



School Dates Policy

Purpose of this policy

To ensure schools are open on school days for student instruction.

Policy

The Minister for Education determines the days when government schools are open for students.

School term dates

School term dates are determined in five year blocks to assist school planning.

Term four dismissals

Students up to and including Year 9 will attend until the end of the school year.

This table describes the arrangements where other students may be excused from attending school at the end of the year:

Student-free days

Each year schools receive four student-free days (when student instruction does not occur) for professional development, school planning and administration, curriculum development, and student assessment and reporting.

The first day of Term 1 each year will be a student-free day in all government schools to allow for appropriate planning to take place for the arrival of students.

School councils have the flexibility to schedule the remaining three student-free days each year to meet local school needs.

Student-free days should be set well in advance each year so that parents can make suitable arrangements. Where possible, schools are encouraged to coordinate activities with other local schools to promote cooperative professional development and planning and maximise the use of available resources.

Principals are required to inform their regional director of their annual student-free day arrangements as early as possible, but no later than the end of Term 3 of the previous year. The information provided to the regional director should include the dates and proposed activities to be undertaken on each student-free day. The provision of this information is required so that regional directors are able to respond to any emergencies that might arise that impact on particular schools, to ensure non-government schools are aware that alternative transport arrangements will need to be made, and that the student-free days are used for their intended purpose.

Communication - School Community

Principals must inform parents and the broader school community of the scheduling arrangements for student-free days (using community language notices where necessary).

Schools should use a variety of communication strategies to inform their school community of annual student-free day arrangements. These strategies may include notices in school newsletters, on the school web site and answering machine/service, signage outside the school and letters to parents.

Schools serviced by Department of Transport or Department school bus services must advise their service providers of their student-free day arrangements. Coordinating schools must advise affected non-government schools to enable them to make their own arrangements.

Public holidays

Public holidays when schools in Victoria are not open are:

- 1 January (New Year's Day) or substitute day
- 26 January (Australia Day) or substitute day
- second Monday in March (Labour Day)
- Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday
- 25 April (Anzac Day)
- second Monday in June (observance of the sovereign's birthday)
- first Tuesday in November (Melbourne Cup Day) or such other day as is appointed under section 8 of the *Public Holidays Act 1993*

- 25 December (Christmas Day) or substitute day
- 26 December (Boxing Day) or substitute day.

For a full list of declared public holidays see: Term Dates.

Orientation day

Orientation days:

- aim to promote enthusiasm and positive participation for secondary education in Year 6 students
- are part of an extensive transition program conducted by secondary schools throughout the year
- should be run by all secondary colleges on the Tuesday in December (usually the second Tuesday of the month) following the final compulsory day for Year 10 students. Any proposal to change this date should be fully discussed with other schools and the regional director.
- should provide a full day program that:
 - is the responsibility of the secondary college
 - should be devised in consultation with primary schools
 - should not involve any form of testing.

Responsibility for students rests with:

- parents/guardians while students are travelling to and from orientation day
- the secondary school while the students attend orientation day
- the primary school when students do not attend orientation, for example, if they intend to attend a private secondary school.