

Penola Primary School

Attendance and Lateness Policy



RATIONALE

The Education Act 1972 requires that children of compulsory school age be enrolled at school. The Compulsory Education Legislation requires children of up to the age of 17 years participate in a fulltime approved learning program. A condition of 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 program.

If students miss the basic skills taught in the primary years of schooling they often experience learning difficulties later. Research indicates:

- Irregular attendance in the primary years can lead to poor patterns of attendance in secondary years
- Poor attendance makes it difficult for students to form positive relationships with their peers
- There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students which addresses their education needs. We expect students to be at school all day, every school day unless they are too unwell to attend.

This means that students will be in class ready to start learning at 8.45 am and remain until 3.15 pm. Our attendance policy aims to ensure that students are reaching their full potential by attending school. When this is not possible, our attendance policy sets out procedures to minimise the impact of non-attendance. It is important that students, staff and parents / carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.

Penola Primary School:

- Is committed to promoting the message that every day counts
- Believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend all day, every school day unless they are too unwell to attend
- Monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance
- Believes non-attendance can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- Believes that attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community

EVERY DAY COUNTS

We are committed to assisting our community to understand the impact poor attendance has on learning and will therefore work to develop an understanding about the impact with information like the following:

If your child misses...	That equals...	Over 13 years of schooling, that is
1 day per fortnight	20 days / 4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 day per week	40 days / 8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years
2 days per week	80 days / 16 weeks per year	Over 5 years

AIMS

Penola Primary School has developed the Attendance and Lateness Policy with the aim to:

- Improve student access and participation
- Improve student achievement and success
- Develop lifelong positive routines and practices
- Intervene early if the need arises
- Provide support for students, parents/caregiver and teachers
- Maximise learning opportunities by ensuring student absenteeism is kept to a minimum
- Ensure that the maintenance and approach towards regular school attendance is the responsibility of all in the school community including and not limited to staff, parents/caregivers and students.
- Put in place agreed processes for managing students' absences within the school.

RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- All staff will positively encourage maximum school attendance.
- Staff will record daily attendance and submit attendance on LearnLink by 9.30am each morning.
- Staff will follow up any unexplained absences and maintain accurate records
- Staff will report any attendance concerns to the Principal and Wellbeing Coordinator who will remind parents of attendance expectations.
- The Principal or Wellbeing Coordinator will follow up extreme patterns of non-attendance
- The Principal or Wellbeing Coordinator will refer cases to the Department for Education Attendance Counsellor when appropriate.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be prepared and ready for school on time
- Ensure all communication (diary notes, notes) are given to the teacher/parent

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Read and follow the Attendance and Lateness Policy
- Positively encourage maximum school attendance
- Ensure children are ready to start learning at 8.45am and that they are at school until 3.15pm.
- Should an attendance concern arise, contact the school before it becomes an issue.
- Notify the school of any absences, part or whole day.
- Request an exemption (ED175) from the Principal for any known extended absences of three days or longer. If an exemption is for a student whose attendance is affected by a period of prolonged illness or other circumstances, parents are required to provide supporting evidence such as medical reports, reports from psychologists/psychiatrists etc.
- Be responsible for making appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.
- **Provide the school with a medical certificate if your child is away ill for 3 or more days** (*if your child is ill on Thursday and/or Friday and is also away Monday and/or Tuesday this still counts as 3 days absent and will require a medical certificate*).

LATE ARRIVAL OR EARLY DEPARTURE

- If arriving after 8.45am sign children in using the late arrival procedure at the front office.
- Sign children out, via the early departure procedure, at the front office if collecting your child before 3.15pm.

ABSENCE NOTIFICATIONS

It is a legal requirement for parents/carers to notify the school of the reason for any absence as soon as it is possible.

Notifications cannot be given by any other person unless there is a formal arrangement with the school.

Notifications can be made via the following methods:

- Your child's diary or note
- Emailing the school at dl.0763.info@schools.sa.edu.au
- Phoning the school on 87372 300
- School Stream
- SeeSaw

Please note: we are not able to assume a child's illness. For example, if a parent rings on Monday to say their child is sick, we cannot assume they are sick on Tuesday if they are not at school. We would need a further communication from the parent on Tuesday.

RESPONSE TO ABSENCES

When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days we will follow this process:

- The student's teacher will ring the parent to discuss the non-attendance. If there is no response the teacher will email the parent to ask for an explanation.
- If there is no response to an email or phone call, a report to Department for Child Protection may be made and we will refer the matter to the Department for Education Attendance Officer.

When a pattern of absences has been identified or if a child has 10 more absences without valid reason we will follow this process:

- Send a letter to the parents asking them to meet with the Principal and/or wellbeing Coordinator.
- The Principal and/or Wellbeing Coordinator will meet with the parents to form an agreement on how to improve student attendance
- If attendance does not improve a referral to the Department for Education Attendance Officer will be made.

ALTERNATE ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

Due to the educational and wellbeing needs of some students, an alternative attendance agreement may be arranged in negotiation with the parents/carers, Principal, Wellbeing Coordinator and Student Support Services Team. The conditions of these alternative arrangements will be reviewed regularly.

Foundation students who are starting school are entitled to an exemption day (rest day) for the first four weeks of Term 1. This is still recorded as a day absent but does not require communication with the school. However, if your child is absent for more than one day per week in those first four weeks parents/carers will need to contact the school.

Policy review date: 2022



Government of South Australia
Department for Education