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Government of South Australia
Department for Education

Attendance Policy

AIM

At Clarendon Primary School we aim to support all families in achieving the most frequent attendance at school possible. We understand students and families will have times of poor health and opportunities to travel, but we also acknowledge that research indicates that attendance at school positively effects the learning and wellbeing of our young people.

VALUES

The values we teach, model and expect from our students are:

- Empathy
- Respect
- Honesty
- Co-operation
- Responsibility

The Department's Attendance Policy

The South Australian Department for Education's Attendance Policy describes the compulsory nature of education and guides the responsibilities of the whole school community (staff, parents, caregivers and students) to ensure that students attend school.

Schools work with their community to support students to develop positive attendance habits from the earliest years. They do this through effective, consistent local practices to monitor and address non-attendance and safe, inclusive and culturally respectful environments.

Students at risk from school absence

Students can be absent from school for many reasons. The following thresholds allow schools to identify varying degrees of risk for children and young people in relation to their learning and their wellbeing and ensures that they are provided with appropriate supports:

- Habitual non-attendance: a student has 5 to 9 days absent for any reason in a term.
- Chronic non-attendance: a student has 10 or more days absent in a term for any reason.

School attendance and the law

It is compulsory by law (*Education Act 1972*) that all children from 6 years of age until they turn 17 years of age are enrolled and attend school or an approved learning program. Parents or caregivers can be prosecuted and might be found guilty of an offence and/or fined if their child is persistently absent from school.

How we implement the Department's Attendance Policy

At Clarendon Primary School our attendance practices align with the Department's Attendance Policy.

We support student attendance by:

- **promoting** the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout the schooling years
- **assessing** patterns of non-attendance and developing ways to address this
- actively **engaging** and including all children, young people and their families
- **addressing** the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing and ensuring inclusive support
- **monitoring** attendance to ensure that progress is documented and supports are in place
- **evaluating** the need for further or ongoing support and referral for additional support

We will work with our school community to develop and implement an Attendance Improvement Plan. To develop this, Clarendon Primary School, with support from central office, has agreed to pilot and trial an online Engagement and Wellbeing tool in 2019-20. From this, improvement plans will be informed by our attendance data and outline a range of actions our school community will undertake to ensure that all students are able to attend every day the school is open.

Clarendon Primary School's attendance expectations

School commences at 9am each day and finishes at 3.20pm. All students who arrive or leave outside of these times must provide an explanation from a parent or caregiver when signing in and out of student services.

Attendance responsibilities

Everyone has a role to support students to attend school all day, every day. Detailed responsibilities are outlined in the Department's Attendance Policy.

At Clarendon Primary School we expect:

Students	• Attend school every day the school is open unless they are ill.
	• Arrive at school and to all lessons and activities on time.
	• Participate positively in all learning activities.
Staff	• Make sure all parents are aware of attendance expectations, policies and procedures.
	• Accurately record each absence, late arrival or early departure with the appropriate absence code.
	• Document all attempts and contact with parents about absences.
	• Request a medical certificate from parents where appropriate.
	• Refer to the local Student Support Services and or Social Worker Truancy for further support as appropriate.
	• Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – <u>CARL</u>) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect (<u>RAN</u>) training and the <u>Mandatory Reporting Guide</u>.
	• Make sure absence and late notes are provided to the front office each day as early as possible.
	• Contact parents if there is no explanation provided on a day of absence or if there is a pattern of absence.
Parents/Caregivers	• Make sure their child attends school all day and every day the school is open, unless they are ill.
	• Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
	• Make sure their child arrives at school on time, between 8.30 and 8.55 am.
	• Provide their child's school with up-to-date contact details.
	• Get permission from the school's principal if their child is going to be away for more than a week, where it is not due to illness; see exemptions below.
	• Provide a reason (eg illness, a family reason) to the school if their child is absent or late, before 9am on the day their child is away.
	• Respond to communication from the school when their child is absent.
	• Provide a medical certificate or written explanation when their child is absent for 3 or more days.

Authorisation of exemptions

The principal has the delegated authority to approve an exemption from school for up to 1 month for holiday or other purpose. Parents should apply in writing to the principal for this approval using forms available from the front office. The principal will advise the parents in writing of approval or non-approval and a copy is filed in the student record folder. Applications for exemptions of more than 1 month must be approved by the Department's central office.

ENDORSED

Governing Council: September 2019

REVIEW DATE

June 2021