



Oakbank Area School

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ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

Please note this policy is mandatory and staff are required to adhere to the content.

CONTEXT/BELIEF STATEMENT

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 the enrolling school. Such participation is to include engagement and attendance as required by the programme.

Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention.

All members of the school community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance and work to the best of their ability and skill as consistently as possible.

GENERAL

A child who is at least 6 years old but not yet 16, is of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability or not. These students are required to be enrolled at a registered government or non-government school and are required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school.

Students who are 16 but not yet 17 are required to participate in an approved learning program, which is education or training delivered through a school, university or registered training organisation, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or a combination of these. The Compulsory Education Age legislation supports young people to remain in education or training. There may be circumstances, however, where a case for exemption can be made for a student. Applications for exemption for employment will usually be approved providing the employment is for 25 hours or more. Students must remain in an "approved learning program" until their exemption application has been determined.

Children who are not of compulsory age but who have enrolled at a preschool or 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.

The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent/guardian. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD).

The department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Education and Child Development (DECD), through its offices and schools and in partnership with their communities, will provide an educational programme that promotes attendance and engagement for all children and students enrolled in government schools.

Educators at Oakbank Area School will actively intervene when attendance and engagement patterns indicate that learners are at risk of not realising their educational and social development potential.

POLICY OUTCOMES

Implementation of this policy at Oakbank Area School will result in the following outcomes:

- Improvement in children's and students' attendance and participation as shown in the data collected.
- Improvement in learning outcomes as measured by school and system assessment processes.
- Increased understanding of the importance of regular attendance by the community of educators, learners and families.
- Oakbank Area School reporting on student attendance through the annual reporting cycle.
- Ongoing analysis of attendance data is conducted which informs the review of each school's policies and procedures.
- Procedures based on the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to improve attendance are consistently implemented and monitored by DECD through its offices and schools.

STRATEGIES

Strategies to support the achievement of these outcomes include:

- Oakbank Area School, in consultation with our community, developing and implementing an Attendance Improvement Plan, which includes attendance targets.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data to enable OAS to implement strategies to ensure that improvement targets identified in the Attendance Improvement Plan are met.
- Monitoring and analysis of state wide data to inform DECD strategic directions regarding policy and programme development.
- Coordination of interagency support by school or district support staff, as appropriate, when intervention is required.
- Engagement of children and students in their learning through quality curriculum, teaching and learning, and relationships, and appropriate preschool and school structures and processes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities for attendance and consequences for non-attendance are clearly described in the DECD Administrative Instructions and Guidelines (AIGs) - refer to section 3, from page 11.

These detail:

- Attendance expectation
- Data collection
- Monitoring expectation
- Exemption
- Unsatisfactory attendance
- Prosecution

Parent's Responsibilities

- Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.
- Children must arrive at school between 8:30am and 8:40am.
- Children must attend school on every day when instruction is being offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (eg illness).
- Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. Usually this comprises of a letter or telephone call from a parent/caregiver or a medical certificate.
- After three consecutive days absence due to illness a medical certificate should be provided to the school.
- Lawful excuses for the absence from attendance at their education program by a student of compulsory school age include:
 - sickness
 - danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease
 - temporary or permanent infirmity
 - events of cultural significance - these could include births, deaths and related ceremonies
 - other events approved by the school council
 - any other unavoidable and sufficient cause.
- When a student is late for school, it is appropriate that the parent/caregiver explains the reason for the lateness either via telephone call to the Front Office, or via the Message You - Student Absence system.
- If a student is to leave early, it is appropriate that the parent/caregiver explains the reasons for the early departure, either via telephone call to the Front Office or by a signed note in the student's diary.
- Parents/caregivers must apply in advance for a temporary exemption from attendance at school, if an extended absence is planned of more than a few days.
- Parents/caregivers must let the school know if the school needs to arrange work at home for students who are unable to attend due to illness or accident.

Students' Responsibilities

- Students are required to attend each day that instruction is provided at Oakbank Area School.
- Students are required to attend all scheduled lessons.
- Students who arrive at school late are required to sign in at the Front Office, obtain the tear off slip and present the tear off slip to their home group or class teacher.
- Students departing early are required to sign out at the Front Office with a note from their parent/caregiver giving permission for the student to leave school. The student needs to retain the tear off slip and attach it to their diary.

Teachers' Responsibilities

- Monitor each child's attendance.
- Record absence and reason for absence in the roll book each day – this needs to be checked each week to ensure correct information is recorded and maintained.
- Incidental Absences (IA) record students signing in late or departing early. Therefore staff are required to check the IA receipts if a student is missing from their class to determine their whereabouts.
- **Contact home on the third day of consecutive absences.** Record the date, who was contacted, the reason given for the student's absence and any strategies/interventions discussed to be recorded in EDSAS.
- After contacting the student's parent/caregiver, alert the Leadership team of attendance issues.
- Coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested.
- Sign off on the roll at the end of each term (if no corrections are needed).

Leaderships' Responsibilities

- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- Student Counsellor will complete letters regarding unsatisfactory student attendance.
- Student Counsellor to document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls for inclusion in the student's file.
- Student Counsellor will refer students to the Attendance Counsellor if attendance issues are not resolved.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month. Parents/caregivers should complete an "Application for Exemption" form if their child will be absent from school for family holiday or other reason.
- Principals should advise approvals or non-approvals of student's absences on school letterhead. Copies of such advice should be retained in school files. Applications for Exemption are to be kept with term rolls and be made available to appropriate Departmental officers as required.
- All applications exceeding one calendar month need to be forwarded to the Central Delegate, Exemptions Processing.
- Communicate attendance improvement and requirements to parents and community.
- Monitor attendance data for the site.

MANDATORY NOTIFICATION RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO STUDENT NON-ATTENDANCE

The Children's Protection Act, 1993 requires DECD staff and volunteers to notify the Department for Families & Communities, through the Child Abuse Report Line (131478) if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. Under the Children's Protection Act 1993, persistent non-attendance at school is identified within the interpretation of "at risk" – Part 1, 6 (2) the child is of compulsory school age but has been persistently absent from school without satisfactory explanation of the absence.

In relation to the above, it is expected that DECD staff will have exhausted all avenues of early intervention/family support and encouragement prior to making a report regarding non-attendance at school.

PROCEDURES

1. Teachers are issued with an **attendance record book** to record student absences.
 - The attendance record book is sent to the Resource Centre for data entry to EDSAS on a **daily** basis by 9am each morning.
 - The attendance book has a record of, and reasons for, student absences.
 - Each week teachers will be asked to check and sign the week's record of attendance for accuracy and ensure the record is updated if further information is provided.
 - Please be aware that student attendance records, including anecdotal notes etc can be called as legal documents in any court action. 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 Counsellor on request. The teacher must endorse each such note with the date on which it was received at the school. Written explanations in school diaries will be considered acceptable if the school uses such diaries. However, where a diary is utilised, a photocopy of the relevant written explanation must be retained by the school. Schools must document all information relating to non-attendance, such as telephone calls, contact with homes and mandatory notification.
2. An **Action Plan** for unexplained absence is inside the attendance record book.
 - It is expected that teachers follow the responses as outlined in the Action Plan. We need to be active in following up student non-attendance.
 - Class teachers and/or Counsellor, as per the Action Plan, should keep documentation of the steps taken in response to student absence in the Roll folder.
3. The school will use the EDSAS attendance module accurately to record student absence as the education program participation data are used for legal purposes, student welfare and achievement purposes and school/site resourcing.
4. Attendance and enrolment data must be kept secure. Students and unauthorised persons must not have access to this data.

ACTIONS FOR UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	WHO	DOCUMENTATION
1. Three consecutive days unexplained absence or irregular attendance pattern	1. Roll book record noted	Home Group teacher	Record noted in roll book
	2. Telephone call, note or home visit made	Home Group teacher	Home contact noted in roll book
	3. Attendance monitored weekly	Home Group teacher	Roll Record
2. Further 3 days unexplained absence	1. Roll book record noted. Leader/Principal informed.	Home Group teacher	Record noted in roll book
	2. Telephone call, formal letter posted or home visit made.	Home Group teacher or Leadership	Home contact noted in roll book.
	3. Notify police if truancy suspected and request police to look out for student.	Leadership	Police notification recorded
	4. Student identified as at risk and counselled	Leadership & Counsellor	Notes of conversations
3. Unexplained absence / unsatisfactory attendance continues	1. Roll book record noted and referral to Leadership made.	Home Group teacher	Record noted in roll book.
	2. Student Referral through EDSAS by Principal for intervention by Attendance Counsellor.	Principal via referral Leadership	EDSAS printout of attendance and referral go in Student File.
	3. Instigate police prosecution	Student Attendance Counsellor (DECD)	

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PRIORITIES/ DESIRED OUTCOMES	TARGETS	STRATEGIES (to achieve desired outcomes)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>High attendance rate achieved</p>	<p>School attains DECD target 95%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor attendance on a regular basis. Attendance statistics are recorded on student information folder each term and class teachers follow up "U" in record book. • Consistency in interpretation of codes across the school. • All staff strictly follow attendance policy. Personal contact is made with families as necessary regarding attendance. 	<p>Home Group Teachers / Principal</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular personal contact is made with families at risk. 	<p>Home Group Teachers</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance data included on written reports. 	<p>Support Staff</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency referrals are completed for students at risk and individual attendance plans are developed. • Celebrate good attendance through end of semester certificates. • Promotion of the advantages of positive attendance in newsletters. 	<p>Principal</p>

Authorized by: School Council, Principal
Date of Review: March 2016

Review Due: January 2018



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Date

Dear

It has been one of our continuing priorities at Oakbank Area School to address issues of attendance amongst students.

Our records for term _____ show that your child _____ has been absent on _____ days and/or late on _____ days.

We understand that this may be due to unavoidable reasons, including illness or family holidays, which cannot be taken at any other time of the year.

However, irrespective of the cause, research shows that students who are absent for more than 10 days per year are disadvantaged both educationally and socially. Your child is at risk of falling into this category and you should be aware that his/her absence over the course of this year so far will have had some detrimental effect on his/her education.

Some of the effects experienced by these students may include:

- Gaps in knowledge and understanding resulting in missing basic concepts.
- Lack of continuity and familiarity resulting in them feeling less secure within the school environment.
- The loss of opportunities for play activities which improve social/emotional and cognitive development.
- Missing out on learning important basics such as class rules and behaviour norms.
- Belief that punctuality and attendance are not important.
- Inability to maintain friendships resulting in isolation, bullying or teasing.
- Loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Increased likelihood of leaving school early.

We ask you to consider the reasons for your child's absences and to try and improve his/her attendance if possible next term. Should you be having problems in getting your child to attend school, please call us and make a time to talk as we can possibly help you or bring in support services that can assist with such problems.

Yours sincerely,

Kylie Eggers
Principal

