



SCHOOL HOURS POLICY

Rationale

- Schools must provide at least 25 hours student instruction per week.
- Foundation (Prep) students are exempt during Term 1.
- The school day is generally between 8.30 am and 3.30 pm however specific starting and finishing times are determined locally based on factors such as:
 - bus schedules
 - links with other schools
 - organisation of the school day
 - school speed zones.

Important: Where possible school times should be organised such that children's ingress and egress occurs within the VicRoads school speed zone times (8.00 - 9.30 am and 2.30 - 4.00 pm) see: VicRoads School speed zones.

Note: Regional Director approval is required for changes to the start and finish times that affect the school bus schedule. Principals must then advise the appropriate transport operators of any significant changes to school finishing times to allow them to consider timetable changes.

- School hours may be varied from time to time for
 - student needs
 - teachers' needs
 - emergency circumstances

Purpose

This policy outlines the requirements relating to school hours and any changes to school hours and processes required for school closure

- To ensure the school provides the required amount of instruction.
- To ensure Tarneit Rise Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure the school complies with Child Safe Standards 1 & 2.

Implementation

- The safety of children is this school's highest priority.
- School hours are determined by the School Council, in consultation with the principal and with input from the community if applicable.
- Daily organisation is determined by the principal.

Foundation (Prep)

- To accommodate local circumstances the principal may dismiss Foundation (Prep) children in January and February, no earlier than 2.00 pm and during the remainder of Term 1, no earlier than 2.30 pm.
- A variation to hours during January and February may include four (4) days per week attendance or a later start to the day, provided that children are not excused for more than 25 per cent of the normal school week.
- To make these adjustments to attendance times the principal must receive School Council agreement, and develop a comprehensive communication strategy with parents/carers.
- The school must ensure that children in Foundation classes are collected by the parent/carer or another person authorised by the parent/carer, or provision is made for the care of the child during normal school hours, when the parent/carer cannot collect the child or wants them to attend school.
- The principal will determine a timetable and procedure to spread the admission of Foundation children over three (3) days in Term 1 when there are large numbers of children to be admitted.

End of Term

- Children can be dismissed after 2.30 pm at the end of Terms 1, 2 and 3 and earlier than 2:30 pm on the last day of Term 4 when School Council agrees provided that the instructional period excluding recess and lunchtime is at least 240 minutes.
- When authorising end of term dismissal times the school will advise relevant authorities to ensure school crossings are supervised and speed signs reflect the new finishing times.
- Important: When determining end of term dismissal times the school will:
 - consider the VicRoads school speed zone times
 - consider coordinating dismissal times with neighbouring schools
 - advise relevant authorities to ensure school crossings are supervised and speed signs reflect the new finishing times.

Stop Work Action

- When strike action is taken the DET expects all schools will remain open and normal arrangements will apply, as far as practicable.
- Any child for whom a parent/carer is unable to provide adequate care will be supervised at school.
- Principals are to be advised 48 hours before the proposed strike action of the teachers who will not be in attendance.
- The principal will arrange for the maximum number of children to attend school and make arrangements with those teachers who will be in attendance for supervision, make special timetable arrangements necessary for the day, make arrangements for any children to attend school when their families who cannot provide adequate supervision at home and send a notice home to parents/carers advising them of the arrangements that will apply.

Emergency Situations

Extreme Weather Conditions

- The school will not be closed on days of extreme heat or heavy rain.

- If there are extreme weather conditions, lunch may be reduced to no less than thirty minutes and dismissal time may be adjusted accordingly.
- Children should only be sent home when there is someone to look after them. Teachers must remain on duty until normal dismissal time to supervise those children who remain at school.

Emergencies

- When children need to be evacuated in response to an emergency, they will be supervised for the duration of the emergency and until the normal dismissal time, provided that it is safe for children to travel home, or dismissed into the care of parents/carer during the evacuation with the details recorded.

Note: Regional Director's approval will be obtained before children can be dismissed.

Water or Electricity Disconnection

- When an electricity or water disconnection will necessitate a school closure and prior notice is received, the principal will seek approval from the Regional Director to close the school. Parents/carers will be advised of the likely time and date of reopening the school.
- If disconnection occurs without prior notice to parents/carers, children will only be sent home when there is a parent/carer at home to look after them and there are no public toilets within reasonable walking distance to which children may be taken, such as at neighbouring school, sports grounds, church yards, railway stations.

Staff Meetings & Conferences

- Principals are not permitted to dismiss children before the normal time for that school to hold staff meetings, conferences or discussions with staff unless there are exceptional circumstances in which the principal, with School Council approval, may dismiss children provided parents/carers are notified in advance.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update early July 2020).

| <u>Ratification Date</u> | <u>Review Date</u> | <u>Policy Number</u> | <u>Version Number</u> | <u>Date Produced</u> |
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Reference:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/hours.aspx