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Gawler Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

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 our school. Such participation is to include engagement and attendance as required by the program.

The Compulsory Education Legislation, implemented at the beginning of 2009, requires all young people between the ages of 6 to 17 to participate in a full-time approved learning program.

Children who are not at compulsory age but who have enrolled at our 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.

AGE OF COMPULSION:

A child who is six years old but not yet sixteen is of compulsory school age. Every child of compulsory school age is required to be enrolled at a school or Open Access College and is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school.

The implementation of the Compulsory Education Legislation requires all young people between the age of 6 and 17 to participate in a full time approved learning program which is education or training delivered through the school, university or registered training organisation, an apprenticeship or traineeship or a combination of these.

WE BELIEVE:

- Students need to attend regularly in order to participate fully, and gain maximum benefit from schooling.
- Parent/Carer's attitude to regular and on time attendance is paramount in avoiding future truancy.
- Successful students are well organised and start the day on time.
- Our attendance policy and procedures will ensure a consistent approach to managing non-attendance across the school.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

As a school community we all have a role to play by ensuring student attendance is regular.

PARENT/CARER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Get their children to and from school.
- Ensure children **are not dropped off at school before 8.30am** unless they are attending Before School Care.
- Ensure children attend school every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for their absence.
- Ensure students attend school from 8.50am to 3.05 pm on each school day.
- Notify the school if a child is absent, in either written or verbal form. For some extended absences teachers can arrange for work to be sent home.
- Complete a temporary exemption from, available from the front desk, **for absences longer than 5 days** e.g. family travel or holidays,. This absence needs to be approved by the school principal.

- Ensure that when their child is late for school an explanation is given as to the reason for lateness. The front desk person will hand over a white slip. This slip needs to be handed to the child's class teacher on entering the classroom.
- Ensure that if they are going to be late picking their child up that they let the front office staff know so that their child can wait safely in the office.
- Ensure that if they pick their child up during the school day, e.g. doctor or dentist appointment, they must go to the front office to sign out their child, get the sign out receipt and then collect their child. Parents must go to the front office on return with their child to sign the child back in.

Under the Education Act it is a legal requirement for parents / caregivers to notify the school of their child's absence either by phone or by a written note.

TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY:

- Monitor each child's attendance.
- Be consistent in the handling of student absences.
- Accurately record attendance and lateness on EDSAS roll sheets.
- Check roll sheets regularly to ensure they are updated.
- Ensure that completed roll sheets are sent to the front office each day by **no later than 9.30am**
- Contact home on the third day of unexplained absence. A personal phone call works best. Record response.
- Identify and closely monitor students at risk of poor attendance. Inform leadership of progress.
- Endorse medical notes and certificates and send to the office to be attached to roll sheets then filed in a safe secure location.
- Have meetings with parents at school or on very special circumstances conduct a home visit. (Refer to "Home Visiting" policy).
- Develop individual attendance plans for any student who has been identified at risk through poor attendance.
- Review attendance plans on a regular basis.
- Coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested (This work may not necessarily be what is happening in the classroom).

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Make sure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in following up attendance.
- Ensure that parents and students are aware of our "Attendance Policy".
- Keep daily record of the number of absences across the school
- Make sure that front desk attendance processes work with classroom processes and there is good communication. Discuss at staff meetings on a regular basis.
- Review class attendance roll sheets three times a term.
- Develop a whole school attendance management plan that clearly outlines attendance targets and strategies.

- Make sure that teachers are aware of our attendance plan and targets and that they are using the processes and procedures outlined in this policy. This will be a regular agenda item for performance development meetings.
- Support teachers who have tried to work with parents on attendance issues by organising a more formal meeting with parents and or involving our regional attendance officer.
- Refer individual students and parent/caregivers to regional support services.
- Send a letter for unexplained absences to parents of students who have been identified as at risk of poor attendance.
- Make sure staff have read and have a copy of the home visiting policy, EDSAS attendance codes, individual attendance plan and whole school attendance action plan.
- Request that parents complete a form for temporary exemption of their children from school for when they go away for holidays, family travel, etc. The principal has the delegation to approve such written requests.
- Ensure parents wishing to start home schooling or enrol their child with the Open Access College must complete forms and have approval from head office for this exemption or change.
- Photocopy any diary absentee notes and keep for twelve months.
- Acknowledge and celebrate regular attendance, at assemblies and in classrooms
- Inform parents/carers via newsletter the importance of regular attendance.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Attend school from 8.50am to 3.05pm on each school day.
- Report to the front office if arriving after 8.50am to sign and be given a White Slip, which is to be given to the class teacher. A **Green Slip** will be given to students who are not accompanied by an adult. This slip needs to be given to the parents / caregivers.
- Remind parents / caregivers to contact the school with an explanation for any absences.

ARRIVING LATE AT SCHOOL:

If a student arrives after 8.50am:

- Students must report to the office before entering the classroom.
- At the front office, students are given a 'white slip' and '**Green slip**'
- Students need to give the 'white slip' to their class teacher when entering the class.
- '**Green slip**' is taken home for parent to fill and return to school
- Teachers need to record lateness on the roll sheet and also the time and reason why.
- Teachers to contact parents / caregivers if they see a pattern of lateness occurring.
- An individual lateness plan may be developed to help change students lateness.
- Teachers to notify leadership of all known improvements.

OFFICE PROCEDURES:

The front desk person will:

- Assist parents and students when signing in late or signing out early.
- Keep EDSAS data e.g. student enrolment or students changing schools up to date.
- Record any phone messages re lateness or absence on EDSAS and on an absence slip.
- Receive roll sheets from teachers each day by **no later than 9.30am**
- Check office phone call records and ensure absences have been recorded on roll sheets.
- Check office late sign in reasons match what is recorded on roll sheets.

- Enter data into EDSAS on receipt of all roll sheets.
- Record daily the number of absences for each class
- Provide a new roll sheet to teachers on receipt of their completed one.
- Provide teachers and senior staff on Mondays of week 4, 7 and 10 with an attendance summary to check for any patterns of students' absences, late arrivals or early dismissals.
- 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 officer on request.

STUDENTS AT RISK:

If a student has established a pattern of absences, late arrivals or early dismissal they are considered to be at risk.

- Class teachers will identify students at risk and monitor their attendance.
- Teachers will follow up with contact to parents / caregiver.
- Teachers may provide information to the student learning team to consider with other data collected (e.g. learning data).
- Leadership and teachers will meet regularly to discuss action in relation to students at risk and this will be documented.
- At the end of each term the deputy may need to send a letter home to some parents pointing out how much school has been missed.
- A more formalised meeting may be called involving attendance officer, parents, teacher and a representative from leadership if needed.
- An individual attendance plan will be drawn up and actioned. This plan will be reviewed on a regular basis.

LAWFUL EXCUSES FOR THE ABSENCE FROM ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL BY A STUDENT OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE INCLUDE:

- Sickness.
- Danger of being affected by an infectious disease.
- Temporary or permanent infirmity.
- Events of cultural significance – these include births, deaths and related ceremonies.
- Other events approved by the school governing council.
- Any other unavoidable and sufficient cause.

DATA SECURITY:

Attendance and enrolment data must be kept secure at school. Students and unauthorised persons must not have access to this data.

AT THE END OF EACH TERM:

- Teacher signs roll book print outs to validate students who are enrolled, left, transferred or absences.
- Teacher returns the hard copy to the nominated office person who will file for audit purposes as a legal requirement.

Appendix

- 1. Home Visit Procedures for Northern Region schools**
- 2. EDSAS Codes of Absences**

HOME VISIT PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE:

Monitoring On Going Non Attendance

HOME VISITS:

Making Home visits has been raised in relation to staff safety by school personnel

Procedures, including parent/caregiver notification and home visits, are strategies documented in the DECD Attendance Policy for follow up of student non-attendance.

The following guidelines have been developed in the Northern Adelaide Region in relation to Staff Making Home Visits:

- ❖ Home visits are only one part of the process of monitoring the attendance (or non attendance) of individual students and children.
- ❖ Phone calls, emails, letters and when appropriate, home visits, continue at the School Level even after a Referral has been made to the Student Attendance Counsellor. Schools remain engaged with the family throughout the referral and case management process.
- ❖ Keeping records of all interventions, correspondence and actions is essential. Phone calls, letters home, registered letters - simply need either a copy or date and time noted. Try to keep all documentation in one place so it can be checked and added to easily, and is readily available when required. For future action such as mandatory notifications, prosecutions etc., it is the recording of all ongoing and reasonable attempts to make contact with the family that is critical.

A Home Visit occurs:

- ❖ **After** consultation with and **approval** by the Principal. The Principal will be part of any home visit. This decision should be based on the best information available at the time, taking into consideration the welfare of the child and the safety and welfare of staff making the proposed home visit. The visits should not occur if you perceive any risks which include physical risks and any possible accusations of inappropriate behaviour.

Individual staff ought not to make these decisions without seeking approval to do so.

If a decision is made NOT to approve a Home Visit based on staff safety concerns, the evidence on which the decisions was taken must be added to the attendance documentation.

If a home visit is considered, you should:

- ❖ Discuss with parents and / or others involved with the family to assess likely risks.
- ❖ Ensure that 2 people attend all home visits. This could involve other leadership / staff members, Partnership Attendance Counsellor (if a current active case) or other agency personnel involved in the case.
- ❖ An alternate venue may be an option rather than attend the home i.e. Gawler Education Office
- ❖ Ensure your principal is aware of the proposed meeting times and the address.
- ❖ Have a mobile phone set up with fast dial facilities.
- ❖ **NOT** enter the home if an adult is not present.
- ❖ If invited into the home, sit by the door. React to any sign of risk by terminating the meeting.
- ❖ **NOT** park in the driveway but ensure your car is parked to enable a quick exit.
- ❖ Be aware of the parent comfort levels as a guide to your approach and whether the meeting is achieving the desired goals.

CODES FOR ABSENCES

Each absence must be recorded with a code to explain the reason for each absence.

The use of codes is essential to provide information about the reasons for non-attendance. It is important schools record information with accuracy. Teachers need to follow up absences to ensure the code finally recorded reflects the accurate reason, especially for those absences initially recorded as unexplained (code 'U').

As codes are updated and developed intermittently to record specific absences, sites should regularly check the updates provided on the DECD SSONet and ensure the information is made available to all staff so they can continue to provide accurate absence data.

CODES:

Code	Explanation
C	Illness - with verification by doctor's letter or certificate, a dentist's appointment card or some other health practitioner's communication.
D	Dispute – where the school is closed for industrial action.
E	Exemption – Approved absences by Principal e.g. holidays, travel.
F	Family/Social – for absences condoned by a parent as being for family, social or cultural reasons.
G	Off-site Learning – any program offered by another provider but still managed through the school.
I	Illness – with absences covered by notes, messages or phone calls from parents, stating a medical condition or illness.
K	Take Home – A student sent home for disciplinary reasons.
M	Camps and Excursions.
N	Not approved – Absent without parent/guardian approval.
P	Alternative placement – for off-site learning programs for students who have been excluded and are undertaking an alternative program.
Q	Approved Medical Program.
R	Risk/Hazard – On days posing a risk/hazard to student welfare/wellbeing.
S	Suspension – External suspension to an agreed place.
T	School sport.
U	Unexplained.
Z	School follow up – Students who are absent for an extended period of time and the school is actively following up to try to re-engage the student.