

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated	October 2016
Review date	October 2018

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Society has a responsibility to prepare young people for successful participation in learning and the broader community
- Families, society, peers and educators and other significant adults influence the life choices of young people
- Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school
- Attendance has benefits and consequences that increase or decrease life choices
- Individuals are able to accept responsibility for their participation in educational programs according to their level of development
- Continuity of relationships and learning in an educational program is dependent upon attendance
- Attendance is a shared responsibility between the staff of preschools and schools, parents/carers, children and students, and members of the wider community
- Attendance is critically linked to the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning and the development of relationships, which then foster improved learning outcomes and increased wellbeing for individuals and groups
- Participation in educational programs fosters the development of personal and social skills

Importance of regular attendance

The likelihood of success in learning is strongly linked to regular attendance and appropriate participation in educational programs. It is crucial that children and students develop habits of regular attendance at an early age, including from the time they are enrolled in a preschool setting.

Students who have poor patterns of attendance are at risk of not achieving their educational, social or psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations. These learners may:

- be socially isolated
- place themselves at risk of harm during times of absence
- be more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable and/or illegal activities
- have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts
- feel insecure in the preschool or school environment
- be more likely to leave school early
- be over-represented in the juvenile justice system
- be the victims of bullying and harassment.

Once learners have begun to absent themselves from preschool or school and the initial cause of this remains undetected or unexplored, it is likely that the pattern of absence will continue and escalate through the student's subsequent school career. Late arrival at school through the primary years is often related to non-attendance during secondary school.

Early warning signs

Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial in order for these patterns to be reversed.

Indicators of students at risk of developing these patterns include the following:

- frequent lateness
- leaving school early
- missing lessons
- being the victim of bullying and harassment
- learning difficulties
- many days absent, either through illness, unexplained reasons or family commitments
- unresolved issues with school personnel (staff or students)
- social or emotional issues
- difficulties at times of transition
- health issues experienced by the student and/or family members

Benefits of regular attendance for students

- Getting the maximum benefit from school will optimise life choices
- Attending school regularly will develop skills and attitudes that will help them to be successful in later life. eg self-discipline, punctuality, being organised and keeping to routines
- Regular attendance leads to an increased likelihood of being successful at school
- Attending regularly leads to making friends and learning to maintain relationships over a length of time
- The acquisition of social skills necessary to live and work successfully with others
- It is safer to be at school than unsupervised away from school
- Be more positive if they have a good attendance record
- Attending school provides opportunities for socialising with friends
- Good attendance will mean that students will learn more and will be more likely to enjoy school

Benefits of regular student attendance for educators

- Able to fulfil responsibilities to the students in your care
- Improved learning outcomes for students
- Less complex management of the learning program as re-teaching parts to students who were absent
- Less complex classroom management as more stable relationships between students likely to be maintained due to less absenteeism
- Able to help students develop habits such as punctuality, self-discipline and organisation which will be of value to them in everyday situations
- Resources currently being spent on following up absences can be spent on the classroom program

Benefits of regular student attendance for parents/carers

- Having a positive influence on their child's education by encouraging regular attendance
- Know that their child is safe at school and not at risk elsewhere
- Know that their child is learning more appropriate things than if they were truanting
- Have peace of mind knowing that children who attend school regularly are more likely to finish Year 12 and have broader opportunities
- Enjoy more structured family routines
- Avoid fines or legal action due to their child's poor attendance at school.

Procedures

<p>The siren will sound at 8.50am to signify that students can enter classrooms.</p>
<p>Parents/carers are requested to advise the front office prior to the start of the school day if their child will be absent. This should be accompanied by a confirming note in the child's diary to be sighted by the class teacher upon the child's return to school. Where the absence is known beforehand eg medical appointment, family reason etc parents/carers are requested to advise the class teacher in writing in the child's diary. A certificate from a qualified medical practitioner is required for student absences for three consecutive days or more.</p>
<p>The teacher will call the roll between 8:50am – 9:00am.</p> <p>Any student absent when the roll is called will be marked as an unexplained absence for the day if the school has not received notification as to the reason for the absence. This will be adjusted if parents/carers provide information at a later time.</p> <p>Any student arriving at school after 8:50am must report to the office and obtain a 'late slip' from the front office staff. The student then proceeds to class and gives the late slip to the class teacher. Teachers will record in the Roll Book the time that the student arrives eg 9:00.</p>
<p>The roll book is sent to the front office each day by 9.15am.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Front office staff will attempt to contact parents/carers to ascertain a reason for absence for any student who is recorded as not being at school by 8:50am without a written explanation (including email to dl.1100.info@schools.sa.edu.au), a phone call to the school or information provided in person by the parent/carer▪ If contact is not able to made by phone the parents/carers will be sent a letter requesting confirmation of their child's absence and the reason for the absence.
<p>Early departure - parents/carers report to the front office. A front office staff member will phone the class teacher/s requesting that the child/ren report to the office. Class teachers will decide if younger students need to be accompanied by another student.</p>
<p>The details of each child's attendance (absence, lateness, early departure) are recorded daily in the class roll book and electronically in DECD EDSAS software. Class teachers and front office staff will bring persistent lateness/early departures and absenteeism to the notice of Leadership for action.</p>
<p>Following three consecutive days of unexplained absence the class teacher will attempt to make contact with the parents/carers. If unsuccessful the matter will be referred to Leadership for action. This may include a home visit by leadership and the class teacher and the matter reported to the Partnership Attendance & Engagement Officer.</p>
<p>In week 8 of each term the principal and staff will meet and review the summary of each child's attendance and punctuality for that term.</p>

Ways for parents/carers to communicate student absence to the school

- Phone: 8251 1393 - office hours for phone messages are 8.00am to 4.00pm weekdays. An answering machine service is available for messages outside office hours.
- Entering into the Skoolbag App
- In writing:
 - Write a note in the Student Diary or Communication Book
 - Send a signed and dated note/letter with a sibling/family member/friend to the front office or class teacher
 - email: dl.1100.info@schools.sa.edu.au
 - fax: 8289 1691
- In person: provide details to the front office or to the class teacher.

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

Document name	Document type
Procedures for Addressing Student Attendance Concerns	Flow Chart
Unexplained Absences	Flow Chart
Explanation of Absence	Letter
Contact with Parents/Carers – Contact Initiated by Staff	Proforma
Student Attendance Improvement Plan	Proforma

