



## Attendance 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 early years of schooling they often experience learning difficulties later on. Research has indicated that:

- Irregular attendance in the early years can lead to poor patterns of attendance in primary 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 educational needs.

We expect students to be at school all day, every school day. This means that students will be in class ready to start learning at 8.50am and remain until 3.15pm.

Our attendance policy aims to ensure that students are reaching their full potential by attending school all day, every day and where that 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.

### 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's...
1 hour per week	7 days / 1 ½ weeks per year	Just under half a year
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

There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement.

Virginia Primary School:

- Is committed to promoting the message that everyday counts;
  - Believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend all day, every school day;
  - Monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance;
- and
- Believes that attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community

### AIMS

Virginia Primary School has developed the Attendance Policy 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/caregivers 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 school staff, parents/guardians and students; and
- 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 send roll books to the office by 9.30am each morning.
- Front Office Staff will follow up any unexplained absences and maintain accurate records.
- Staff will report any attendance concerns to the school counsellor.
- Leadership will ensure that all families are informed of attendance expectations.
- The school counsellor will follow up extreme / patterns of non-attendance.
- The school counsellor will refer cases to DECD Attendance Counsellor when needed.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be prepared and ready for school on time.
- Ensure all communication in diaries is given to the teacher / parent.

### PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Positively encourage maximum school attendance.
- Ensure children are in class ready to start learning at 8.50am and that they are there for the whole day until 3.15pm.
- Should an attendance issue arise contact the school for assistance before it becomes a issue.
- Notify the school of any absences part or whole day via the means set out in the Absence Notifications section of the document.
- Request an exemption (ED175) from the Principal for any known extended absences of three days or longer.
- Sign children in upon arrival if after 8.55am through the procedure at the Front Office.
- Sign children out through the procedure at the Front Office if taking the child before 3.15pm.
- Apply for an exemption for a student whose attendance is affected by a period of prolonged illness or other circumstances related to their personal situation. 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, this is required).
- Read and follow the Attendance Policy.

### ABSENCE NOTIFICATIONS

It is a legal requirement for parents / carers to notify a 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 / message book
- Sending a message to our Skoolbag app
- Emailing the school at dl.0455.info@schools.sa.edu.au
- Phoning the school on 8380 9292
- Leaving a message on the answering machine any time before 8:15am or after 4pm

**Please note:** we are not able to assume a child's illness (e.g. if a parent rings the school 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). Alternatively, if the parent knows on Monday that their child will not be at school Tuesday, they can let us know when they contact us on Monday.

### RESPONSE TO ABSENCES

When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days we will take the following action...

- Send a SMS reminding the parent of their obligations.
- Ring the parent to discuss the non-attendance.
- If there is no response to a SMS or phone call, a report to Families SA may be made and we will refer the matter to the DECD attendance officer.
- When a pattern of absences has been identified or if a child has 10 or more absences without valid reason we will take the following action:
  - Send a letter to the parents asking them to meet with the School Counsellor.
  - The School Counsellor will meet with the parents to form an agreement on how to improve the attendance.
  - If attendance does not improve a referral to the DECD attendance officer will be made.

### STUDENTS OF CONCERN

Students of concern regarding lateness and non-attendance are monitored through individual student attendance plans. These plans are shared with both students and families

- Arrival Improvement plan for lateness
- Attendance improvement plan for non-attendance