

STUDENT ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN



All students have the right to an education. This gives them the best opportunity to reach their full potential. We know that students are more likely to attend school regularly when they feel included, valued, respected and supported.

At McLaren Vale Primary School we provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where students can learn and grow. We ensure that every student is engaged in their learning. Parents and caregivers are important partners in this process. We communicate with parents, caregivers and students to identify the reasons for children's absences, and we provide supports that are specific to each student's needs.

OVERVIEW:

The Education Act requires that children of compulsory school and education age (aged 6 to 17th birthday) are enrolled and attend school or an approved learning program every day the school/ program is open. This is known as regular attendance.

The Department for Education Attendance Policy <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/attendance-policy> defines the following groups of students as at risk due to non-attendance:

- **Habitual non-attendance:** a student who misses 5 to 9 school days in a term, for any reason
- **Chronic non-attendance:** a student who misses 10 or more days in a term, for any reason.

For students in these groups we assess the impact of absences on learning and wellbeing, and we talk with the student's parents/ carers about this.

HOW WE FOLLOW UP STUDENT ABSENCES:

1. Rolls are submitted at 9:00am each day by the class teacher via Sentral (then imported to EDSAS)
2. Students arriving after 9:00 will be recorded as late
3. An SMS is sent to the Primary Contact for each child recorded as absent to notify families of the absence and requesting that they contact the school to provide a reason
4. Each student absence is recorded along with the reason, provided by the parents/ caregivers
5. When there is no response from the parents/ caregivers then the classroom teacher will contact the family enquiring regarding the reason
6. If the classroom teacher is unable to make contact then the teacher will advise leadership for further follow up.

When a student's pattern of absences continues to be of concern, we will maintain communication with the parents/ carers by phone, email, meeting or letter, offering support to address barriers that prevent the student from regular attendance. When appropriate we connect the family with other services, for example, Department for Education Student Support Services, or various community services.

OUR DATA:

At McLaren Vale Primary School, staff and the leadership team monitor student attendance through analysis of the data in order to identify patterns of unexplained absences, frequent absence, the reasons for absence, and patterns of late arrival. This also enables us to identify risks, plan whole school and targeted supports and interventions, and monitor progress and outcomes.

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Student attendance data from across the whole school is analysed by the leadership team and staff and the Governing Council Committee at least once each term. This data informs strategies to improve school attendance.

OUR APPROACH TO IMPROVING ATTENDANCE:

At McLaren Vale Primary School our attendance strategies are guided by the South Australian Department for Education's attendance policy. Together with our Governing Council committee, staff, students, families and local community, we plan, implement and review the below attendance improvement actions.

We promote the importance of education by communicating the benefits of regular attendance, and how absences affect learning, wellbeing and future success. This will be communicated in a range of formats including conversations with families, the school's Facebook page, Seesaw and Skoolbag apps.

We actively engage and include children enrolled at our school and their families in the learning programs and activities. We implement interventions that support regular attendance, including:

- Creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive school
- Engaging and challenging students in their learning program, providing for the range of student abilities and needs. Curriculum and teaching practices are modified to suit student needs
- Supporting teaching staff to be skilled in creating inclusive, relevant and engaging curriculum
- Building relationships with parents and caregivers, and offering connection through family & community activities during the year
- Implementing programs that support student wellbeing and school connection
- Educating students and families regarding the benefits of regular attendance
- Encouraging student voice regarding the school and learning environment, and including students in decision making
- Early identification of students with habitual or chronic non-attendance patterns, and follow up with families to support engagement. This might include home visits.

We provide support to address barriers to student attendance and engagement. Actions include:

- Early identification of students with concerning attendance patterns
- Communicating with families to identify reasons for student absences, planning appropriate in school and out of school supports, and reviewing progress
- Working with our school's ATSI team to support students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander with concerning attendance issues, being respectful of the student's individual and cultural needs
- Developing individual plans to support re-engagement for those students with concerning attendance patterns, including student voice in this process
- Working with Department for Child Protection and caregivers to support Children in Care who have concerning patterns of attendance
- Working with parents/ caregivers and support staff to develop individual plans for students with disability who have concerning patterns of attendance
- Communicating and working together with Department for Education Student Support Services regarding student attendance, referring individual students to the Social Work and Truancy team as appropriate
- Training staff and volunteers in mandatory reporting of attendance issues
- Maintaining relationships with local community groups and agencies who can contribute to support student attendance.

Reviewed and verified by Governing Council: September 2022