



Government
of South Australia
Department for Education
and Child Development

The Pines School Attendance Policy & Procedures



Attendance at The Pines School

The Pines School is committed to ensuring that students, parents/caregivers, staff and the school community understand the importance of attendance and value making high attendance a priority in our school. We aim to work together to support children and families to attend school and improve student outcomes. Children and students need to maximise attendance at preschool and school to gain optimum benefit from education. Ensuring regular attendance at preschool and school is a shared responsibility between parents/caregivers, preschools and schools.

Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies. We believe that 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.

COMPULSORY ENROLMENT

The Pines School is zoned. A child who is at least six years old but not yet sixteen is 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 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.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

Research shows that success in learning is directly proportional to regular attendance and participation in education programs. Non-attendance and irregular attendance can be viewed as early indicators of the potential for disengagement from the education program. There is a correlation between under-achievement in primary school and non-attendance in later years and consequently lack of success in adult life. Absence from school can limit a student's achievement of essential knowledge and skills required for effective participation in work, relationships and families, and active citizenship.

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.

Early identification of, and intervention in, poor attendance is known to improve child and student learning outcomes. Children and students who have patterns of poor attendance are at risk, as they may not achieve their potential in educational and social development.

This means that these children and students may:

- Have gaps in knowledge and understanding resulting in missing basic concepts.
- Lack continuity and familiarity resulting in them feeling less secure within the school environment.
- Reduce opportunities for play activities that improve social/emotional and cognitive development.
- Miss out on learning important basics such as class rules and behaviour norms.
- Struggle to maintain friendships resulting in isolation, bullying or teasing.
- Lower self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Increase likelihood of leaving school early.
- Feel socially isolated.

RESPONSIBILITIES

School's Responsibilities:

- Students are engaged in their learning through quality curriculum, teaching and learning, relationships, and appropriate preschool and school structures and processes.
- Teachers have access to and delivery of high-quality teacher training and development in student engagement and pedagogy that supports this.
- Students are provided with a safe and supportive environment for children, both in the classroom and the yard.
- Students are taught the importance of attending school regularly and are acknowledged for consistent and/or improved attendance.

Responsibilities of children and students:

Children and students enrolled in a preschool or school site have responsibility for their attendance. The level of responsibility will be determined by the individual circumstances of the child.

The expectations are that they:

- Attend preschool, school or other educational programs as negotiated regularly on every day the program is offered.
- Be punctual in arriving at preschool, school or the educational program and for all associated lessons and activities.
- Engage appropriately in the education program as negotiated.
- Wear appropriate school uniform.

Parents' responsibilities:

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

- Children must arrive at school between 8.30 and 8.50am.
- Children must attend school every day unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent.
- Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. Usually this comprises a letter or telephone call or a medical certificate.
- When a student is late for school, it is a requirement that parents/caregivers explain 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 the student.
- Ensure that children are dressed in school uniform.

Teachers' responsibilities:

- Monitor each child's attendance.
- Record absence and reason for absence in Absence Folder and send to the front office by 9.30am daily. EDSAS records only lateness, therefore, if concerned, keep a record of time of arrivals in Absence Folder. EDSAS can record reason for lateness, therefore, include that for record keeping.
- Make contact with family for any 'unexplained' absences.
- Contact home on third day of absence.
- Follow process outlines on the 'Addressing Absenteeism at The Pines' flow chart.
- Document any strategies/interventions and include in student's file.
- Coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested.
- Regularly communicate with school counsellor in regards to students 'at risk'.
- Record information in Individual Yellow Folders for students that have been identified as 'at risk'.

School Counsellor's responsibilities:

- Communicate regularly with teachers in regards to students 'at risk'.
- Work with students individually to improve attendance.
- Communicate with parents where teachers have been unsuccessful.
- Work with students, families and teachers to develop a support plan.
- Ensure intervention in preschools and schools occurs after 10 days of accumulated absence or sooner if the child or student has a poor attendance record
- Document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls etc. in student's Individual Yellow Attendance file.
- Ensure that parents/caregivers are provided with information around attendance policies in the 'Parent Booklet' upon enrolment and yearly.
- Information regarding the importance of student attendance is included in the school newsletter.
- Ensure that teacher induction around attendance procedures is implemented.
- Teachers are provided with a term summary of their class attendance.
- Liaise with Attendance Counsellor and refer students if attendance issues are not resolved.

Principal and Leadership's responsibilities:

- Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to a month. Parents/caregivers should apply in writing and principals should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data and report to the school community through the site's annual report
- All applicants for temporary exemptions exceeding one month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on Form ED175 and forwarded to the Student Attendance Counsellor.

Student Attendance Counsellors may assist by:

- Working with students in a supportive counselling role to improve attendance.
- Visiting students at home and consulting with parents and/or caregivers.
- Inform parent/caregivers of their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance and possible implications of non-compliance.
- Identifying reasons for student non-attendance and making appropriate referrals.
- Monitoring student attendance and reviewing progress as necessary.

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