



North Geelong Secondary College

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact North Geelong Secondary College on 03 5240 5800 or north.geelong.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to

- ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend every day the college is open for instruction.
- ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.
- explain to college staff and parents/carers the key practices and procedures North Geelong 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 North Geelong Secondary College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of North Geelong Secondary College, parents/carers and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

DEFINITION

Parent/carer – 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 STATEMENT

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 North Geelong Secondary College during normal college hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from attendance for the student.
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment at North Geelong Secondary College
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in North Geelong Secondary College for activities.

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

North Geelong Secondary College believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the college is open for instruction and is committed to working with the college community to encourage and support full attendance.

Our college 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/carers 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.

North Geelong Secondary College parents/carers are committed to ensuring their child/children attend the college on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicate openly with the college and provide valid explanations for any absence.

Parents/carers will communicate with the relevant staff at North Geelong Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the college to address any concerns.

Parents/carers will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from the college and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments, and other activities outside of college hours.

Supporting and promoting attendance

North Geelong Secondary College's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

Our college also promotes student attendance by breakfast club, lunchtime clubs, SRC, career planning and support, attendance officers, student wellbeing programs.

Recording attendance

North Geelong Secondary College must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements.
- discharge North Geelong Secondary College's duty of care for all students.

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

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

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each lesson using Compass.

If students attend a college approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Recording Absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent/carer must provide an explanation on each occasion to the college.

Parents/carers should notify North Geelong Secondary College of absences by:

- contacting the relevant Sub School by phone
- reporting on Compass

If a student is absent on a particular day and the college has not been previously notified by a parent/carer, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, North Geelong Secondary College will notify parents/carers by telephone or SMS. North Geelong Secondary College will attempt to contact parents/carers as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent/carer to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent/carer, the college will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the college, on the day of the unexplained absence.

North Geelong 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/carer meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) and the *School Attendance Guidelines*.

If North Geelong Secondary College considers that the parent/carer has provided a reasonable excuse for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

If the college 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/carer 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/carer to address causes and support the student's return to the college.
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the college in advance.
- family holidays where the parent/carer notifies the college in advance.

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents/carers 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, North Geelong Secondary College will work collaboratively with parents/carers, 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 staff including Student Wellbeing and Student Management

- Referral to Navigator, The Geelong Project and any other relevant provider

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional support 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 North Geelong 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 Victoria Region for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent/carer, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the college, the Principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from the college on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - the parent/carer 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 will be communicated to our college community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our college website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our college newsletter
- Hard copy available from college administration upon request

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

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| Policy last reviewed | 4/12/2023 |
| Consultation | School Council 19/03/2024 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next Scheduled Review Date | Before 12/2025 |