Introduction

Regular attendance in the primary school years provides children with the basic skills for learning and educational outcomes, and assists the development of social skills including communication, self-esteem, teamwork and friendship building.

Poor patterns of attendance can place students at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations.

Once learners have begun to absent themselves from school, and the initial cause of this remains undetected or unexplored, it is likely that the pattern of absence will continue and escalate through the subsequent school career.

School Attendance Requirements

Students are expected to attend school, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless:

1. There is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student, or
2. The student has a partial enrolment in the school for particular activities.

Responsibilities for School Attendance

Parents/Carers:

• Ensure that their child attends school at all times when school is open for instruction
• Promote and provide organisational support to their child for full attendance and participation at school on all designated school days
• Ensure that their child is on time for school each day
• Notify the school of their child’s absence as soon as possible on the first day of the child’s absences
• Provide a written note to the school explaining why an absence has occurred
• Notify the school in advance if an absence of any period longer than two (2) days is planned
• Support their child’s learning during continued or prolonged absences through the implementation of agreed student absence learning plan
• Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school to develop and implement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the school

Students

• Attend school at all times when the school is open for instruction
• Arrive on time to school

School

• Promote student attendance through clear statements of expectations and procedures
• Ensure that attendance is marked twice a day; 9.00am and 2.15pm
• Maintain accurate records of student attendance using Reporter Pro
• Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly for early identification and the provision of timely, targeted support to students at risk of poor attendance and possible disengagement from school
• Pursue and record an explanation for every absence
• Work collaboratively with parents/carers and students to develop an agreed Student Absence Learning Plan when a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time. This process should involve discussion with the parents/carers about the possible impact of the proposed absence on the student’s learning
• Convene a student support group meeting which is attendance focussed with parents/carers and students when a student’s attendance pattern is of concern to the school

Approved Absences
The following are categorised as approved absences:
• Illness
• Medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or not appropriate
• Bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
• School refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes
• Cultural observance, if the parent notifies the school in advance
• Family holidays, where the parent notifies the school in advance and the student completes any Student Absence Learning Plan agreed by the school, student and parent.

Unexplained Absences
If a parent/carer does not contact the School to provide an explanation on the day of the student absence, the child’s Home Group Teacher must attempt to contact the child’s parent/carer (for example by telephone, email) within three days of the absence.

If an explanation is received, the accurate cause of the absence must be recorded in Reporter Pro.

If, following contact by telephone or email, no explanation has been provided within 10 school days, the absence should be recorded in Reporter Pro as an unexplained absence.

Following up absences
Approved absences will be excused and require no further follow up by the Home Group Teacher.

Responding to Absenteeism
Home Group Teachers are required to intervene when they have identified a student’s absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency. To enable a consistent and school wide approach the following process is to be followed:
1. Contact the child’s parents to discuss your concerns (seek interpreter support if required).
   • During this discussion ensure that you provide the parent with accurate details of the child’s absences
   • Ascertain with the parent whether there are any specific issues/reasons why the child is absent (lack of transport, family problem etc)
   • Ask what, if any, support is needed to ensure the child regularly attends school.
   • Agree on a strategy/target for ensuring the child is regularly attending school.

2. Keep a written record of the date and time when the parent/carer was contacted.
3. Keep a written record of the issues discussed with the parent/carer.

4. If after this initial discussion there continues a pattern of absenteeism, the Home Group Teacher is to immediately notify The Director of Student Wellbeing and Engagement.
   - Once notified, the Director of Student Wellbeing and Engagement and will review the actions taken to date and work with the Home Group Teacher to identify other possible courses of action.
   - The Director of Student Wellbeing and Engagement will draw upon written records to further address the issue.

Parents should be informed that if a student has repeated absences without a reasonable excuse or explanation, the parent may be issued with a School Attendance Notice from a DEECD School Attendance Officer.

Responding to Regular Late Arrival to School

Home Group Teachers are required to intervene when they have identified any student who is regularly arriving late to school. To enable a consistent and school wide approach the following process is to be followed:

1. Contact the child’s parents to discuss your concerns (seek interpreter support if required).
   - During this discussion ensure that you provide the parent with accurate details of the number of times the child has arrived late.
   - Ascertain with the parent whether there are any specific issues/reasons why the child is arriving late (lack of transport, family problem etc)
   - Stress the positive impact on the child’s learning when he/she is arriving to school on time
   - Ask what, if any support is need to ensure the child arrives on time to school.
   - Agree on a strategy/target for ensuring the child is arriving on time for school.

2. Keep a written record of the date and time when the parent/carers was contacted.

3. Keep a written record of the issues discussed with the parent/carer.

4. If after this initial discussion there continues a pattern of late arrival, the Home Group Teacher is to immediately notify The Director of Student Wellbeing and Engagement.
   - Once notified, the Director of Student Wellbeing and Engagement and will review the actions taken to date and work with the teacher to identify other possible courses of action.
   - The Director of Student Wellbeing and Engagement will draw upon your written records to further address the issue.

Supporting Policies and Procedures

F.4 Learning Framework
F.7 Responding to Diversity Framework
F.6 Promoting Student Engagement and Positive Behaviour Framework
3.1 Child Safe Policy

Communication and Evaluation

A copy of this policy and the associated procedures will be provided to all staff annually.

The Student Attendance Policy and the associated procedures will be widely promoted to all students, staff, parents/carers via the School website and Newsletter.

This policy will be reviewed biannually.