



# Henley Beach Primary School

Scuola Elementare di Henley Beach

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Every South Australian child and young person deserves the opportunity to be their best in life. Department for Education 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 Department for Education

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 Department for Education Wellbeing Framework for Learning for Life which recognises the important interrelationships between children and young people’s wellbeing and learning outcomes.

The Education Act requires that children of compulsory age (6 years old) are enrolled and attend school. Children who are not of compulsory age but who have enrolled are subject to the same participation requirements. Schools have a legal responsibility to monitor lateness and attendance.

At Henley Beach Primary School we:

- Seek to engage all students in their learning to encourage full participation
- Believe that regular school attendance is fundamental to improving educational outcomes
- Will ensure that any unsatisfactory participation or unexplained absence is investigated as soon as possible
- Analyse all data available related to Attendance – EDSAS, Sentral
- Work supportively with families where there are attendance concerns that are impacting on the student’s full participation
- Use Department for Education resources where necessary eg youth worker, attendance counsellor



## PARENT/CARER RESPONSIBILITY

- To support children in attending school all day every day unless there is an unavoidable reason for not attending
- It is essential the school is notified by phone/SMS or email of your child's absence and the reason for it before 9am
- Respond to SMS messages informing parents that child is absent without reason
- For children with three or more consecutive days of absence, parents should provide the following:
  - Doctor's certificate in the event of illness
  - Exemption form ie; for family travel – this must be Principal approved **before** taking the period of leave. These are available from the front office.
- Make appointments eg doctor out of school hours if at all possible
- Support children in being punctual – when arriving late or leaving early parent must go through office and advise reason
- 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/caregiver
- Work with the school to improve attendance when necessary

## 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/caregiver 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 9.00am
- 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

## OFFICE ADMIN SSO

- Enter attendance data daily on Sentral by 10.00am
- Make a record of any parent messages received
- Provide ED175 Application for Exemption from School Attendance when families take children from school for more than one week

## LEADERSHIP

- Communicate the importance of “All Day Every Day” to parent community on a regular basis
- Monitor patterns of unexplained absence, frequent absences due to illness or family reasons and lateness
- Work with the teacher and family in a supportive way to improve attendance and punctuality
- Communicate with the family verbally and in writing when there is a concern and document all communications
- Seek support of Regional Attendance Officer/ Youth Worker when necessary

## 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
- 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 IS ACCEPTABLE FOR CHILDEN 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 will require 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.

### 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, youth worker, coordinators, Deputy Principal or the school Principal.

## 2018 ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

- Decrease unexplained absences from 10.45% of total absences in 2017 to 9% in 2018
- Maintain (or improve) overall attendance rate at 95-97%
- Work closely with chronic poor attenders to improve their attendance by 50%
- Decrease lateness by 10% from 2514 in 2017 to 2263 in 2018 (Total achieved 2390 - 8%)

### 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 child health website.

### References:

- <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/supporting-students/health-e-safety-and-wellbeing/attendance>
- Wellbeing for Learning and Life – Department for Education 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

