

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 the key practices and procedures Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS) has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

PLEASE NOTE THAT MCHS DOES NOT OFFICIALLY ENROL STUDENTS. STUDENT'S ARE ENROLLED AT THEIR BASE SCHOOL. MCHS GETS CONSENT TO PROVIDE EDUCATION TO THE STUDENTS WHILE THEY ARE INPATIENTS OR OUTPATIENTS OF MONASH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, INCLUSIVE OF EARLY IN LIFE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Monash Children's Hospital School (MCHS).

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 MCHS, 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.



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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 people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students that meet the criteria for MCHS are strongly encouraged to participate in the teaching and learning program at MCHS. This is a personalised program for all students and usually aligns directly with the school work set by the student's base school. Students may not be involved in the MCHS program if they are exempted due to shortness of admission or if they are deemed unwell by the medical/health staff. MCHS believes all students should attend the school sessions in the hospital or in the outreach programs at ARC and WRC. MCHS is committed to working with its school and hospital community to encourage and support 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 the school sessions every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

MCHS 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 may communicate with the relevant staff at MCHS about any issues affecting their child's

Supporting and promoting attendance

MCHS's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.



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Recording attendance

MCHS records attendance and commentary about a student on the student management system – Compass. The administration team create student files on Compass when a child is first admitted into hospital or recorded as an outpatient. Each inpatient has a learning file and a communication file. Outpatients have a communication file only.

Recording absences

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent or medical/health practitioner for a student's absence. The usual reason for a child not attending the MCHS education sessions is that they are deemed unwell and cannot attend or they have medical/health appointments that they must attend. E.g. physio, OT, Speech etc.

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, MCHS will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other medical/health professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance.

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student, their family and their treating team, MCHS will endeavour to provide this support when it is required.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

MCHS will not inform the School Attendance Officer of a student who does not attend the education sessions while an inpatient in hospital. However, they will alert the Student Attendance officer if they find out that a student has disengaged from their regular school or are simply not attending a school. This will also include communicating with the student's base school.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)



POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	15 June 2020
Consultation	With MCH and MCHS staff
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2023

