



Salisbury Downs Primary School Attendance Policy

1 RATIONALE

- 1.1 At Salisbury Downs Primary School we believe that students need to attend school regularly and punctually in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from school learning time.
- 1.2 Irregular attendance, frequent absence and lateness have been shown to have a negative effect on student learning outcomes.

2 PURPOSE

To ensure that all students can access equitable educational outcomes through:

- 2.1 Maximising a students regular, punctual attendance.
- 2.2 6 days absence per term from Reception to year 7 equals 1 year of schooling missed.
- 2.3 30 minutes late each day equals 5 days absences per year.
- 2.4 Monitoring attendance to enable identification of students of concern and implementation of intervention strategies to help families with the causes of non-attendance.
- 2.5 The provision of student attendance improvement plans and organisational processes for those students identified as at risk.
- 2.6 Ensuring effective communication between parents/ caregivers and the school in relation to school attendance requirements, absence and exemption.

3 GUIDELINES

- 3.1 Under the Education Act of South Australia all children aged between 6 and 16 years of age must be enrolled and attend school regularly, irrespective of distance from school or whether the child has a disability or not.
- 3.2 It is assumed that parents who choose to start their child in preschool or reception have made the commitment to their child's education and so regular attendance is expected.
- 3.3 The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent/ caregiver. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with DECD. The Department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.
- 3.4 Increase explained absence to 93%
- 3.5 Decrease lateness to 5%
- 3.6 Attendance Practice outlines the responsibility of Students, Teachers, Front Office staff, Leadership as well as a list of contributing factors to why children may be absent from school.

BELIEF STATEMENT

Salisbury Downs Primary School (SDPS) is committed to student learning. We believe that students must have maximum attendance and participation in school learning programmes, if they are to develop to their fullest potential. This policy outlines school practices which encourage attendance and deal with non-attendance and 'opting out' of school activities. During school hours, teachers have duty of care responsibilities for all students. As part of this responsibility, they must ascertain reasons for student absence.

STRATEGIES ADOPTED TO SUPPORT ATTENDANCE

To support good attendance and participation in our school we:

- Encourage strong lines of communication between school and home
- Strive to create a safe, harassment free environment
- Provide relevant, appropriate learning programs for students
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment where students do not feel victimised or judged for having attendance or lateness issues but rather supported, respected and understood. Students receive counselling by teachers to assist them through any issues that might impact upon attendance.
- Support students 'at risk' of non-attendance through monitoring, communicating and counselling to ascertain reasons for poor attendance
- Provide lunch and recess for children who have none (this assistance is monitored for Mandatory Notification purposes)
- Monitor attendance and lateness closely and document according to system requirements
- Publish reminders each term about school times and attendance expectations.
- Ensure Attendance Records are sent home at the end of each term giving students a star rating according to their attendance throughout the term. Students at risk are also identified during this process.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every school day unless ill or absent for family reasons
- Participate in all school activities, unless ill or injured
- Pass on any notes about attendance or participation from parents/caregivers or from their teacher to their parent/caregiver.

Student supervision is provided from 8.30am and students should not arrive at school earlier than this.)

- Arrive at school prior to the morning bell at 8.45am – any time after this will be recorded as late
- Report to the office to sign in, if they arrive late (after 9:00am)
- Stay at school all day

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/caregivers are expected to:

- Keep children home when they are ill and seek a medical certificate for 3 days or more of absence
- Notify the school if their child is absent from or late (phone call to the office, note to class teacher, respond to school text message system, skoolbag app)
- Provide a note for class teachers if there is valid reason why students cannot participate in part of the school learning program
- Contact the school if their child is to be collected during the school day
- Contact the school if they know of a reason affecting school attendance upon which the school can act (eg. harassment)
- Ensure that home and emergency phone numbers are up to date
- Arrange to collect children via the office if they are needing to leave early for an explained reason. Parents are required to sign students in and out from the office and provide teacher with an Early Dismissal Card. Be aware that leaving 30 minutes early each day equals 5 days of absence over the year.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Classroom teachers are expected to:

- Maintain attendance records including a record of all late arrivals (after 8:45am)
- Provide a friendly, welcoming classroom environment
- Encourage/seek explanations for absence or lateness by means of attendance slip and phone contact with home
- Follow up issues relating to attendance if notified (eg. harassment)
- Issue reminder slips to students who have unexplained absences
- Seek written information about students who cannot participate in learning activities
- Record/alter information from parents/caregivers as necessary
- Record through the appropriate documentation as highlighted in this document all attempts made to contact family and seek explanations of absences
- Upon failed attempts to make contact with home and no alteration in attendance patterns alert the School Counsellor through Non-Attendance notification letter of their concerns.

Office Staff:

- Record attendance/lateness records on the school database
Pass on details of extended or frequent unexplained/unacceptable absences to Wellbeing Co-ordinator follow up with teachers
- Send out daily reminder texts to families seeking explanations for non-attendance

Wellbeing Co-ordinator is expected to:

- Make contact with home after students have been away for 3 or more days and class teachers have had no luck getting into contact with families.
- Send out absence and lateness letters to families at the end of every term with 10 or more absences or lateness
- Contact families and record date and outcome of calls and if still no contact then ring emergency contacts.
- Call a meeting after 10 days of unexplained absence with the family and form an attendance plan
- Refer students at risk to Regional Attendance Counsellor
- Attend home visits with Regional Attendance Counsellor when safe to do so
- Hold review meetings to see how things are going for the student and the family.

THE SCHOOL PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

- 1 day unexplained absence, a text message is sent via automated computer MGM Wireless
- After 3 days of unexplained absence/lateness class teacher calls home
- If no explanation has been provided, or student has not returned to school after contact has been made 3 times class teacher will refer the situation to School Wellbeing Co-ordinator
- School Wellbeing Co-ordinator will make contact with the family via a phone call if unsuccessful or a commitment of return is not met the Wellbeing Co-ordinator will send out an Attendance letter to the family.
- After 10 days of unexplained absences the Wellbeing Co-ordinator will contact the family to make a meeting time to draw up an attendance plan.
- As per Department of Education and Child Development guidelines, a home visit will be attempted for any student who has been unsighted for 10 consecutive school days
- After this meeting and a commitment to achieving the outcomes of the attendance plan is unsuccessful a referral will be submitted to the Regional Student Attendance Counsellor. Home visits will take place once a student is referred to Regional Attendance Counsellor.

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