Chiltern Primary School Attendance Policy - Draft

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Rationale:
- The Education Act requires that children of school age (six to sixteen years) resident in Victoria are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Regional Director.
- Chiltern Primary School recognises that regular attendance maximises a student’s academic and social development.
- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the developmental process of learning, causing them to find ‘catching up’ difficult. Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.
- This policy defines the procedures and strategies that will assist the school to increase its student attendance rate.

Aims:
- To maximise learning opportunities by ensuring that student absenteeism is kept to a minimum.
- To maximise learning opportunities by ensuring that student late arrival to school is kept to a minimum.
- To put in place agreed processes for managing student absences within the school.

Implementation:
- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents have a further responsibility to phone the school or provide a written note or return a completed absence form to the school explaining why an absence has occurred.
- The school will work with its community through the school newsletter, parent meetings and parent/teacher/student discussions to raise awareness of the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Classroom programs will be used to reinforce the importance of regular student attendance and punctuality following the “It’s NOT OK to be away” program.
- The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers, are aggregated on the CASES database and communicated to the DEECD.

Students who habitually commence school after the due time are deemed late.

The Principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained.

The Principal will ensure parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences are contacted, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to ensure more regular, punctual attendance.

The Principal accesses the absence data and, when necessary sends this to the student’s parents with a letter asking for an explanation for unexplained absences. Parents may also be telephoned by school staff regarding absences. This contact is conducted with courtesy and respect and with recognition of the potentially sensitive nature of the issue. Contact is made with the view to developing and implementing strategies that minimise absences and build positive home-school relationships.

The Principal will refer habitually late students to the Primary Welfare Officer to investigate the reasons for their frequent lateness.

Students with reasonable grounds for lateness will be assisted in their personal circumstances by the Primary Welfare Officer as appropriate.

School Guidance Officer support will be offered to students with additional needs related to school attendance.

Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Human Services.

Improved attendance will be acknowledged and celebrated through class and individual student rewards.

Students with excellent attendance records will receive certificates of achievement.

Attendance records will form part of each student’s report in Semester 1 and Semester 2.

Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the DEECD and the wider community each year as part of the Annual Report.

The DEECD and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

This policy was ratified by School Council in ............................................. 2009