



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development

Tarlee Primary School

Attendance Policy

Ratified by Governing Council: 2011
Reviewed: 2015
Next Review date: 2018

STATEMENT

At Tarlee Primary School, we believe:

- Schools should provide a positive, safe, and caring success oriented environment.
- In order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling Students need to attend school regularly; every day school is open for instruction.
- Learners, their families and the school are active partners in the learning process.

Regular attendance allows and encourages Learners to:

- Actively participate in the school and their own learning.
- Participate fully in the educational program
- Feel welcome and a part of the school's daily activities
- Meet administration requirements, (i.e., morning information given to students, diaries checked, readers changed, homework checked, etc)
- To develop enduring and positive relationships with all educators who are professional, contemporary thinkers and responsive to the individual needs of the learner.
- To develop enduring and positive relationships with peers.
- Promotes the partnership links between home and school and to benefit education
- Have a greater chance to reach their full potential
- Understand the value of schooling in their lives.

In addition, it meets the legal requirements of parents, for their school age children, to attend school from the age of six (younger if they are enrolled and start attending school) until they are seventeen years of age (age of compulsion).

School staff, volunteers and parents should set the example for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

This means ensuring:

- Learners arrive at school at a reasonable time and are collected from school at a reasonable time.
- Staff will arrive at school by 8:30am and be in attendance until 4:00pm; there is no guarantee that staff will be at school outside school hours (8:30am to 4:00pm to supervise students Due to the size of the school and demands of professional development; parents will have prior warning of these occasions).

At Tarlee Primary School our aim is to ensure all students can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and enabling the early implementation of intervention strategies when required. We believe the early detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance and the provision of student development plans and organisational structures which are responsive to the needs of students are vital.

All members of the school community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance and work to the best of their ability and skill level as consistently as possible.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

All children and young people who are at least six years old, but not yet seventeen are of compulsory school age. Every child or young person of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from school or whether the student has a disability or not, is required to be enrolled at a government or non-government school or Open Access College and must attend the school (except at the Open Access College) on every day, or for such parts of every day, as instruction is provided at the school for the child, unless the Minister has granted a certificate of exemption from school attendance.

Compulsory attendance at school for all children and young people aged 6 - 17 years of age (or from their enrolment and attendance at school (if aged under 6 years) is based on the premise that each child has the right to receive an education which aims to promote personal development and equality of opportunity. Students who are between the ages of 16 and 17 who participate in a full-time approved learning program, which is education or training delivered through a school, university or registered training organisation, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or a combination of these are considered to be attending school.

The primary responsibility for meeting this requirement rests with the parent / guardian. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department for Education, Children's Development. DECD

The department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

The times for compulsory attendance for **ALL** students enrolled at Tarlee Primary School (regardless of age), are identified in bold blue writing below:

4:00pm – 8:30am School grounds officially closed

8:30am School grounds open for morning play
8:50 – 8:55am Warning bell for students to move to classes

8:55 - 10:40am Morning lesson session
10:40 - 11:00am Morning recess break
11:00 - 12:30pm Late morning lesson session
12:30 - 12:40pm Lunch (eating inside)
12:40 - 1:15pm Lunch (play outside)
1:15 - 3:15pm Afternoon lesson session

3:30pm Play equipment and playground school yard NO longer supervised (Students who are still waiting to be collected by parents,

school bus etc must wait in an area directed by a teacher and remain under supervision until picked up)
3:30 - 4:00pm School departure time for waiting bus travellers (under supervision)

4:00pm – 8:30am School grounds officially closed for students; unless special permission has been given and under supervision.

The school has a duty of care for students, until they are in safe possession of their parents or caregivers or in a mode of transit that the principal believes will transport the students to their parents or caregivers.

If a parent / caregiver are delayed, knows they are going to be late picking up their child /ren please notify the school ASAP, to avoid concern. This can be done via a phone call to the school on 08 85 285 301.

On any school day where a student/s are left inside school grounds **without notice**, after 3:30 staff will attempt to contact parents, after 4:00pm, the student/s are at risk of possible psychological harm. Therefore after all reasonable attempts by the principal or any adult present have been made to locate the parents, and the family's emergency contact persons; without success. The principal or any adult present may:

- Make the decision about whether any incident should be reported to Families S.A. Department, as a form of neglect.
- Where a student is left in the school grounds after 4:00 pm, **without notice** and when school staff is unable to stay at school to care for the student, the principal or delegate may contact the local Police Station, where they will be cared for by the police. A notice addressed to the parents involved will be pinned on the inside of the school's front doors, informing where the child is located.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to:

- Arrive at school punctually between the times 8:30am and 8:50am.
- Leave the school grounds promptly after School is dismissed; unless required to remain at school.
- Attend school on everyday that instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (eg, illness/family reasons).
- Provide teachers with an appropriate explanation for their non-attendance; usually this comprises of a phone call from parent/caregiver (on the day) or a letter / note or a Medical certificate on or before the student returns to school.
- When a student is late for school it is appropriate that the student explains the reason for their lateness.
- Hand letters or notes from parents (such as those written in diaries), to their teachers promptly.

- If late come into class quietly so as not to disturb other students learning. Quietly and appropriately give the teacher an explanation for the lateness.

Parents are expected to:

- Actively encourage their children to regularly attend school.
- Notify the school of any absences via the telephone call or text before 9:05 on the day of the absence or if the absence is known prior to the date by a written explanation in advance.
- Provide a written explanation for all absences on return to school. After a 3 day absence a doctor's certificate may be required.
- Inform the school if an extended absence is likely or if the school needs to arrange work at home for students.
- Negotiate and seek permission from the principal; in writing, for any expected periods of absence which may be greater than three days e.g. vacation, attending a family occasion Interstate. Approval can only be given following written confirmation from the principal.
- Ensure their child/ren is picked up promptly from school at the end of the school day. If you are going to be delayed for any reason / length of time contact the school ASAP to make arrangements.
- Inform the school if someone other than parent or caregiver is collecting your child.

Teachers are expected to:

- Encourage students to attend school regularly by providing an educational program constructed and evaluated on the stable foundation of a dynamic curriculum and administrative policies.
- Providing an exciting and stimulating educational program which is inclusive of the needs of all learners.
- Monitor each child's attendance and implement school attendance procedures.
- Accurately complete the roll book for each day. Absences are to be coded according to the criteria set by DECD and found in the front of the roll book.
- Submit roll book for statistical information when requested (eg, NAPLAN testing, Attendance Counsellor Etc).
- Complete and update Absentee information on a daily basis (i.e., late arrivals early departures etc).
- Teachers assess each individual regarding the appropriateness of applying consequences, such as additional homework, tasks to be completed, for un-explained non-attendance.
- Co-ordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom the work is requested.
- Inform the principal of any concerns about attendance, and in particular when a student is absent, without a reasonable explanation, for three consecutive days or if an irregular attendance pattern is

identified, (eg, 5 days in 2 weeks, regular late arrivals or early departures). **It is the Teacher's responsibility to investigate and follow through absences during this early stage**

School Service Officers (SSO) or delegated person is expected to:

- Enter all new enrolments information accurately on to EDSAS
- Ensure enrolment details are kept current, up to date and accurate recorded on EDSAS.
- Accurately enter attendance information into EDSAS each day. Absences are to be coded according to the criteria set by DECD and found in the front of the roll book.
- Submit roll information for statistical information when requested (eg, NAPLAN testing, Attendance Counsellor Etc).
- Complete and update Absentee information on a daily basis (i.e., late arrivals early departures etc).
- Contact the family; via text or telephone by 9:20, all students who have not arrived by 9:05.
- Pass reasons for absents / lateness on to teachers promptly.
- Inform the Teacher and Principal of any concerns about attendance, and in particular when a student is absent, without a reasonable explanation, for three consecutive days or if an irregular attendance pattern is identified, (eg, 5 days in 2 weeks, regular late arrivals or early departures).
- Provide Principal or Teachers with attendance information when requested promptly.
- Complete and print out for Teachers to verify term attendance details.

The principal is expected to:

- Ensure the roll book and EDSAS attendance list is accurately completed.
- Direct teachers to pursue any action as a result of poor attendance.
- When the classroom teacher faces an unsatisfactory outcome, to be responsible for recommending future action.
- Document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in student's file.
- Consult with DECD support staff as required by DECD attendance procedures.
- If the child is Aboriginal, contact the Aboriginal Education Worker immediately the non-attendance is apparent.
- Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar year. **Parents or guardians should apply in writing and Principals should also advise approvals / non-approvals on school letterhead.** Copies of such advises are to be retained in school files, together with applications and are to be made available to appropriate departmental officers as required.

- All applicants for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar year, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on Form ED 175 and forwarded to the Student Attendance Counsellor.
- All applicants for permanent exemptions are to be set out on Form ED 175 and forwarded to the Student Attendance Counsellor.
- Applications for home schooling are referred, by the principal, to the District Superintendent. Only when parents receive written approval to home school their child/children, may the child/children be released from attending school.

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT MIGHT TYPICALLY HAPPEN IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTENDANCE ISSUE:

After three days unexplained non-attendance at school, or a pattern of irregular attendance: i.e., 3 days one week, two days the next, two days the next, **or a pattern of lateness to school and or regular early departures.** The class teacher makes contact with the parents to determine the cause of the absence, (The teacher may also inform the principal of the non-attendance). **It is the Teacher's responsibility to investigate and follow through absences during this early stage;** if these efforts are unsuccessful then the following actions may be instigated:

1. **The teacher will inform the principal of his / her intended action to address the issue of poor or non-attendance.** This may include requesting a letter stating reasons for the absence using the phone, letter, diary or a home visit.
If no written response is received within one week. The teacher informs the principal.
The principal may write / phone the parent requesting an explanation.
2. **If the child is Aboriginal then the principal or delegate informs the district ACEO** (Aboriginal Community Education Worker).
3. **Where the teacher suspects a pattern of absences or lateness is occurring** (i.e., 3 days one week, two days the next, two days the next), **the teacher will make contact with the home to seek an explanation.** If the explanation is not forthcoming, or appears not plausible or legitimate, the teacher shall inform the principal.
The principal or delegate completes the ED 170, form notice of unexplained absence to be completed by the parents. This is sent to the parent caregiver. An accompanying letter from the school on school letterhead, may inform the parents of the child's non-attendance.
4. **Where the teacher receives several written excuses for lateness or absence and s/he are suspicious of the explanation, the Principal may contact the attendance counsellor and ask the Department to investigate the written reasons provided.** The principal or delegate completes the ED 170, the notice of unexplained absence, at the request of the teacher. This is sent to the parent caregiver. An accompanying letter from the school on school letterhead, to inform the parents of the child's non-attendance.

5. The class teacher may delegate responsibility for the management of the issue to the principal at this point, **only if the principal agrees to take up the issue on behalf of the teacher.**
6. **The teacher / Principal may contact by mail, phone and / or make a home visit.** The teacher will inform the parent of the consequences of further non-attendance [i.e. referred to **DECD Support Staff** (with parents permission) and or the **Attendance Counsellor** (parents permission not necessary)], or may request the principal do this, if they feel uncomfortable with this.
7. **The teacher will establish the reasons for non-attendance** and will continue to work on improving the attendance of the child. The principal will manage the process, if he or she has been requested to do so, by the class teacher.
8. **The classroom teacher will document intervention strategies**, home visits, phone calls, etc, and place these in the child's school file and copies in the back of the roll book.
9. **The class teacher may delegate responsibility for the management of the issue to the principal at this point**, only if the principal agrees to take up the issue on behalf of the teacher.
10. **After approximately 10 days of non-attendance, but not necessarily consecutive days**, the principal identifies the underlying reason for attendance and directs a referral to the **Behaviour Support Services and Attendance office**, which may be consulted as part of the process of developing the least intrusive response to the issue.
11. **Any Aboriginal child, the local regional services provider, in consultation with the district ACEO** will participate in a case conference organised by the principal (or delegate) and attended by the teacher, ACEO and parents to discuss the underlying causes of non-attendance. Attendance of the child at this meeting is optional and depends upon what is considered to be in the best interests of the child. The regional service provider and ACEO may consult with other service providers (I CAN Program) in developing and implementing and attendance plan.
12. **If non-attendance continues then the regional service provider will inform the attendance counsellor** who will activate the intervention action. The student attendance counsellor will then assume case management.
13. **If the attendance issues are not resolved, the attendance counsellor will meet with the districts interagency team** to consult and decide whether :
 - To offer additional services.
 - Whether the child meets the criteria for the Families SA: 'Adolescence at Risk Program', to pursue the child protection act legislation to prosecute the parents.

ATTACHED APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Attendance Information Brochure for Parents/Caregivers

Appendix 2 - Letter to parents from school enquiring about unexplained absence/lateness.

FORMS AVAILABLE from DECD :

- ED170, Notice of absence sent to parents.
- ED 170 Investigation of poor student attendance
- ED171, Report of Unsatisfactory school attendance.
(Including the instructions and guidelines).
- ED175, Application for exemption from school attendance.
(Including instructions to applicants).

ED170 - Investigation of poor student attendances

CONFIDENTIAL ATTENTION TO:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Your child _____ was absent from / late to (delete which) school on
_____ 19 _____.

Will you please state the reason on the bottom of this form, and return it, as soon as possible, to me.

Date: _____ signed: _____

School: _____

Attention the principal

In reply to your letter, I wish to say that my child _____ did
not attend school or was late on _____ 20 _____, because

I hereby declare this to be true and correct.

Signed (parent/caregiver) _____

Name printed _____

Date _____ 20 _____