

# Attendance Policy

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy, aligned to the Department for Education Attendance policy, is to provide a framework of expectations of attendance for all students.

## SCOPE

Research shows that attendance at school all day and every day positively affects learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people. Learning is cumulative and it is disrupted if students often miss school.

### The department's attendance policy

The South Australian Department for Education's Attendance Policy guides the responsibilities of the whole school community to make sure that children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers and students.

Schools work with their community to develop positive attendance habits. This starts from the earliest years. They do this when they provide a safe, inclusive and culturally respectful environment. They use effective and consistent local practices to monitor and manage absences.

Attendance at school is required from the age of 6 years.

### Compulsory school age - 6 to 16 years

Children and teenagers must be in school from 6 years to 16 years old.

They must attend a government or non-government school full time.

### Compulsory education age - 16 to 17 years

Teenagers must go to school or an approved learning program until they turn 17 unless they:

- achieve their SACE or other qualification
- are in full-time employment.

### Students at risk from missing school

Students can be away from school for many reasons. Schools use categories to identify children and young people at risk. We make sure that appropriate follow up and support is provided.

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

## PROCESS

### How we implement the department's attendance policy

At Findon High School our attendance practices align with the department's attendance policy.

We support student attendance when we:

- promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout school

- assess patterns of non-attendance and develop ways to address this
- actively engage and include all children, young people and their families
- provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing
- monitor attendance to make sure progress is documented and supports are in place
- evaluate the need for further or ongoing support and referral for additional support.

We use data to create our attendance improvement plans. This is in partnership with our community. Our plan includes the actions we will take to make sure all students can attend school.

### **Findon High School's attendance expectations**

The Findon High School and The Palms learning program starts at 8.30 am each day with the exception of Wednesday 10:40am start and finishes everyday at 3.10 pm.

The Findon Technical College learning program varies by year level;

- Year 10 starts at 8.30 am each day, with the exception of Wednesday 10:40am start, and finishes everyday at 3.10 pm
- Year 11 starts at 8.00 am and finishes everyday at 4.00 pm.

A parent or carer must provide a written or verbal (over the phone or in person) explanation if their child is late or has to leave early. All students/parents or carers provide this to student services when they sign in or out.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Everyone has a role to make sure students attend school all day, every day.

#### **Students**

- Attend school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Arrive at school and to all lessons and activities on time.
- Participate positively in all learning activities.
- Report to the Student Services Office if they arrive late or leave early. A parent or carer will be contacted.
- Note: a student's age and circumstances affect the level of responsibility.

#### **Parents and carers**

- Make sure their child attends school every day the school is open, unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Make sure their child arrives at school on time, generally 15 minutes before the first scheduled session.
- Provide their child's school with up-to-date contact details.
- Provide a reason to the school if their child is absent, late or leaving early. The same day if possible.
- Provide a medical certificate or written explanation if their child is ill for 3 or more days in a row.
- Make appointments outside of school hours if possible. For example, dentists or National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers.
- Make appointments with NDIS providers outside of school hours (unless NDIS provide is approved to be onsite).
- Monitor their child's attendance and classwork. Help their child to meet deadlines and catch up if needed.

#### **Teachers and leadership team**

- Make sure all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies and procedures.
- Accurately record each absence, late arrival or early departure with the appropriate code.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence, or a pattern of absences.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact.
- Request a medical certificate from parents or carers if needed.

- Consult with the local Student Support Services if needed. For example Social Work, Truancy.
- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide.
- Make sure the list of absences and late arrivals are given to student services / front office each day as early as possible.
- Contact the parent or carer on the day their child is absent, by text message and follow up phone call for unexplained absence.

## EXEMPTIONS

### Authorisation of exemptions

In some circumstances, the principal has authority to approve an exemption from school. This can be for up to 1 month. It can also be for up to 12 months for a family holiday. Before asking for an exemption, families should talk to a site leader or delegate. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved.

Our school requires an exemption for absences more than 5 school days in a row. This does not include illness.

Parents or carers must apply in writing via the application for an exemption form. The principal will advise of their decision through return of the form. A copy is kept in the student record folder.

Exemptions of more than 1 month (excluding holidays) must be approved by the department's central office.

Note: Exemptions are counted as student absences from school.

### RELATED PROCEDURE/PROCESS

Findon High School Attendance Process

[Department for Education Exemption Information](#)

[Department for Education Exemption Procedure](#) (including appropriate forms to complete)

### REFERENCES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

[SA Government - Attendance at School](#)

[Department for Education Attendance](#)

Version Control

Version 1.1

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