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ATTENDANCE POLICY

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CONTEXT/BELIEF STATEMENT

At Port Noarlunga Primary School we believe schools should provide a safe, success orientated and caring environment. We believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education, enabling them to reach their full potential. School staff should set an example for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

Our aim is to ensure all students can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies. We believe the early detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance and the provision of organisational structures, which are responsive to the needs of students, is vital.

All members of the school community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance and work to the best of their ability and skill as consistently as possible.

Student attendance is everyone's business.

Legal Requirements

A child who is at least six years old but not yet sixteen is of compulsory school age (from 01/01/03) irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability or not. These students are required to be enrolled at a registered or non-government school and must attend the school on every day instruction is provided at the school for the child, unless the Minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent/guardian. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD). The department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

Attendance Improvement Plan

Parent's Responsibilities – Also refer to Student Attendance pamphlet for Parents

Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.

- Students must arrive at school between 8.30 and 8.50 a.m.
- Students must attend school on every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (e.g. illness)
- Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. Usually this comprises of an email, class dojo message, Skoolbag submission, a letter or telephone call from a parent/caregiver or a medical certificate – after three days absence an explanation is required. Any unexplained absences recorded by 10:00am each day are followed up with a text message to the primary parent or caregivers listed in the enrolment form.
- When a student is late for school, it is required that the parent/caregiver explains the reason for lateness.
- Parents/caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely and complete an Exemption form if required. Exemption forms are available from the front office or from the school website.

Teacher's Responsibilities

- Monitor each student's attendance.
- Record absence and reason for absence in absence folder and send to front office by 10.00 a.m. each day.

Late arrivals and early departures will be recorded in the Front Office using the Academy Absences Program. A print out is given to the student which is handed to the class teacher on arrival.

- The school will contact home on third day of unexplained absence. Notify line manager re concerns.
- Other action: Discuss with leadership team or other concerned groups.
- Document any strategies/interventions and include in student's file if deemed necessary. These strategies could include notes to parents/caregivers in diaries/take home books, emails to parents, contact with parents via Dojo, face-to-face meetings with parents etc.)

Leadership Team's Responsibilities

- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- The Student Wellbeing Leader will complete the letter regarding the absence of a student and send home to parent/caregiver. This is done as required. Parents have the opportunity to provide reasons for any absences that are unexplained to that point in time. The letter outlines any unexplained absence clearly, with a reply section attached. This section is returned to the school so that attendance records can be updated.
- The Student Wellbeing Leader will document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in the student's file.
- The Student Wellbeing Leader will refer to an Attendance Officer via EDSAS if attendance issues are not resolved.
- Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month. Parents/caregivers should apply in writing and principals should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advices are to be retained in school files, together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate department officers as required. All applicants for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on Form ED175 and forwarded to the Front Office staff member. A copy of this form is passed on to the class teacher to assist with completing the roll. The original is kept in the Front Office and filed in the student's file once the student returns to school.
- The importance of regular attendance is highlighted at enrolment and preschool-to-school transition meetings.
- Attendance concerns are raised at Site Review Team meetings. These are held once a term. Concerns will be also addressed with parents and caregivers via a letter outlining low percentage attendance.

Targets

- The school's targets for attendance align with the DECD targets each year and are included in our Site Learning Plan.
- The school continues to target unexplained absences. This is process managed by the Student Wellbeing Leader.