# same-day notification of unexplained student absences

## template excerpts for school newsletters and social media channels

### Overview

The [*School Attendance Guidelines*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/management/schoolattendanceguidelines2018.docx) specify that from the end of Term 2 2018, government schools must contact parents/carers as soon as practicable on the day of an unexplained student absence.

Protecting the safety and well-being of children through the reporting and monitoring of absenteeism is the responsibility of both parents/carers and schools. Parents/carers have an obligation to notify the school of their child’s absence and schools are required to notify parents/carers on the day of an unexplained student absence. This responsibility needs to be underpinned by shared understandings and expectations about the procedures for the promotion, monitoring and follow-up of student attendance as outlined in the school’s *Attendance Policy*.

Clear communication and building a positive and collaborative relationship between schools and parents is critical to the successful implementation of same day notifications. In addition, in order to implement this requirement, it is essential that schools have accurate and current parent/carer contact details. Below are examples of content that schools can include in regular communication with parents/carers (i.e.: via newsletters, Facebook and Twitter) to:

1. maintain accurate parent/carer **contact details**
2. ensure parents/carers are aware of their obligation to **notify the school of their child’s absence**
3. advise parents/carers of the **same-day notification of unexplained absences** requirement.

An **example newsletter article** for parents/carers about the new attendance requirements is also included.

**Newsletters**

1. **Contact details**

*There are times when we will need to contact you, including on the day if your child is absent and you haven’t informed the school as to why. Do we have your most up to date contact details? If not, please contact the school on <insert relevant school contact phone or email details> so we can update our records. Please include parent/carers’ name, address, phone numbers, email address and emergency contact details. Please remember to contact the school if any of these details or your circumstances change.*

1. **Notify the school of your child’s absence**

*Protecting the safety and well-being of children through the reporting and monitoring of absenteeism is the responsibility of both parents/carers and schools.*

*Please remember to call the school on <insert phone number> or email at <insert email address> or log your child’s child’s absence using our school’s IT platform <insert IT platform name and details> <add/delete those that are not applicable> early in the morning if your child is going to be away or late for school so your child’s absence can be recorded correctly.*

*For further information on the processes and procedures our school uses to record, monitor and follow-up student attendance and absence please read our Attendance Policy <insert link to Attendance Policy>. <add/delete those that are not applicable>*

1. **Same-day notification of unexplained student absences**

*Our school will text/call you as soon as practicable on the day if a student is not at school and you haven’t notified the school as to why. If you are notified by the school that your child is away without a reason, please contact us as soon as possible by <texting/calling/emailing> <insert school phone number/email address> to let us know where your child is. If we cannot reach you because we don’t have your correct contact details (i.e.: message notification fail, disconnected number), then we will make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on your child’s file held by the school, where possible, on the same day of the unexplained absence.*

*Please remember it is your responsibility to contact us to provide an explanation for your child's absence from school, and where possible, please inform us in advance of upcoming absences.*

*For further information on the processes and procedures our school uses to record, monitor and follow-up student attendance and absence please read our Attendance Policy <insert link to Attendance Policy> <add/delete those that are not applicable>*

**Save this number!** *Our school uses SMS/text to contact parents/carers as soon as practical on the day on an unexplained student absence. Save this number <insert school phone number> into your phone so you know it is the school contacting you if you receive a text. <Add/delete those that are not applicable>*

**New Attendance Requirements**

*If your child is sick or absent, you are required to notify the school as soon as possible* ***on the day of absence,*** *by* ***<****insert details of preferred method>*

### *Notifying the school of your child’s absence either prior to, or on the day that they will be away, helps ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and will fulfil your legal responsibility.*

*From the end of Term 2 2018, all Victorian government schools are required to contact parents/carers as soon as practicable on the same day of an unexplained student absence. If your child is absent on a particular day and you have not contacted the school to explain why, the absence will be marked as unexplained.*

*This system also promotes daily school attendance. Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child’s education, they learn new things every day – missing school puts them behind.*

*The* ***<****insert school name> Attendance Policy which outlines the school’s processes and procedures for monitoring, recording and following-up of student absences is available* ***<****insert details>.*

**Facebook**

1. **Contact details**

*Parents/carers – have you moved recently or changed your phone number? Let us know and we will update your details so we can keep you up-to-date!*

1. **Notify the school of your child’s absence**

*Please remember that it is your responsibility to notify the school if your child is going to be late or away from school. You can log your child’s absence by logging onto our schools IT platform <insert IT platform name and details> call the school absentee line on <insert number>, send a text to <insert number> or send an email to <insert email address>****.*** *<Add/delete those that are not applicable>*

1. **Same-day notification of unexplained student absences**

*Have you missed a text from us checking where your absent child is? You can get in touch with us by calling <insert number>, texting <insert number>, or emailing <insert email address> so your child’s absence can be recorded correctly. <Add/delete those that are not applicable>*

**Save this number!** *We will text* *parents/carers as soon as practicable on the day if a student is not at school and you haven’t informed us as to why. Make sure you save this number <insert school phone number> into your phone so you know it is the school contacting you via text. <Add/delete those that are not applicable>*

**Twitter**

1. **Contact details**

*Parents/carers–have you moved recently or changed phone numbers? Let us know & we will update your details to keep you up-to-date!*

1. **Notify the school of your child’s absence**

*Please remember that it is your responsibility to notify the school if your child is going to be late or away from school. Call the school for more info or check out our Attendance Policy <insert link to Attendance Policy>*.

1. **Same-day notification of unexplained student absences**

*Have you missed text/call from us checking on your absent child? Don't forget to text/call/email back so we know your child is safe and the absence can be correctly recorded. <Add/delete those that are not applicable>*