ATTENDANCE POLICY

Eudunda Area School

Is Your Child at School?

Information for Parents

COMPULSORY ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Regular attendance and participation in schooling is an important factor in educational and life success. Students who are regular non-attenders are at risk of alienation from education that can lead to decreased options for future pathways.

Under the Education Act of South Australia, parents and guardians are responsible for the regular attendance of all children in their care between the ages of 6 and 17 years. (Education Act of South Australia, part VI Section 74-81).

The encouragement and maintenance of regular school attendance is also the responsibility of school and preschool staff who work closely with parents and guardians to maximise learning opportunities for children.

Schools and preschools work with parents to encourage attendance and participation to:

- Provide a safe, success orientated and caring environment.
- Provide relevant learning programs for all students.
- Monitor and maintain accurate records of attendance.
- Ensure non-attendance is followed up through early intervention.
- Develop strategies to resolve attendance difficulties.
- Refer to student attendance counsellors and other support service if additional support is needed.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Under the Education Act, parents and guardians are responsible for the regular attendance of all children in their care between the ages of 6 and 17 years. There are legal implications for those parents who are unable to demonstrate they are meeting this responsibility.

IS REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?

Yes, from the first day! If students miss the basic skills in the early years of school, they often experience difficulties later. It has been shown that irregular attendance in the early school years can lead to poor patterns of attendance in primary then secondary years.

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Six days absence per term for Early Years students to the end of Year Seven equals one year of schooling missed.

Half an hour late each day equals five days absence per term.

DO I HAVE TO SEND MY CHILD TO SCHOOL?

Yes. All children between the ages of 6 and 17 years are required by law to attend school regularly.

Please note that according to current law, a child under the age of compulsion must not partake in paid work during school hours.

DO I HAVE TO SEND MY CHILD EVERY DAY?

Yes. Unless...

- The child is too sick to leave the house.
- The child has an infectious disease like chicken pox, mumps or measles.
- The child has an injury preventing movement around school.
- The child is going with his or her parents on a family holiday which cannot be arranged in school vacations. This
- should be arranged with the Principal prior to the absence by applying for a school exemption.
- The Principal is provided with any genuine and acceptable reason preventing the child's attendance.

Whenever possible, dental and medical appointments should be made out of school hours.

MUST I NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN AWAY?

Yes. On your child's return to school, a note must be supplied to cover the days missed. If your child has seen a medical practitioner, eg doctor, dentist etc. A note or appointment card from the practitioner will help explain the absence. If you know of a future absence, please notify the school beforehand and find out if an exemption is required. Parents must request an exemption and fill in an 'Application for Exemption from School' (ED175) if absence is to be more than five days.

SHOULD I NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IF MY CHILD REFUSES TO GO TO SCHOOL?

Yes. You should immediately contact the Principal to seek assistance.

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WHAT ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

Student Attendance Counsellors are members of a professional team that provides a support service to students and their parents. Their aim is to work with schools and parents/caregivers to provide additional support to students in maintaining regular patterns of school attendance.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT ATTENDANCE COUNSELLOR?

Student Attendance Counsellors may assist by:

- Working with students in a supportive counselling role.
- Visiting students at home and consulting with parents and/or caregivers.
- Identifying reasons for student non- attendance and making appropriate referrals.
- Monitoring student attendance and reviewing progress as necessary.

Attendance counsellors are available to:

- Assist in the development of students attendance policies
- Provide training and development for school staff
- Provide a counselling service and consulting services
- Liaise with appropriate agencies
- Work with identified students and their parents/caregivers
- Inform parents/caregivers of their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance and possible implications of non-compliance

There are legal implications for parents and/or caregivers who are unable to demonstrate that they are meeting their responsibilities.

SOCIAL WORK TRUANCY/ SOCIAL WORK DUTY LINE
Phone: 1300 620 673

Student attendance counsellors assist schools, families and students to manage issues related to unsatisfactory student attendance

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EARLY ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Any parent who is seeking supervision for their child/ren prior to 8.30am must apply in writing to the Principal stating the reason(s) for the request. A written reply to the request will be provided.

- If permission is granted:
- The parent must deliver the student/s to the front office in person.
- The student/s will be signed in to school by the parent (office counter).
- The student/s will be 'handed over' in person to the staff member present – eg. not just left in the room. If no staff member is present children are not to be left unattended. At 8.30am the teacher on duty collects the students from the Office and they are then supervised in the yard (or classroom(primary)) in the case of inclement weather).

PARENT/ CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Parents will ensure consistent and regular attendance of their child/ren.

- Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.
- Children must arrive between 8.30am and 8.50am.
- Late arrivals are accepted in the classroom up until 8:59am.
- From 9:00am, when a student is late for school, they must report to the front office with a parent/caregiver who should provide an explanation for the student's late arrival, or have a note detailing the reason/s for their lateness.
- Parents/caregivers wishing to collect students for an early departure must also report to the front office with an explanation and sign their child out. Should they return the child to school after some time out, eg. A dentist's visit, the student needs to be signed back into the school at the front office.
- Children must attend school on every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for the absence.
- Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the child's non- attendance. This can be done via phone call, verbally to the teacher, by student diary, email, note, Daymap or by letter.
- Parents/caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely from school and for what reason.
- Parents/caregivers must apply to the Principal for exemption from school if there will be an absence of between 5 days and 12 months, which is not due to illness. Parents/caregivers must apply to the Minister if the absence will be required for more than 12 months.

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TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

(See attendance procedure)

Teachers will monitor each student's attendance.

- Teachers will record absences and the reason for absence.
- Teachers will mark students who are absent without explanation as a "U" until they receive an appropriate explanation from the parent/caregiver.
- When a written explanation arrives for an absence the home group teacher will record this on daymap, making note of the reason (photocopying note from diary or placing note into files). When a student returns to school and there is no appropriate explanation given, the teacher shall attempt to gain an explanation from the parent/caregiver.

(Step 1 attendance procedure)

- When a student is absent for the third consecutive day and there has been no explanation from home the home group teacher shall seek an explanation for the unexplained absences via a letter (attendance letter 1) or arrange for a phone call to be made seeking an explanation, which can be recorded on attendance letter 1 and added to Daymap. (After 4 days' absence in the term the home group teacher needs to notify Leadership who will send home attendance letter 2).

(Step 2 attendance procedure)

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:

Monitor overall attendance within the school.

- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- Contact parent/caregiver, where explanations for absences are repeatedly not forthcoming.

(Attendance letter 2)

(Step 3 attendance procedure)

- Provide information in the newsletter and school information packages relating to attendance.
- Ensure that new parents understand the school's attendance procedures.
- Review student attendance in the middle and at the end of each term.

- Review the reasons for absence of students who record family or social explanations frequently and discuss this with the parent/caregiver if those reasons seem unacceptable. (Attendance letter 3 with student/parent surveys)

(Step 4 attendance procedure)

- Approve temporary exemptions from school for students, for up to 12 months and send applications for longer term exemptions to the Educational Director.
- Keep documentation of all attendance and actions taken when issues around attendance arise.
- Where necessary, in line with DECD Policy refer to and work with DECD Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor to engage with families to improve student attendance.

ATTENDANCE PLAN:

As a site we will work collaboratively and proactively to:

- Work towards achieving set DECD targets for Eudunda Area School by implementing the policy effectively

This policy was last ratified by Governing Council August 12th 2026