

Walkerville Primary School Attendance Policy

Every child and young person deserve the opportunity to be their best in life. Department for Education 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.

Legislative Framework and Legal Requirements

Walkerville Primary School commits to the principles of the Education and Children's Services Act 2019, the Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020, and the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

The school will ensure students attend or participate in an approved learning program and maintain accurate attendance registers using Sentral and EMS, complying with all Department for Education requirements.

A child who is at least six years old but not yet sixteen is of compulsory school age. These students must be enrolled at a registered government or non-government school and must attend every day unless an exemption has been approved by the Minister.

The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with parents/carers. The Department for Education is responsible for enforcing school attendance and has a legal responsibility to record, monitor, and take appropriate action in cases of non-attendance, consistent with child safety legislation.

Statement of Intent for Attendance and Punctuality

At Walkerville Primary School, we know that regular and on-time attendance helps your child get the most out of their learning. When students arrive on time and attend each day, they can participate fully in lessons, build good friendships, and enjoy the positive routines of school life.

Working together, parents and staff can help children succeed by making punctuality and attendance a shared responsibility. We are committed to keeping our school safe and caring, and we follow all legal requirements to protect and support every student.

Why attendance and punctuality matter:

- Coming to school on time helps your child settle into the day and keeps the classes running smoothly.
- Being punctual shows respect for teachers and classmates, and helps your child feel part of the learning group.
- Teachers lead by example—in being on time and prepared, they encourage students to do the same.
- Good attendance builds habits of responsibility and independence in students.
- As a school, we have a duty to care for and support each child's wellbeing and safety.



Whole-School Approach & Attendance Improvement

Walkerville Primary School maintains a Local Attendance Improvement Plan as part of our Site Improvement Planning. This plan is developed collaboratively with staff, families, and the Governing Council, reviewed annually, and available on our school website and in the office. All staff, students, and families are encouraged to engage positively with this plan, which outlines proactive, targeted and intensive strategies for attendance improvement.

Responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

- Ensure children arrive at school between 8:30 am and 8:50 am.
- Ensure children attend every day instruction is offered, unless the school receives a valid reason (e.g., illness).
- Provide an appropriate explanation for any absence. Acceptable methods: message, letter, telephone call, or medical certificate (written explanation/certificate required after 3 days).
- Advise the school if a child will be late or absent, and of any foreseeable extended absences.
- Notify the school of any issues impacting attendance and partner with the school to remove barriers.

Teacher responsibilities

- Monitor each child's attendance and punctuality.
- Record absence and reason for absence and lateness on Sentral by 9:00am daily.
- Follow up and send a message to parents for any unexplained absence via Skoolbag, Seesaw, Sentral, or similar communication system. Follow up unexplained absences daily and ensure all efforts are recorded; escalate if reasons are not received within 3 school days.
- Contact home on the third day of absence if no parent/caregiver contact is received, and document intervention strategies in Sentral.
- Inform leadership via email or Attendance form for students with habitual (5-9 days/term) or chronic (10+ days/term) non-attendance.
- Forward parent letters requesting principal consideration for planned longer absences.

SSO Responsibilities

- Data entered on EMS and Sentral.
- Monitor patterns of student absence and alert class teachers and leadership if attendance is of concern.
- Support documentation and retention of all communications (SMS, letters, emails) related to absences.

Leadership Team Responsibilities (Principal, Deputy, Assistant Principal)

- Ensure accurate and timely completion of Sentral (or approved LMS) Roll.
- Ensure standardised, daily follow-up of unexplained absences and that all contact attempts are documented, with unexplained absences resolved within 3 school days.
- Document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls, and include in Sentral.
- Refer unresolved attendance matters to relevant DfE support services or Attendance Officer.
- Approve temporary exemption applications up to one month, retain related documentation, and forward longer/permanent exemption applications to the department.
- Report students with 10+ days unexplained absence per term for central tracking, as required by DfE.
- Initiate SAPOL welfare checks and notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) when student safety is identified as a concern due to non-attendance, as per legislative obligations.
- Oversee implementation and review of the school's Attendance Improvement Plan.



Acceptable Absences

Acceptable reasons for children to miss school include:

- Illness (including when too sick to leave home or has an infectious condition)
- Significant family events (e.g., bereavement)
- Medical or dental appointments unable to be scheduled outside school hours
- Principal-approved genuine reasons (including cultural observance)
- Approved exemption
- School-initiated disciplinary absences

Medical certificates should be provided for absences due to illness of three or more consecutive days.

Inclusive Communication and Equity

The school ensures that attendance communication (including explanations of expectations and follow-ups) is accessible to all families, considering language, literacy, cultural or technological needs. Translated and interpreter services, and alternative formats, will be provided as required.

Support, Intervention & Escalation

Walkerville Primary School uses a universal, targeted, and intensive support model for attendance concerns. Early, personalised intervention is provided for students at risk. Unresolved absence issues are referred to DfE Student Support Services.

Where attendance issues co-exist with wellbeing or family hardship, the school works in partnership with parents/caregivers and support agencies to remove barriers and re-engage the student.

Mandatory notifications will be made to CARL for patterns or circumstances of non-attendance suggesting neglect or harm.

Record Keeping

All explanations and communications relating to student absence are retained in accordance with DfE records management policy. Absence notes, SMS responses, and other records are uploaded to Sentral or securely retained in files for audit, departmental, or legal purposes.

Refusal to Attend School

If parents/carers have difficulty with their child attending school, they are to contact the school as soon as possible. Staff (teachers, Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal, Principal) are available to work with parents/carers to address concerns.