**FCPS Attendance Policy**

**Rationale:**
The Department requires that children of school age (six-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.

**Goal:**
To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences.

**Implementation:**
1. Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult.
2. Absenteeism contributes significantly to student failure at school.
3. All enrolled students are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent.
4. The school encourages strong attendance using strategies outlined in the Student Attendance – The Teacher’s Role Document (Attached)
5. Student engagement is essential in ensuring student attendance. The Ferny Creek Student Engagement Statement outlines strategies for student engagement.
6. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
7. Parents have a responsibility to provide a written note or, return a completed absence form to the school, or ring the office explaining why an absence has occurred.
8. The principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
9. All student absences are recorded in both the morning and the afternoon by teachers, are aggregated on our CASES21 database and communicated to DET
10. DET and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records.
11. The principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained. (See Form 2 below).
12. The principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing individual plans to minimise absences.
13. 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.
14. Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.
15. Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the DET and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

**Evaluation and Review:**
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s four-year review cycle.

**Author/Responsibility/Date**
EPP/M. Coyle/2013
**Attachment:**  
**Student Attendance – The Teacher’s Role**

**Strategies for teachers**

The following strategies are given to all teachers at the beginning of each year.

**Adopt an active role in fostering positive, open communication with students and parents**

- Form healthy professional relationships with students.
- Know at least one thing about each student's interests out of school.
- Talk to students.
- Contact parents to let them know how their children are going at school (via diary entries, phone calls, email).

**Share, when appropriate, relevant knowledge about students and factors which may affect their regular attendance at school**

- Cross-reference attendance issues with learning outcomes on a regular basis.
- Share student information with appropriate school-based personnel, for example coordinators, student welfare staff and pastoral teachers.
- Use protocols to ensure a balance of access and maintenance of confidentiality.

**Actively develop a safe and secure environment for all students**

- Develop an anti-bullying campaign in the classroom.
- Encourage all students in the class to take responsibility for the safety of each other.
- Model and develop a culture of trust.
- Model effective timekeeping practices, for example returning work promptly, arriving and finishing classes on time.

**Communicate and promote the school’s attendance expectations regarding the importance of attending school every day**

- Talk to students about why it is important to be at school and discuss the school’s attendance policy.
- Talk positively about regular attendance.

**Contact parents to follow up student absence**

- Ensure that all teachers are responsible for contact.
- Use agreed timelines and protocols across the school and within teams for parent contact.
- Provide for long-term absences through classroom teachers organising authentic work as required.