

Attendance Policy - Y Community School

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to promote attendance at school by students to the Y Community School and describe how the school will promote and monitor student attendance, maintain an accurate attendance register, and the measures will be taken in response to students' absence from school.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all staff and students at Y Community School

Please note: This policy does not apply to other programs and services delivered by Y Whittlesea.

3. Definitions:

- **'The Y' or 'Y' or 'Y Whittlesea':** refer to YMCA Whittlesea Inc and YMCA Whittlesea Community Services.
- **Staff:** Any person performing duties on behalf of the Y Community School be they an employee, volunteer, trainee or contractor.
- **Attendance:** Physical presence at school or at an event which is part of the school curriculum. Note: where students are engaged online but not at school or under the supervision of school staff this will be recorded as such but is not considered 'attendance' at school except in the circumstances as described below.
- **ACARA** – the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Recording Authority is the body responsible for national collection of data regarding school performance in line with the National Schools Agreement.
- **Parent:** The term parent is used to refer to parent(s), and legal guardians. In the case of students who are adults or who have been deemed to have independent status the parent refers to the student and they should sign documents in their own right. There may be instances where a disengaged young person resides with an adult carer who does not have legal status as their legal guardian. In this instance, where all reasonable attempts to contact a parent have been undertaken, and an Informal Carer Statutory Declaration has been completed, that carer may sign documents in the place of the parent.

4. Policy:

The school will record the attendance or absence of all students enrolled in a course of study for each scheduled session in the school timetable. Attendance will be recorded as per the ACARA National Standards for Student Attendance Data Recording, July 2020. Students will be recorded as either Present at school or if not at school will be recorded as Absent from school using the categories of absence shown below.

4.1 Categories of absence:

The following categories of absence will be recorded in the school's student management software and used in line with the ACARA guidance.

Unexplained / unauthorised – this may also be used where parents provide an explanation for the absence deemed to be inappropriate.

Religious / cultural,

Parent approved,

Medical,

Disciplinary (Out-of-school),

Behavioural reasons,

Employment,

Explained other absence,

Any relevant additional information to provide further detail or context will be recorded in the notes section within the school's attendance register in the student management software.

4.2 Other categories of attendance:

Certain activities where the student is not physically present at school in their normally scheduled classes but are participating in a valid and school organised / approved program are considered as school attendance. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the designated school staff member to verify and record that the student has actually been in attendance at these activities These are identified below.

Students attending approved educational activities organised by the school including camps and excursions, VET programs, other educational programs, or completing on-line learning during a natural disaster or other event will be recorded as **Present - Approved Educational activity**.

Students participating in an organised and monitored work experience program including Structured Workplace Learning will be recorded as **Present – Work Experience**.

Students who are receiving social and emotional support or medical assistance while at school, either from school staff or visiting professionals, will be recorded as **Present – Wellbeing**.

Students who have been withdrawn from class to manage behavioural concerns and are placed in alternate classes or another withdrawal option at the school will be recorded as **Present - Disciplinary (In-school)**.

4.3 Notification and follow up of school absence:

The school will ensure that parents are notified as soon as practicable of the unexpected absence of a student. To achieve this the school will:

- Ensure teachers and other staff record attendance within the first hour of scheduled sessions.
- Parents of students who are absent will be notified by SMS using the school's student management software within 1 ½ hours of the commencement of scheduled sessions.
- Where a student is deemed to be at high risk, the school will contact parents by phone rather than SMS.
- When a student leaves the school during the day without prior arrangement with parents, the parent will be contacted by phone to advise that their child has left and the circumstances regarding this.

Teachers will contact parents on the day following an absence to determine the circumstances and record any relevant information in the school's student management software.

Where a teacher notices a pattern of absences, they will confer with the wellbeing leader and / or campus principal to determine the best course of action.

4.4 Strategies to support attendance:

The school recognises that students who enrol at the school may have not attended school for some time and may have a range of anxieties and concerns about returning to school. To address these and support attendance the school adopts an individualised approach for each student. This addresses the needs of students either in returning to school or who have had a period of poor attendance at school. These include:

- Working with a student, their family, and other supports, to identify the barriers to attendance, problem solve these and support the student to overcome these barriers.
- Modifying a student's individual learning plan and timetable to reduce attendance requirements for a period of time. Where this occurs, the arrangement will be documented, time limited and subject to regular review. A reduced attendance plan will include strategies and goals to gradually increase attendance with the goal being full attendance.
- Consulting the student regarding changes in groups, course arrangements, and the goals and activities in their individual learning plan.
- Considering a period of blended learning (mix of face-to-face and remote learning) to maintain progress in learning while a student is not able to fully attend school. Use of remote learning is not a preferred option and will be used in conjunction with a plan to increase face-to-face learning.
- Working with other agencies involved with a young person to support their attendance. This includes working with youth justice to support young people in youth detention to return to school when they are released.
- Use of outreach strategies including meetings in the community or out of school hours at the school site to support a student to build relationships and gain confidence to improve their attendance.
- Ensuring a student has access to learning materials and support while they are working to improve their attendance.

4.5 Attendance reporting:

The school will report attendance as follows:

- To students and parents as part of the semester-based student progress reporting.
- To individual students and parents at any point where the school believes a student's absences are likely to compromise their ability to successfully engage in learning and progress in their individual learning plan.

- To ACARA as required in line with the school's registration and funding agreements.
- To the VRQA as part of the school's Annual Report. This will also be published on the school's website.
- As required by any lawful request by relevant authorities.

4.6 Attendance and outcomes verification:

For students to achieve qualifications their performance of tasks which demonstrate outcomes must be verifiable as their own work. Teachers will ensure that they advise and work with students to ensure that they are attending school to the required level so that their teacher(s) are able to verify the authenticity of their work.

The expectation is that students will attend at least 75% of scheduled session in the VPC or VCE VM to be able to meet the requirements of the course and have their work appropriately verified. Where attendance is not at this level the teacher will discuss with the Teaching and Learning Leader and record the strategies they have used to authenticate work which they judge meets the required outcomes.

Where student attendance is not at a level that allows a teacher to authenticate work, they will:

- Advise students of this at the earliest available opportunity.
- Develop a plan with the student to revise timelines for tasks and plan as to how the student can perform tasks in away that allows the teacher to authenticate the student's work as their own.
- Identify any additional supports the student requires to be able to meet the requirements of the course.
- Record the details of these conversations and plans in the student's file.

4.7 Attendance at external programs

Student who are attending an external program or structured activity where they are not directly monitored by a school staff member will have their attendance monitored as follows:

For students in an externally purchased or organised program this will be governed by the standard purchasing contract which specifies that the provider is required to report a student absence ad record and report student attendance. To ensure this occurs the Vet and Careers Leader will establish a process with each provider to obtain attendance records on the day of the program. They will record the data in the school's student management software and follow up with any student who have not attended.

For students undertaking a program such as a structured workplace learning or SBAT the core teacher will liaise with the employer on a weekly basis to ascertain student's attendance. They will record this in the students record in the school's student management software and follow up any absences.

5. Parent contact details:

To ensure that parents can be contacted in the event of their student not being at school when expected, or for other reasons the school has an obligation to work with parents ensure that contact details are up to date.

To achieve this the school will:

- Collect contact details for parents at the time of enrolment.
- Collect contact details for emergency contacts at the time of enrolment.
- Ensure enrolment forms contain advice to parents regarding the need to advise any change of details whenever this occurs.
- Publish a reminder to families to notify any changes in contact details via direct message or school bulletins at the beginning of each school term.
- Where a parent's contact details are found to be nonfunctional (e.g. rejected, SMS, phone call or email) the school will request this be rectified by
 - Contacting the parent via an alternate means or other family member if available, and / or
 - Discuss this with the student to request an updated contact is provided,
 - Where neither of the above is possible, contact the student's emergency contact to seek further information and assistance.
- Should none of the above be successful a home visit will be discussed with the student and arranged to enable a discussion re home – school contact with the family.

6. Related policies:

- YCS Student Engagement and Management Policy

7. Legislative and Industry Requirements:

- [Link](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

8. Consequences of breaching this policy:

All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

9. Variations:

Y Whittlesea reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

10. Policy owner:

The Executive Manager - Schools is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.

11. Document Control:

Review of this policy will be undertaken every 2 years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Policy available on Y-MAC>Communication>Manuals and Files>Policies and Procedures

This document is due for review on 1/04/2026.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Approver and date	Release Date
1.1	Additional information included for external programs and SWL	Paul van Breugel	Executive Manager Y Schools 24/7/23	1/11/23
1.0	Policy Created	Paul van Breugel	Executive Management team 19/6/23	1/11/2023