



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale:

Regular attendance provides the best opportunity for student learning.

Expectations:

1. It is expected that students will attend school daily.
2. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and if absent, they provide a written explanation explaining why the absence occurred.
3. Teachers mark the attendance roll twice daily and follow up unexplained absences.
4. Poor attendance is followed up by school personnel with the view to developing and implementing strategies that minimise future absences and build positive home-school relationships.
5. Strategies for managing long term absences should be discussed with the child's class teacher.
6. Excessive absenteeism will require follow-up by the principal and may be referred to DEECD.

Implementation Strategies:

In order to raise the awareness of parents of the critical importance of children being on time and at school every day.

The Role of the School

Information Sharing

- ✓ Communicating with parents regarding attendance expectations
- ✓ Informing parents about current research that links attendance with student achievement levels
- ✓ Providing information to parents on the sequential nature of lessons and learning and how their child's learning can be severely disrupted if they miss crucial learning points

- ✓ Including regular articles in the newsletter
- ✓ Making presentations at information evenings for prospective Prep student parents to ensure that they clearly understand the importance of being at school and on time daily
- ✓ Including school attendance data in Annual reports to the school community and highlighted as improvement strategies in the Annual Implementation Plan and Strategic Plan for the school
- ✓ Identifying trends for high absence days and publishing this information in the school newsletter and in separate flyers to parents
- ✓ Organise meeting with parents of identified students to address attendance issues

Intervention

- ✓ Providing special interest lunch time activities on a regular basis
- ✓ Grounds development projects initiated to stimulate student engagement
- ✓ Offering extra curricula opportunities to students
- ✓ Providing peer mediation training to student leaders to support students deal with situations in the yard
- ✓ Working closely with families and support personnel to support families suffering hardships or who are in crisis
- ✓ Implementing a split lunch timetable to reduce the number of students in the yard at any one time

Management Issues

- ✓ Developing an absence protocol that defines the roles and responsibilities of all staff members when addressing attendance
- ✓ Celebrating with individual students / classes who have shown improved attendance

Implementation Strategies:

Classroom -

Management Issues

- ✓ Class teacher marking e-cases roll and paper attendance roll twice daily
- ✓ Regularly monitoring student attendance data including weekly analysis and identification of at risk students
- ✓ Making phone calls to parents on the third consecutive days absence by any one student
- ✓ Ensuring a strong welfare and supportive approach is provided for families who are experiencing difficulties
- ✓ Providing regular reminders for children
- ✓ Insisting on notes to explain all absences
- ✓ Records of written or verbal student absence notifications from office staff and by teachers maintained
- ✓ Finding out relevant information about students and factors which may affect their regular attendance at school
- ✓ Formally reporting absences on mid and end of year written reports

Learning / Classroom Environment

- ✓ Providing a stimulating and supportive learning environment
- ✓ Providing a wide range of experiences designed to excite and enthuse students - may include 'surprise' fun activities.
- ✓ Promoting upcoming activities and classroom programs
- ✓ Verbally rewarding and acknowledging students who improve their attendance rates over time
- ✓ Promoting attendance with individual attendance charts
- ✓ Providing weekly class on-time awards
- ✓ Talking positively about regular attendance
- ✓ Providing for long-term absences by organising authentic work as required eg. overseas / interstate visits
- ✓ Modelling effective timekeeping practices by expecting students to undertake a range of activities within a specified time

Implementation Strategies:

Administration -

- ✓ Roll summary data is transferred daily to CASES 21
- ✓ Using CASES 21 to generate absence reports on a monthly basis
- ✓ Using formal letters and follow-up phone calls to contact parents of children with ongoing attendance issues (Principal Class)
- ✓ Provision of a trained First Aid Officer to support students
- ✓ Daily late arrivals and early dismissals collected

Information for the Community

Why 'It's Not Ok to Be Late to School'

Latecomers:

- * Miss out of talking to their class teacher before school
- * Miss out on playing with other children before school
- * Miss out on organisation time, for example getting their work books and pencil case from their tub and setting up their table for the day - miss out on being organised
- * Miss out on roll marking, lunch order being sent to the canteen and taking monies or notices to the office - and their notices and lunch orders often stay in their school bag
- * Miss out on learning time when they take their lunch order to the canteen and monies or notices to the office
- * Miss out on hearing what's happening for the day
- * Miss out on the early instructions from the teacher therefore are unsure about what they have to do in the lesson
- * Are often unsure about what they have to do in the lesson
- * Can arrive at their classroom to find that their class has gone to a specialist lesson and they do not know where to go
- * Particularly miss out on reading and writing learning time
- * Find learning becomes disjointed and difficult
- * Are failing to take responsibility for their learning
- * Tend not to see being late as a problem
- * Are often unapologetic to the teacher and the class
- * Distract other students when they arrive and stand out from the rest of the class
- * Require teachers to repeat instructions and or / find extra sheets or materials before late students can begin working

Why 'It's Not Ok to Be Away'

When students stay away from school their learning and friendships are affected and their teachers become frustrated and disappointed because learning becomes disjointed and difficult.

Students who stay away from school:

- * Miss out on the introduction of new work and fail to complete work
- * Miss revision of work
- * Miss maths, reading and spelling tests important to the development of sequential learning programs
- * Miss homework explanation and worksheets
- * Fall behind in their learning
- * Develop disjointed home-reading routines
- * Develop inconsistent homework returns
- * May lack confidence and feel embarrassed because they cannot do the work the class has been studying
- * Feel left out from class discussion when they have missed a special class activity and cannot do the associated work
- * Miss specialist lessons because these lessons only occur once a week and so, for example, art work is not completed or is rushed in order to finish in the limited time available, physical education skill work is not practised and they may miss out on being selected for sports events / teams / competitions, performing arts sessions become disjointed and they may miss out on being in a school play or production / choir or dance group.
- * Miss notices and newsletters
- * Miss celebrations, for example Student of the Week, Citizen of the Term, class awards, excursions, school visitors, assemblies and special activities
- * Can find it difficult to break into established friendship groups and develop good friendships with their peers
- * Can develop a poor attitude towards school believing 'I won't miss much if I'm not at school'
- * Fail to realise that the teachers and students miss them

Sometimes students stay at home for reasons that are not acceptable. For example:

- * The student's birthday
- * The parents' or siblings' birthday
- * Too tired to come to school because of regular late nights
- * Staying away for the whole day when an appointment is booked for a short time in the morning and afternoon
- * Weather conditions, too hot / too cold /raining (commercial air conditioning and heating is provided in each classroom and the school operates an alternative hot day / wet day timetable)

NB: If you have attendance issues please contact the school so that a meeting can be made to discuss your concerns.