

Attendance

March 2019



DECD Regulations:

A child who is at least 6 years old but not yet 16, is of compulsory school age. Every child of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from school or whether the student has a disability or not, is required to be enrolled at a government or non-government school and must attend school. Every day instruction is provided at the school unless the Minister or delegate has granted an exemption from school attendance.

Once they have been enrolled, children are required to attend school for the entire day that school is open for instruction.

Belief Statement:

Student attendance can significantly impact on student success. Students who have poor attendance patterns are at risk of not achieving their full potential, educationally, emotionally or socially and can therefore be disadvantaged in their future choices. Family/caregiver support in maintaining regular and punctual attendance is essential. We believe that in the case of poor attendance/punctuality extra support and intervention may be required to ensure that the student has the best opportunity for success in later life.

Requirements:

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

Student and Family Responsibilities:

- Students should attend school every day unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent. Lawful excuses for absence include illness, danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease, temporary or permanent infirmity, events of cultural significance (eg. Births, deaths, and related ceremonies), other events approved by the school governing council and any other unavoidable and sufficient cause.
- East Torrens Primary School has an electronic automatic SMS message that is sent to families' mobile to alert parents/caregivers that the child's absence is unexplained. It is expected that parents/ caregivers respond to this SMS.
- Families are required to inform the school of the reason for their child(ren)'s absence by responding to SMS with the reason,
 - students name and class
 - by note,
 - conversation with the class teacher,
 - front office staff
 - a member of the leadership team or
 - by a phone call to the school
- Absenteeism due to illness will be monitored.
 - If a student is absent for three or more consecutive days, a medical certificate is required for explanation.
 - Where a student is absent for ten or more days in any term, a care plan may be required from the treating health professional that can guide appropriate school responses in the case of illness.
- Extended absences due to family reasons will be monitored.
 - Valid absences for family reasons include for days of cultural significance and any other unavoidable significant cause.
 - A pattern of regular non-attendance due to family reasons may indicate the need for intervention by the school and/or an attendance counsellor.
- Students need to arrive at school between 8:30am and 8:40am. There is no duty of care before 8:30am; if children need to be at school earlier because of parent commitments they should attend Out of School Hours Care.
- Students need to arrive at school on time. If they arrive late, students need to present to the front office and sign in. **Parents/caregivers are required to provide an explanation for their child(ren)'s lateness.**
- Parents/caregivers picking their child(ren) up before 3:00pm need to provide a reason for their child leaving

early and sign out at the front office.

- If a pattern of late arrivals/early departures becomes apparent this may require follow up by the school.
- Families are required to inform the school of extended absences. Any exemption over 5 days require an exemption that is to be approved by the Principal for up to 4 weeks. Exemptions of more than 4 weeks need to be approved by the Regional Director. Parents/caregivers need to give adequate notice of exemptions and request for student work.
- Children need to have left the school grounds by 3:30pm unless they are involved in an after school program. If necessary, children will be placed in Out of School Hours Care at the cost to the parents/caregivers.

Teacher Responsibilities (including TRT):

- Follow the guidelines as stated in the East Torrens Primary School 'School Attendance Plan'.
- Monitor each child's attendance.
- Provide a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage all students and offers opportunity for success, thus encouraging regular attendance.
- Teachers are responsible for noting student absence, lateness and early dismissal in the electronic Roll on Academy
- Roll must be submitted by 9am each day.
- Class teachers need to follow up all unexplained absences. Update Academy from information received. Teachers need to check student's communication book if a reason for absence has been given. This needs to be recorded in Academy with the appropriate reason.
- If there is no explanation given by the family, teachers need to place **an attendance label** in the student's communication book when the student returns to school. This then needs to be checked the following day and any reason needs to be recorded in the roll folder.
- Teachers can speak to the ACEO or Wellbeing Leader when making contact with Aboriginal families to gather any known pertinent family information that may relate to a student's absence for guidance before making contact.
- Teachers can request BSSO's to call parent/caregivers regarding absences if required for translation or cultural reasons.
- If a student is absent for three consecutive days without explanation, and attempts made by the teacher to make contact with the family have been unsuccessful, teachers need to notify leadership.
- Teachers are to keep all correspondence regarding absences from families and document any contact/attempted contact with families/caregivers using the **tracking update sheet**. (a copy needs to be forwarded to leadership)
- Complete the Roll Verification Form each fortnight – which will be placed in your pigeon hole (these are to be returned Front Office Receptionist's pigeon hole). Please note any changes and initial these changes.
- Coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school due to sickness, family holiday, suspension and for whom work is requested.

Front Office Responsibilities:

- Check SMS responses by 12pm.
- Make adjustments on EDSAS daily.
- Phone families after 3 days unexplained. (DU)
- Enter absence data on to Academy daily from phone calls which includes the explanation provided for the absence. (i.e. DF- funeral).
- Any late arrivals or early departures need to be entered into Academy Kiosk. White printed slips to go in the teacher pigeon holes for record keeping.
- Provide class teachers an **Attendance Term Summary Sheet** at the end of **each fortnight** to sign and verify.

Leadership Responsibilities:

- Leadership will support staff to follow up non-attendance as outlined in the East Torrens Primary School 'School Attendance Plan'.
- Leadership to regularly promote good attendance/ punctuality through the School Newsletter and brochures provided at enrolment and the start of each year.
- Ensure that the Academy Roll is accurately completed by confirming teachers are using the correct absence coding and recording correspondence with families.
- If an Attendance Alert is received the School Counsellor will :

- Call families
- Send letter to families - **Notification 1**
- If no response – **Notification 2**
- If no response - **Notification 3**
- The Leadership Team will have a pre-referral discussion with the Student Attendance Counsellor if attendance issues are not resolved after action by the school.
- Co-ordinate and document all interventions, strategies, home visits and phone calls via the 'Attendance Concern' folder. Should a student transfer to a different school the documentation is to be placed in the student's file for transfer.
- Liaise with appropriate support service (internal and external) to determine the best intervention option for each family.
- Leadership will facilitate regular meetings regarding students with attendance concerns involving the class teacher and other support staff as required.
- Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve application for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of the up to one calendar month. Parents/caregivers should apply in writing and principals should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advices are to be retained in school files, together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate department officers as required.
- All applications for temporary exemptions and permanent exemptions are to be set out on form ED175 and forwarded to Principal.

REVIEW:

- This policy began in April 2015
- Next review: March 2020

Supporting Documents:

- Attendance Alert Note/Label which goes into student's communication book
- Attendance Notification 1 letter to families
- Attendance Notification 2 letter to families
- Attendance Notification 3 letter to families
- East Torrens Primary School Attendance Flow Chart