardian may appeal a decision or likely decision regarding receiving a 'Failed to Complete' judgment for the year.
 - A student / parent / guardian wishing to appeal must make a formal approach to the Principal. In addition to outlining the reasons for appeal, applicants would be expected to attach additional evidence to support their application – eg medical or other certificates, letters of support.
 - The Principal may convene a panel made up of senior staff to consider the application. This panel can seek additional information from the student, any teacher(s) involved and relevant Mini School Student Managers.
 - The outcome of the appeal will be either :
 - The 'Failed to Complete' judgment or potential judgment stands. The student may still, however, have the opportunity to redeem this judgment.
- or
- The 'Failed to Complete' judgment or potential judgment will be unconditionally withdrawn.
- or
- The 'Failed to Complete' judgment or potential judgment will be withdrawn, but conditions may be placed on that withdrawal.

Footnote : Students living independently of parents or guardians will be expected to fulfill all the requirements of this policy and will need to represent themselves in relation to any processes outlined in this policy. They may, if they wish, call on an advocate, from either within or external to the College, to act on their behalf.

Summary of Key Expectations in Relation to This Policy

Students

- Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and, if a VCE student, their designated study areas.
- If absent, students are expected to make a serious effort to catch up on any work missed or complete any alternative work set.
- Even though such information should already have been provided to the teacher, students should let their teachers know of their involvement in College sanctioned activities such as music, sport, counselling, work placement, etc.

Parents

- Parents/guardians are expected to let the College know the reasons for any absence, either by phone or letter.
- Ideally, Parents / guardians should telephone the school on the **Attendance Hotline – 5337 2024** - before 9:15am on the first day of an absence to let the Attendance Officer know of the situation. This will be accepted as official notification and will save significant follow-up work being undertaken. Follow-up medical certificates should be provided wherever possible to help meet the expectations of this policy.
- Parents / guardians are expected to respond to school correspondence regarding absences including involvement in interview processes where necessary and notifying the school if they feel an exemption to this policy should be granted in particular circumstances.

'A c o m m u n i t y o f l e a r n e r s'

Date Implemented	September 2012
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Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
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Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
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References	Victorian Government Schools Policy & Advisory Guide

'A community of learners'