



# Swan Reach AREA SCHOOL

PO Box 31 • Swan Reach SA 5354  
Phone (08) 8570 2053 • Fax (08) 8570 2325  
www.swanrchas.sa.edu.au • Email: dl.0423\_info@schools.sa.edu.au



Ratified March 2015

## ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

### CONTEXT/BELIEF STATEMENT

The Education Act 1972 requires that children of compulsory school age be enrolled at school. A condition of that enrolment is that a student is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school. Such participation is to include engagement and attendance as required by the program.

Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention.

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.

### GENERAL

A child who is at least 6 years old but not yet 16, 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 or non-government school and is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school.

Students who are 16 but not yet 17 are required to participate in a full-time approved learning program, which is education or training delivered through a school, university or registered training organisation, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or a combination of these. The Compulsory Education Age legislation supports young people to remain in education or training. There may be circumstances, however, where a case for exemption can be made for a student. Applications for exemption for employment will usually be approved providing the employment is for 25 hours or more. Students must remain in an “approved learning program” until their exemption application has been determined.

Children who are not of compulsory age but who have enrolled at a preschool or school are subject to the same participation requirements as those students of compulsory age. Attendance and participation requirements for a particular child of non-compulsory age may be modified to meet his or her specific needs.

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.**

Lawful excuses for the absence from attendance at their education program by a student of compulsory school age include:

- sickness
- danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease
- temporary or permanent infirmity
- events of cultural significance—these could include births, deaths and related ceremonies
- other events approved by the school governing council
- any other unavoidable and sufficient cause.

## **MANDATORY NOTIFICATION RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO STUDENT NON-ATTENDANCE**

The Children's Protection Act, 1993 requires DECS staff and volunteers to notify the Department for Families & Communities, through the Child Abuse Report Line (131478) if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. Under the Children's Protection Act 1993, persistent non attendance at school is identified within the interpretation of "at risk" – Part 1, 6 (2) the child is of compulsory school age but has been persistently absent from school without satisfactory explanation of the absence.

In relation to the above, it is expected that DECS staff will have exhausted all avenues of early intervention/ family support and encouragement prior to making a report regarding non-attendance at school.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Teachers are issued with an **attendance record book** to record student absences.
  - The attendance record book is sent to the office for data entry to EDSAS on a **daily** basis.
  - The attendance book has a record of and reasons for student absence.
  - Each week teachers will be asked to check and sign the week's record of attendance for accuracy and ensure the record is updated if further information is provided.
  - Please be aware that student attendance records, including anecdotal notes etc can be called as legal documents in any court action. All written explanations, replies to absentee notes, medical certificates and other documentation are to be kept at the school for a period of one year and made available to a student attendance counsellor on request. The teacher must endorse each such note with the date on which it was received at the school. Written explanations in school diaries will be considered acceptable if the school uses such diaries. However, where a diary is utilised, a photocopy of the relevant written explanation must be retained by the school. Schools must document all information relating to non-attendance, such as telephone calls, contact with homes and mandatory notification.
  
2. An **Action Plan** for unexplained absence is inside the attendance record book.
  - It is expected that teachers follow the responses as outlined in the Action Plan. We need to be active in following up student non-attendance.
  - Class teachers and/or counsellor, as per the Action Plan, should keep documentation of the steps taken in response to student absence.
  
3. The school will use the EDSAS attendance module accurately to record student absence as the education program participation data are used for legal purposes, student welfare and achievement purposes and school/site resourcing. Attendance and enrolment data must be kept secure. Students and unauthorised persons must not have access to data.

### **ACTIONS FOR UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES**

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	WHO	DOCUMENTATION
1. Three consecutive days unexplained absence or irregular attendance pattern	1. Roll book record noted	Class teacher	Record noted in roll book
	2. Telephone call, note or home visit made	Class teacher	Home contact noted in roll book
	3. Attendance monitored weekly	Class Teacher	Roll Record
2. Further 3 days unexplained absence	1. Roll book record noted. Coordinator/Principal informed.	Class teacher	Record noted in roll book
	2. Telephone call, formal letter posted or home visit made.	Class teacher or Leadership	Home contact noted in roll book.
	3. Notify police if truancy suspected and request police to look out for student.	Leadership	Police notification recorded
	4. Student identified as at risk and counselled	Leadership & Counsellor	Notes of conversations
3. Unexplained absence / unsatisfactory attendance continues	1. Roll book record noted and referral to Leadership made.	Class teacher	Record noted in roll book.
	2. Student Referral through EDSAS by Principal for intervention by Attendance Counsellor.	Principal via referral Leadership	EDSAS printout of attendance and referral go in Student File.
	3. Instigate police prosecution	Student Attendance Counsellor (DECD)	

### **ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Priorities/ Desired Outcomes	Targets	Strategies (to achieve desired outcomes)	Roles and Responsibilities
<i>High attendance rate is maintained and improved</i>	<i>School attains DECD target 95%</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor attendance on a regular basis. Attendance statistics are recorded on student information folder each term and class teachers follow up "U" in record book.</li> <li>• Consistency in interpretation of codes across the school.</li> <li>• All staff strictly follow attendance policy. Personal contact is made with families as necessary regarding attendance.</li> </ul>	<i>Home Group Teachers / Principal</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular personal contact is made with families at risk.</li> </ul>	<i>Home Group Teachers</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance data included on written reports.</li> </ul>	<i>Support Staff</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interagency referrals are completed for students at risk and individual attendance plans are developed.</li> <li>• Continue to celebrate good attendance through end of semester certificates.</li> <li>• Promotion of the advantages of positive attendance in newsletters.</li> </ul>	<i>Principal</i>



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Date

Dear

It has been one of our continuing priorities to address issues of attendance amongst students. Our records for term \_\_\_\_\_ show that your child \_\_\_\_\_ has been absent on \_\_\_\_\_ days and/or late on \_\_\_\_\_ days.

We understand that this may be due to unavoidable reasons, including illness or family holidays, which cannot be taken at any other time of the year.

However, irrespective of the cause, research shows that students who are absent for more than 10 days per year are disadvantaged both educationally and socially. Your child is at risk of falling into this category and you should be aware that his/her absence over the course of this year so far will have had some detrimental effect on his/her education. Some of the effects experienced by these students may include:

- Gaps in knowledge and understanding resulting in missing basic concepts.
- Lack of continuity and familiarity resulting in them feeling less secure within the school environment.
- The loss of opportunities for play activities which improve social/emotional and cognitive development.
- Missing out on learning important basics such as class rules and behaviour norms.
- Belief that punctuality and attendance are not important.
- Inability to maintain friendships resulting in isolation, bullying or teasing.
- Loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Increased likelihood of leaving school early.

We ask you to consider the reasons for your child's absences and to try and improve his/her attendance if possible next term. Should you be having problems in getting your child to attend school, please call us and make a time to talk as we can possibly help you or bring in support services that can assist with such problems. The enclosed pamphlet may further explain the importance of good attendance.

Yours truly,

John Robertson  
Principal