



RENMARK WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

BELIEF STATEMENT

At Renmark West Primary School we believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education and assists them to reach their full potential. School staff set an example for students by encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance and punctuality identifies students at risk and allows the early implementation of intervention strategies.

Student attendance is everyone's business and all members of the school community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance. Staff continue to work in partnership with the school community to provide a safe, caring and success-orientated environment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

DECS Requirements of Student Attendance

A child between the ages of six and sixteen years is of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability. All students are required to be enrolled at a registered government or non-government school and must attend on every day instruction is provided, unless the minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

The implementation of the Compulsory Education Legislation (2009) requires all young people between the ages of 16 and 17 to participate in a full-time approved learning program, which is education or training delivered through a school, university or registered training organization, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or a combination of these.

The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS). The Department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

Parent's/Caregiver's Responsibilities

- Parents/Caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.
- Children are expected to arrive at school between 8.25am – 8.45am.
- Children must attend school every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent eg illness.
- Parents/Caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance within a reasonable time. Ideally for safety reasons, this explanation should be received on the day of the absence or within three days. This needs to be a written note or telephone call from a Parent/Caregiver or a medical certificate.
- When a student is late for school the Parent/Caregiver needs to explain the reason for lateness: either by phone call or written note.
- Parents/Caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely i.e. five days or longer. If the school needs to arrange work at home for students, teachers require **three days notice** to prepare this.
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

Teacher's Responsibilities

- Provide a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage all students and offers opportunity for success, thus encouraging attendance.
- Monitor each child's attendance.
- Record absence and reason for absence in the class absence folder and send to front office by 9.00am each day.

- If there is no explanation *from* the Parent/Caregiver regarding a student's absence or lateness for that day, the teacher will:
 - Complete an "**Unexplained Absence**" (blue) form or "**Notification of Late Attendance at School**" (orange) form (as appropriate).
 - Give the form to the student who will take it home to be signed and be returned to the class teacher the next day.
 - Place the signed note in the plastic pocket at back of the roll book.
- On the third day of an unexplained absence, lateness or if a regular pattern of non-attendance is observed the class teacher will contact home by phone and will also notify the Principal.
- All written explanations, replies to absentee notes, medical certificates and other documentation are to be kept at the school for a period of one year and made available to a Student Attendance Officer on request. The teacher must endorse each such note with the date on which it was received at the school. Written explanations in school diaries are acceptable: where a diary is utilised, the school must retain a photocopy of the relevant written explanation.
- Where a student has patterns of non-attendance and participation document any strategies/interventions and include in their file. Document information on **Non-Attendance Concern Proforma**. Inform Principal of action taken.
- Set appropriate work for children unable to attend school when requested.
- Make Mandatory Notification as appropriate, document and store as per DECS procedures.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- Ensure intervention occurs after 10 days of accumulated absence or sooner if a student has a poor attendance record.
- If our best advice is that a student has left the school/district but there has been no transfer advice from another school after 2 weeks, the student will be made 'not active' and the Student Attendance Officer will be advised.
- Principal will complete a letter regarding the absence of a student and send home to the Parent/Caregiver.
- The issue of continued unexplained or inadequately explained absences over a term or frequent late arrivals will be addressed through a family conference including some or all of the following: parents/caregivers, principal, school counsellor, teacher and student (if applicable).
- Principal and staff will document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in student's file. The **Non Attendance Concern Proforma** to be reviewed and updated.
- Where a student leaves school during the day without the teacher's permission, the Principal will be notified immediately and parent and/or police assistance sought.
- Principal and staff will refer to a Student Attendance Officer on an **ED171 (Report of Unsatisfactory Attendance)** form if attendance issues are not resolved.
- Principal has delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month. Parents/Caregivers should fill in an **ED175 (Application for Exemption from School Attendance)** form and the Principal should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advices are to be retained in school files, together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate department officers as required.
- All applications for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on form **ED175 (Application For Exemption from School Attendance)** and forwarded to the Assistant Regional Director.
- Ensure that notifications about suspicions of neglect and/or abuse are made in addition to a referral to Regional Support Services.