



Burnside Primary School Attendance Policy

Reviewed: December 2016

Every South Australian child and young person deserves the opportunity to be their best in life. DECD supports the learning and life opportunities of all children and young people, and seeks to help make them strong, creative and resilient learners, to set the trajectory for a lifelong wellbeing.

"Learning success is characterised by consistent attendance and engagement with quality education opportunities. A wellbeing approach to attendance supports families to recognise the importance of education and to address barriers to active participation. Attendance matters in South Australian preschools and schools." ~ Rick Persse - Chief Executive DECD

It is no surprise that research recognises the high correlation between attendance and successful literacy and numeracy outcomes. Students who attend school regularly have been shown to achieve at higher levels than students who do not have regular attendance. Research shows that students who are absent for more than 10 days per year are disadvantaged both educationally and socially.

Children and young people who do not attend school regularly miss out on planned learning experiences, sequences of instruction and class participation. As early as preschool regular absences can predict later attendance patterns and are also a strong indicator of lower levels of achievement in learning tasks as well as the potential for poorly developed social skills and difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships.

This attendance strategy is aligned with the DECD Wellbeing Framework for Learning for Life which recognises the important interrelationships between children and young people's wellbeing and learning outcomes.

Compulsory school age is when children must be enrolled in and attend school, from when they turn 6 until they turn 16.

Compulsory education age is when students are 16 and have completed an approved learning program.

Parent/Carer Responsibility

Informing school about your child's absence:

- Children must arrive at school between 8.30am and 8.50am
- It is essential the school is notified either by phone/School Stream or email of your child's absence and the reason for it before 9am
- If you are unable to notify the school in advance, send an email covering the days missed when your child returns (see below)
- For children with three or more consecutive days of absence, parents should provide the following:
 - Doctors certificate in the event of illness
 - Exemption form ie; for family travel - this must be principal approved **before** taking the period of leaveThese forms are available via the school website, School Stream or front office.
- When your child is late for school (after 8.50am siren) it is a requirement that the child reports to the front office to sign the electronic late register. Younger students may require a parent to accompany them
- Children who require early departure must be signed out electronically via the front office by a parent/careprovider

School Procedures

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

- Text message system to alert families of a child's non attendance without notification
- Contact the parent/careprovider when three consecutive days without notification are recorded
- Data collection and report systems will be monitored to track individual student attendance. This will ensure timely identification and provision of support to children at risk of chronic non-attendance
- Staff communicate to share information regarding absence, eg front office staff with class teachers, specialist teachers with class teachers
- Develop strategies to resolve attendance difficulties
- Provide a safe, success orientated and caring environment
- Provide relevant learning programs for all students
- Attendance data of days absent and days late is included in semester 1 and 2 reports



Teacher Responsibility

- Teachers record student attendance/late arrival daily via Sentral Data Base system with all data collated by 9:30am
- Students not present in class by 8.50am are to be recorded as absent, if no prior information has been provided
- Any student arriving after 8.50am is to report to the front office and sign in via the check in system
- Teachers will notify leadership of concerns re: student attendance or habitual non-attendance: whereby a student has five or more absences per term
- Attendance concern is raised in Sentral after 3 unexplained consecutive absences or frequent late arrivals with no parent communication
- As the attendance data is a legal record; these records may be called upon in the case of court action

Monitoring and Referral System

- Address barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing to support children and young people being physically present and involved in their learning
- Active monitoring and understanding of attendance patterns and taking early action to address attendance concerns
- Data collection and reporting systems will be regularly assessed to track student attendance against a range of outcome measures
- School leaders will have access to detailed student attendance data and attendance alerts via the Education Dashboard to ensure timely identification and provision of support to children and young people at risk of chronic non-attendance
- From 2017 statutory options for enforcing non-attendance, such as the prosecution of parents in extreme cases, will be actively pursued after all other options have been exhausted

When it's acceptable for children to miss school include times when the:

- Child is too sick to leave the house
- Significant family events, eg bereavement
- Child has an infectious illness such as gastroenteritis, chickenpox or measles
- Child needs to attend medical or dental appointments that could not be made out of school hours
- School principal is provided with a genuine reason that prevents the child attending school
- Child has been granted an exemption from school
- Child has been sent home or suspended from school for disciplinary reasons
- If a student is absent due to reported illness for three or more consecutive days the principal can ask for a medical certificate

Refusal to attend school:

A child's refusal to go to school can be very distressing both to parents and the child. Non-attendance can take different forms. While some children may refuse to leave home, others may leave the house but not attend school or slip away from the school (truancy).

There are many reasons why children refuse to attend school:

- Separation anxiety
- Learning difficulties
- Not having friends
- Being bullied at school
- Not getting along with teachers



What to do if your child refuses to attend school:

If you have difficulty with your child attending school you should immediately contact the school to seek help. There are many staff members who can assist you. You can discuss your concerns with your child's teacher, school counsellor, assistant principal, deputy principal or the school principal.

Resources:

For more information on how to help your child with their school attendance phone the parents' hotline on 1300 364 100 or visit the parenting and child health website.

References:

- <https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/supporting-students/health-e-safety-and-wellbeing/attendance>
- Wellbeing for Learning and Life - DECD framework
- National Safe Schools Framework - MCEECDYA -Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
- Attendance Strategy for SA preschools and schools 2017 - 2020