



# FRANKSTON HIGH SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated September 2022

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and 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/carers the key practices and procedures Frankston High School 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 Frankston High School.

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 Frankston High School, parents/carers and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

#### 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 young 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 Frankston High School during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- There is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- The student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Frankston High School.
- The student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Frankston High School for particular activities.

Both school and parents/carers have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day. Frankston High School 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.

Frankston High 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/carers to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Students must be committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Frankston High School parents/carers must be 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/carers will communicate with the relevant staff at Frankston High School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns. Parents/carers are expected to 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**

Frankston High School's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance. Our school also promotes student attendance through:

- Student Support Group Meetings involving parents/carers
- Developing and implementing Attendance Improvement Plans
- Developing and implementing Return to School Plans as appropriate.

### **Recording Attendance**

Frankston High School must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- Meet legislative requirements
- Discharge Frankston High School's duty of care for all students
- Meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students.

Teachers will record attendance in every class at the start of the lesson using Compass. If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present on Compass.

### **Recording Absences**

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

Parents/carers should notify Frankston High School of absences by contacting the Attendance Officer through email (see below) or by phone.

Year 7: [year7absences@fhs.vic.edu.au](mailto:year7absences@fhs.vic.edu.au)

Year 8: [year8absences@fhs.vic.edu.au](mailto:year8absences@fhs.vic.edu.au)

Year 9: [year9absences@fhs.vic.edu.au](mailto:year9absences@fhs.vic.edu.au)

Year 10: [year10absences@fhs.vic.edu.au](mailto:year10absences@fhs.vic.edu.au)

Year 11: [year11absences@fhs.vic.edu.au](mailto:year11absences@fhs.vic.edu.au)

Year 12: [year12absences@fhs.vic.edu.au](mailto:year12absences@fhs.vic.edu.au)

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent/carer, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Frankston High School will notify parents/carers by SMS that morning. If a student has been absent for **three days unexplained** or for **5 days explained**, the Sub School Education Support will phone the relevant parent/carer to establish the reason for the absence and the expected date for the student's return to school.

If it is going to be an extended absence, then appropriate support strategies will be put in place (including an Absence Learning Plan).

If no explanation is provided by the parent/carer within **10 school days** of an absence, it will be recorded as an '**unexplained absence**' on Compass. Parents/carers will be notified, either via phone call or an Unexplained Absence email (sent twice a term – week 5 and 10) if an absence has not been excused.

Frankston High School 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 Frankston High School considers that the parent/carer has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as 'approved absence'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as 'unapproved absence'.

### **Planned Absences**

Frankston High School does not support the scheduling of absences during the school day and/or school term, including routine medical and dental appointments and family holidays, where these may be arranged for holiday periods.

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
- School refusal, if a plan is in place with the parents/carers /carer to address causes and support the student's return to school
- Cultural observance if the parents/carers /carer/carers notifies the school in advance
- Family holidays where the parents/carers /carer notifies the school in advance and a Absence Learning Plan has been put in place.

At Frankston High School all applications for an extended absence must be made, in writing, at least **4 weeks** before the absence. The application must be addressed to the relevant Year Level Coordinator who will, in conjunction with the Principal and/or Campus Principal, determine if the absence is approved.

The application process covers absences such as those due to external commitments, interstate and overseas travel and other exceptional circumstances. If the absence is approved an email will be sent to the parent/carer and an **Absence Learning Plan** will be developed (which the student is to collect from the Year Level Coordinator). The student is to take the Absence Learning Plan to all of their teachers so they can provide a list of work that needs to be completed before returning to school after the absence. The student is to show this plan to the Year Level Coordinator before leaving for the extended absence. The Year Level Coordinator will then inform the Attendance Officer or Senior School Administration Education Support of the approval. At this point the Attendance Officer or Senior School Administration Education Support will mark the absence as approved. If the absence is not approved parents/carers will be notified in writing by the Year Level Coordinators or Campus Principal.

## 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 or the equivalent number of classes, Frankston High School will work collaboratively with parents/carers, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- Establishing an Attendance Student Support Group
- Developing an Attendance Improvement Plan
- Implementing a Return to School Plan
- Implementing an Individual Education Plan as appropriate
- Implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- Arranging for assistance from a member of the School's Wellbeing Team.

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 Frankston High School 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 South Eastern Regional Office for further action.

If, after multiple attempts to contact a parent/carer, 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 or the equivalent number of classes in the previous 12 months where:
  - the parents/carers /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.

### Year 7-10 Attendance Requirements

Students in Years 7 – 10 are expected to attend Frankston High School during normal school hours every day of each semester.

All absences must be explained by parents/carers. For absences of two days or more, the school must be notified in advance where possible.

For absences of two or more days, students will not be able to sit a Common Assessment Task (CAT) unless a medical certificate and/or bereavement notice is provided.

Any CAT missed due to extended absence will be marked as NA (Not Assessed) and may affect the students' ability to achieve a satisfactory result in the subject. To be eligible for a satisfactory result, a student must be able to show the teacher their understanding of the required skills and knowledge as demonstrated in classwork from that unit and/or work completed as part of an Absences Learning Plan.

Students who are absent for **more than 16 classes in any unit** excluding legitimate college activities such as sport or excursions and excluding extended illness approved by the Campus Principal may be deemed **unsuccessful** in completing that subject. The student and parents/carers may be required to meet with the appropriate Year Level Coordinator to discuss attendance.

## Senior School (Year 11 and 12) Attendance Requirements

Success in VCE/VCAL starts with attending each day. Attendance in class ensures that our students have access to instruction and set work in order to keep up to date with their studies. While the school understands that some absences are unavoidable due to health, medical, legal or family reasons, students in Years 11 and 12 are required to attend 90% of scheduled classes to satisfactorily complete a unit of study.

This means that:

- **Seven or more** 'unapproved' absences in a unit of study will result in an 'N' result. Please note that missing a double lesson will count as 2 absences.
- **Fifteen or more** absences in total (i.e. approved/unapproved) excluding legitimate school activities such as sport or excursions and excluding extended illness approved by the Senior School Campus Principal (e.g. time in hospital) will result in an 'N' result.
- **Documentation** to support an approved absence must be submitted ***within 5 days*** of the return to school or the absence will be recorded as unapproved.
- **Arriving late to class** counts as ***½ an unapproved*** absence.

An approved absence may be:

- An illness which requires medical treatment and for which there is a valid medical certificate
- An approved college excursion or sporting event

### COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request.

### MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#).

### Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	September 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2025