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## Attendance Policy

Every child and young person deserves the opportunity to be their best in life. DfE supports the learning and life opportunities of all children and young people, and seeks to help them become strong, creative and resilient learners and to set the trajectory for a lifelong wellbeing. Students need to attend school regularly to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies. All members of the school community are expected to support regular student attendance.

### Legal Requirement

Our school is required under the Education Act 1972 (SA) and the Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Act 2007 to ensure that students enrolled at our school attend school or participate in an approved learning program and maintain appropriate attendance registers. Attendance and punctuality are a shared responsibility between parents/caregivers and the school.

A child who is at least six years old but not yet sixteen is of compulsory school age, 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 government or non-government school and must attend the school every day unless the Minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

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

### Statement of Intent for Attendance and Punctuality

Early identification and intervention of non-attenders, late attenders or irregular attendance has proven to support student learning. The following policy outlines how we can work together to ensure we are supporting the rhythms of our classrooms and provide a healthy learning environment. Our child protection policies require us to abide by all legislative and regulatory obligations and to take necessary action promptly where there are concerns.

We encourage punctuality in both students and teachers for the following reasons:

- To maintain the healthy rhythm and flow of the lessons in the school day.
- For students to demonstrate a healthy respect for teachers, fellow students, content and study.
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- The modelling of punctual and responsible teachers will encourage students to develop self-responsibility in this area.
- The school has a common law, duty of care responsibility.

## Responsibilities

### Parent Responsibilities

- Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.
- Children must arrive at school between 8.30am and 8.50 am.
- Children must attend school on every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent eg. illness.
- Parents must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. Usually, this comprises of a letter or telephone call from a parent/guardian or a medical certificate - after 3 days a written explanation is required.
- When a student is late for school (arrives after 8:55 am) this will be indicated on the roll. It is appropriate that the parent/caregiver explains the reason for lateness.
- Parents/caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely or if the school needs to arrange work at home for students.

### Teacher responsibilities

- Monitor each child's attendance/lateness.
- Record absence and reason for absence and lateness on Sentral and submit to the front office by 9:00 am each day.
- This information will then be recorded on Sentral.
- Send home a standard message to parent if a reason for absence has not been given by the parent via online communication system (Skoolbag, Seesaw, Sentral etc)
- Contact home on the third day of absence if there has been no contact from the parent/caregiver, or if there are any concerns about patterns of non-attendance. Record on Sentral.
- Document any strategies/interventions undertaken and send to the office for inclusion in Sentral.
- After contacting parent/s, alert the leadership team via email or Attendance form.
- Alert the Leadership team if a student has missed more than 10 days within the calendar year via email or Attendance form (when necessary).
- Forward any letters received from parents indicating an upcoming long-term absence due to holidays etc to the office for consideration of temporary exemption by the Principal.

### SSO Responsibilities

- Enter the data on EDSAS and Sentral.
- Monitor students who are regularly absent.
- Alert the class teacher and leadership team if a student attendance is of concern.

### Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal Responsibilities

- Ensure that the Sentral Roll is accurately completed.
- The leadership team will make contact via phone call or standard letter regarding the ongoing absence of a student and send home to parent.
- The leadership team should document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in Sentral.

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- The leadership team will refer to an Attendance Officer 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 or guardians should apply in writing and Principals should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advice are to be retained in school files, together with applications and are to be made available to appropriate departmental officers as required.
- All applicants for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be completed and forwarded for approval.

### **When it's acceptable for children to miss school include times when the:**

- Child is too sick to leave the house
- Significant family events, eg bereavement
- Child has an infectious illness such as gastroenteritis, chickenpox or measles.
- Child needs to attend medical or dental appointments that could not be made out of school hours.
- School principal is provided with a genuine reason that prevents the child from attending school.
- Child has been granted an exemption from school.
- Child has been sent home or suspended from school for disciplinary reasons.
- If a student is absent due to reported illness for three or more consecutive days, Leadership can ask for a medical certificate.

### **Refusal to attend school:**

A child's refusal to go to school can be very distressing both to parents and the child. Non-attendance can take different forms. While some children may refuse to leave home, others may leave the house but not attend school or slip away from the school (truancy). There are many reasons why children refuse to attend school:

- Separation anxiety
- Learning difficulties
- Experiencing friendship difficulties
- Being bullied at school
- Finding positive relationships at school a challenge,

What to do if your child refuses to attend school:

If you have difficulty with your child attending school, you should immediately contact the school to seek help. There are many staff members who can assist you. You can discuss your concerns with your child's Teacher, Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal or the School Principal.