POLICY: ATTENDANCE

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 Brentwood Park has in place to
    - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
    - record, monitor and follow up student absences

AIMS:

- 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 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 at Brentwood Park, or
    - the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment for particular activities
- Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day

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 Brentwood Park Primary, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

The term *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.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- All students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and the school is committed to working with the school community to encourage and support full school attendance.
- The 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 to attend school every day, arrive on time and prepared to learn. The students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- Parents are encouraged to ensure their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicate openly with the school and provide valid explanations for any absence.
- Parents will communicate with the principal class officers 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.

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING ATTENDANCE:

The school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

The school also promotes student attendance by implementing the whole school programs, *Learning and Growing Together, You Can Do It!* and the *Respectful Relationships* and tutoring/additional assistance programs. The school has a Before and After School program facilitated by Camp Australia.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE:

- Teachers must record student attendance twice per day on the XUNO app. If the system is not operating, hard copies of the roll are available. A Casual Relief Teacher will use a hard copy of the roll. They can also mark the roll on XUNO if it is set up on another device. This is necessary to:
    - meet legislative requirements
    - discharge duty of care for all students
- Attendance will be recorded by 9:15am and by 1:45pm using the XUNO app.
- If students are in attendance at a school 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 must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.
- Parents should notify absences by:
    - Using the Absentee form on XUNO preferably, or by a telephone call.
- If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, an SMS message will be activated after 10:00am, to which the parents will be prompted to respond. The school will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, if the parent does not respond.
- If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school, where possible, on the day of the unapproved absence.
- The 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 the school considers that the parent 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.'**
- The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent 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 to address causes and support the student's return to school
    - cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
    - family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance
- If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an **'unapproved'** and recorded on the student's file.
- Parents will be notified if an absence has not been approved.

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

- establishing an Attendance 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 of the Student Support Service

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 the school decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, the school, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines, refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the South East Metropolitan Regional Office for further action.
- If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent, 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 in the previous 12 months where:
        - the parent 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 school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction and child safety training processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Placed in Foundation Transition pack

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL:

Policy last reviewed	29/10/2024
Consultation	Consultation with school council and approved by School Council
Approved by	James Bell, principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2028