STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE:
The Education Act requires children of school age (6 – 16 years) who are resident in Victoria to be in full-time attendance at school unless they are receiving approved home school tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted exemption by the Regional Director.

Education is a sequential process and Bellbridge Primary School believes regular attendance maximises a student’s academic and social development. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the developmental process of learning, causing them to find ‘catching up’ difficult.

This policy acknowledges that attendance depends on active cooperation between school, parents/caregivers and students.

AIMS:
- To monitor and improve student attendance at school.
- To raise awareness of the value of attending school on a regular basis.
- To establish and maintain school protocols and procedures related to student attendance.
- To implement DEECD (Department of Education & Early Childhood Development) policy in relation to the ‘It’s Not Okay to be Away’ program.

IMPLEMENTATION:
- The school will make parents aware of their responsibilities regarding students being punctual and attending school, as regularly as possible, by communicating with students and parents via the school newsletter, assemblies, parent meetings and discussions.
- Parents have a responsibility to inform the school about their child’s absence via phone call or written note, explaining why an absence has occurred.
- Classroom programs will be used to reinforce the importance of regular attendance and punctuality, using the ‘It’s Not Okay to be Away’ program as a reference.
- Regular student attendance (using individual student and class data) will be acknowledged and celebrated via assemblies, certificates and awards.
- The Principal will ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored in accordance with DEECD guidelines.
- Students leaving the school early must be signed out by a parent/guardian via the ‘Early Leaver’s Book’ at the Office.
- Students who arrive at school late (after 8:35am) need to provide a note from their parent/guardian and must collect a ‘Late Pass’ at the Office which the student gives to the classroom teacher when they enter their classroom.
- Student attendance records will be included in each student’s report in Semester 1 and Semester 2.
- Aggregated student attendance data will be reported to the DEECD and the wider community as part of the Annual Report to the School Community.
- All student absences will be recorded by teachers in the morning and the afternoon, aggregated on the CASES 21 database and communicated to the DEECD.
- The Principal (or nominee) will ensure that unexplained absences are investigated and where necessary, high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences will involve contact and/or meetings with parents with the view to developing and implementing strategies to ensure more regular, punctual attendance.
- The Principal will refer students who are regularly late and/or absent to the Primary Welfare Office in order to investigate the circumstances of the situation.
- Students (and families) with reasonable grounds for lateness and/or absence will be assisted by the Primary Welfare Office or School Guidance Officer as appropriate.
- Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal (or nominee) to the Department of Human Services.
- Improved attendance will be acknowledged and celebrated with class awards and individual student awards and students and classes with excellent attendance records will receive certificates of achievement.

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

Ratified by Bellbridge Primary School Council – November 2013

Principal: Debbie Clancy  School Council President: Kerri Cahoon