



Whyalla Town Primary School

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Government
of South Australia

Department of Education
and Children's Services

Attendance Policy

Whyalla Town Primary School

Rationale

- The *Education Act* requires that children of school age (six-seventeen years) to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Education Department (DFE).
- Education is a sequential process. Absences often mean students miss important stages in the development of topics, causing them to find 'catching up' difficult and contributes significantly to student failure at school.
- Early identification of, and intervention in, poor attendance is known to improve child and student learning outcomes.
- Attendance is a shared responsibility between the staff of schools, parents/caregivers, children and students, and members of the wider community.

Aims

- To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary absences.

Implementation

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school and are only absent if ill or other approved reasonable grounds.
- Illness is reasonable grounds for an absence, shopping excursions or birthdays are not – principals have the authority to request a medical certificate for absences pertaining to illness.
- Parents have a further responsibility to inform the school by providing a written note, phone call to the school or a message via the REMIND App explaining why an absence or lateness has occurred.
- Teachers must document the reason for the absence or lateness (even if taken by phone) and keep as a record.
- Teachers must record student absences in the **morning** and in the **afternoon using the EDUPORTAL Timetable**. They are then aggregated on our database and communicated to the Department for Education (DFE) as required.
- Student absences are uploaded daily onto EDSAS at 10am. Afternoon absences will be uploaded the following day.
- Parents/caregivers will receive an SMS if their child has been marked as absent or late, asking for an explanation for the absence.

- Students who have permission to leave the school during the school day must be signed out by the parent or guardian at the front office **prior** to collecting their child.
- Teachers of students who have been absent for 3 consecutive days without an explanation have a responsibility to contact parents on the **third day** to seek reasons for the absence.
- Teachers need to follow up unexplained absences and lateness and request reasons for these and document.
- **Identified patterns / unexplained absences** must be reported to the Wellbeing Leader using (Form 3 – found on 'O' drive).
- The Wellbeing Leader will initiate a consultation conversation with the social worker for Attendance and Engagement with the intention to submit a referral.
- Teachers must report absences to the Wellbeing Leader that occur after 10 days of accumulated absence, or sooner if the student has a poor attendance record.
- At the end of each term teachers will receive a **Student Attendance Report**. This report needs to be thoroughly checked and signed off as being a true and accurate record of student attendance.
- The Department for Education (DFE) and enrolment auditors may seek student attendance records at any time.
- The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
- The Principal has a further responsibility to ensure that unexplained absences are investigated, and that high levels of absenteeism are adequately explained.
- The Principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised by the school.
- Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Department of Child Protection and to the Education Department (DFE)
- Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student mid-year and end of year reports. The data will show absences and lateness.
- Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department for Education (DFE) and the wider community each year as part of the Annual Report.
- Students who are not present at the time of the morning roll call, 8:50am, will be marked as absent, this will be modified when and if the student arrives at school with an explanation by 9:30am.
- Students who leave school **12pm to 2:45pm will be marked as absent .5 (Afternoon)**
- Students leaving between **2:45pm to 3.15pm are marked as early dismissal**
- Students who arrive to school later than **9:30am will be marked absent .5 (Morning)**
- Students arriving after **8:50 and up to 9:30am will be marked late.**
- Leadership will discuss attendance concerns as part of the agenda at leadership meetings.
- Habitual and Chronic absences will be collected at the beginning of every month, this information will be collated and interventions required will be processed.

Communication and review

- Consultation has occurred with:
 - Students through meeting with student leaders (SRC) to discuss and seek feedback on the policy
 - The broader community by consultation with parent members of our Governing Council.
 - Staff through email and consultation to seek feedback on the policy.
 - The policy is accessible via the school website ([School Policies & Procedures - WTPS \(whytownps.sa.edu.au\)](https://www.whytownps.sa.edu.au/SchoolPolicies&Procedures)).
 - If at any point you would like another copy of the Attendance Policy please see the front office.
 - This policy is reviewed on a 3 year review cycle.
 - **This policy was last ratified by Governing Council in March 2023**

Questions, concerns and further information

This policy has been implemented by the school in line with the Department for Education's Attendance Policy and the *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* and the *Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020*. You can find more information about this policy [Attendance policy \(edi.sa.edu.au\)](https://www.edi.sa.edu.au/attendance-policy)

If you have any questions or concerns about the department's policy, you can contact the department at:

Email: education.customers@sa.gov.au or submit an online feedback form.

Phone: 1800 088158

Please contact the school directly to discuss the possibility of an exemption if your child has exceptional circumstances as outlined in this policy.