

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact our office administrative team, on (03) 5248-1400.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure all children of compulsory school age enrolled at Newcomb Secondary College 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 Newcomb 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 Newcomb 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 Newcomb 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.

RATIONALE

Daily attendance is important for all students in order to maximise their learning and development. School participation provides life opportunities for students by establishing education and support networks and developing important skills, knowledge and values that assist students to pursue further education and to participate in their community.

Newcomb Secondary College acts in accordance with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, which states full-time attendance at school is compulsory for students aged 6 to 17 years, unless a formal exemption has been granted. Students are expected to attend Newcomb Secondary College during normal school hours every day of each term unless there is an approved exemption for the student. Both Newcomb Secondary College staff and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

At Newcomb Secondary College, we believe all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and are committed to working with our 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/staff member and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance. Newcomb Secondary College utilises a combination of strategies to promote and monitor attendance and, where necessary, to resolve nonattendance issues.

Newcomb 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 Newcomb 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.

STRATEGIES

At Newcomb Secondary College we promote 100% attendance by:

- providing a safe and supportive school environment that encourages positive relationships, with the implementation of programs which develop social and emotional skills, peer tutoring and mentoring, and anti-bullying strategies.
- establishing positive relationships with families while maintaining regular communication to identify students at risk and to provide support to ensure that their student attends school every day.
- working with community agencies and organisations to encourage regular attendance, promote the reasons and benefits of why students should be attending school and to support students with circumstances impacting attendance.
- providing resources and links to external agencies for parents whose children are refusing to attend school regularly.
- maintaining continuous analysis of individual pupil and whole school attendance for strategic planning.
- act in accordance with a declared and active first day contact policy to make clear to pupils and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will be followed up.

Supporting and promoting attendance

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

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

- providing student council and staff-supported daily lunch-time activities and clubs encompassing all sectors of interests and hobbies.
- engaging in Professional Learning training for staff to enhance and develop core attributes, and to ensure effective and quality curriculum and classroom learning for students.
- offering a healthy and nutritious breakfast accessible to all students through our School Breakfast Club to assist students in improving attendance, punctuality, concentration, behaviour and educational attainment.
- offering tutoring from teachers and experienced tutors through our Learning Club program, to assist students in catching up on or getting ahead of schoolwork.

Responses to absences

At Newcomb Secondary College we are committed to improving attendance for all students. When a student is absent without explanation or a pattern of absences has been identified, the school will contact the family to discuss the attendance issue and record details on Compass. At Newcomb Secondary College the impacts of unexplained or unauthorised absences might include the following:

- referral to the Student Support committee to identify further support that may be required,
- organisation of support meeting for student to identify attendance barriers, provide support and implement strategies to improve and encourage attendance,
- formal notification advising parents of their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school.

Newcomb Secondary College:

- is committed to promoting the key messages of Every Day Counts.
- believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day.
- monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance.
- believes truancing can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.
- believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Newcomb Secondary College reports of absence or truancing are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- contacting the office by phone to notify the school of the absence with explanation.
- entering an attendance note on their student's Compass with explanation.

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

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

Attendance is electronically recorded by the teacher at the start of each lesson. Students who arrive after 9:00am must enter the school via the Student Administration office where the office staff update the attendance roll. If departing prior to the end of the school day, students must exit and sign out via the Student Administration office. If a student is absent for a class and the school has not been previously notified by a parent or guardian, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, an automatic SMS or Compass push notification message will be sent to the parent or guardian. We share responsibility by asking parents to inform the school as soon as possible if their child will not be attending school on a particular day. If a student is absent without explanation, the school is required to contact parents on that same day, wherever possible.

Support 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, Newcomb Secondary College will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing a 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

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.

RELATED RESOURCES

- ❖ The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)
- ❖ <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/attendance/resources>
- ❖ Newcomb Secondary College website: <https://www.newcombsc.vic.edu.au/contact-us/absences>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2025