



## ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### RATIONALE

The Education Act 1972 requires that children of compulsory school age (from age 6) be enrolled at school. A condition of enrolment is that students are required to attend school on a full-time basis and fully participate in the education program. The Compulsory Education Legislation (2009) requires children to participate in a full-time approved learning program up to the age of 17.

Attendance is a priority at Golden Grove Primary School. The more students attend, the more they learn and the more they will like school. Research also indicates that **regular attendance** leads to:

- Developing skills and attitudes such as self-discipline, punctuality, organisation and sticking to routines
- Making friends and learning how to maintain relationships over a period of time
- Learning social skills necessary to live and work with others

As there is a clear correlation between attendance and achievement, **irregular attendance** can lead to learning difficulties. If students miss the basic skills in the early years of schooling they will often experience learning difficulties in later years. Research also indicates that:

- Irregular attendance in the early years can lead to poor patterns of attendance in primary years.
- Irregular attendance makes it difficult for students to form positive relationships with their peers.
- Being half an hour late to school each day from Reception to Year 10 equates to missing one year and one and a half terms of schooling.
- Being absent five days a term from Reception to Year 10 equates to more than one year of missed schooling.
- Missing one day a week from school from Reception to Year 10 equates to missing two years and one term of schooling.
- Frequent absences make it difficult for the progress of class learning programs as information and skills often need to be retaught.

## **AIM**

### ***The Golden Grove Primary School attendance target is 95%.***

Monitoring lateness and attendance are legal responsibilities of teachers as employees of the Department for Education. The Golden Grove Primary School Attendance Policy and Procedures aim to:

- Respond to attendance concerns early through known and consistent processes.
- Account for the whereabouts of all students with all absences satisfactorily explained.
- Improve parent/school communication regarding attendance/lateness.
- Maximise learning opportunities by ensuring student absenteeism is kept to a minimum.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIONS**

### **Parents/Caregivers are required to:**

- Ensure that all children attend school from the beginning of each day (8:50am)
- Provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance via a telephone call/SMS before 10am on the day of the absence
- Provide a medical certificate for extended absences (over 3 days) due to illness.
- Obtain a late slip from Student Services if students arrive after 8:50am and present to teacher on arrival at classroom
- Obtain an early dismissal slip from Student Services and present this to the classroom teacher if taking a child from school prior to 3:10pm
- Request a temporary exemption form from school for any known absences of five days or longer (ED175 forms available from the front office)
- Communicate to relevant school staff any needs or concerns which may affect a child's attendance

### **Teachers will:**

- Record absences and reasons for absence via the online Roll before 10am each morning. The Roll can be updated any time up until 10am
- Request that all students arriving late (after 8:50am) report to Student Services for a late arrival slip
- Request that all parents obtain an early dismissal slip if collecting a child prior to 3:10pm
- Ensure that all known absence reasons/details are entered as cover notes electronically. These can be entered retrospectively however if known before 10am on any day, details must be entered on that day to prevent an SMS being sent to parents
- Follow up unexplained absences and provide updated information as received from parents to Student Services
- Keep all communication /anecdotal notes/ record of contact attempts re attendance in Pastoral Folders
- Discuss attendance concerns as they arise with the Principal/Student Services
- Sign the (end of) term summary when distributed and return to Student Services

### **Student Services Manager will:**

- Provide the Principal, or designated leader with attendance records of all students in Weeks 4 & 9 each term and discuss noted attendance concerns as they arise with leadership members
- Provide class teachers with (end of) term summaries
- Provide class teachers with end of semester summaries prior to each reporting cycle.
- Distribute late arrivals/early dismissals slips (thereby updating online Roll)
- Manage the online attendance procedures/system
- Send daily text messages for unexplained absences
- Monitor receipt of information following distribution of texts
- Monitor daily/weekly patterns of absence and unexplained absences. Follow up via phone calls and record details on EDSAS
- Record subsequent follow up intervention measures (including attendance letters) on EDSAS

### **Leaders will:**

- Meet with the Student Services Manager in Weeks 4 and 9 of each term to discuss individual absences and plan/implement appropriate action to address concerns (see flow chart)
- Provide Student Services Manager with details of follow-up measures for recording on EDSAS
- Meet with the Attendance and Engagement Officer every term in Week 9 to case-manage individual students/families
- Consider applications (ED175) from Parents/Caregivers for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month. Parents/Caregivers will be advised in writing re approvals and non-approvals. Copies of such advice will be retained in the school files, together with applications, and will be made available to appropriate department officers as required
- Forward requests for exemptions of longer than one month (ED175) to the Department for Education central office

## **Unsatisfactory Attendance**

The Principal or delegate may need to remind the Parent/Caregiver about legal obligations for attendance of students under compulsion. The Principal or delegate may contact a Department for Education Social Worker (Truancy) for assistance/intervention.

### **Social Workers (Truancy):**

- Can provide advice relating to persistent non-attendance issues, e.g. ideas for intervention strategies
- Liaise with the school to establish and maintain an exchange of relevant information after a report of unsatisfactory attendance
- Consult with a legal adviser from Legal Services Unit when the prosecution of a parent is being considered

**Social Workers (Truancy) will, in the first instance, use the following processes to monitor chronic non-attendance**

- Keep copies of all relevant documentation during a process leading to a possible prosecution
- Send copies of relevant documentation to the Principal
- Understand that all documentation, including notes may be requested and provided to the parent under Freedom of Information
- Keep all records factual (who, what, where, when)
- Make a home visit
- Develop a case plan in agreement with the Principal to address issues, including those raised by the student and the family
- Support the school in implementing the case plan with a time line known to all parties
- Monitor the case plan on a regular basis
- Arrange a case review meeting between the family, the student attendance counsellor and the Principal
- Close or review the case
- Repeat the above process as many times as required until the student returns to a program of education or until the student is over the age of compulsion

**If there is no return to an educational program, the Social Worker (Truancy) will consult with relevant departments and may:**

- Refer the student to Families SA or other interagency support service
- Liaise with the school and the family to develop an alternative education strategy which may involve work experience or alternate placement
- Recommend to the Minister that the parent/caregiver be prosecuted

**Prosecution of parents for the non-attendance of a child:**

- Section 76(1) of the Education Act states that a child is required to attend the school at which he/she is enrolled on every day instruction is provided by the school for the child.
- Section 76(3) states that where a child fails to attend school each parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty not exceeding two hundred dollars.
- Prosecution of Parents/Caregivers is a last resort for persistent non-attendance of students of compulsory school age.

**Ratified by Governing Council on 10.5.21**

**Principal: Wendy Moore**

**Governing Council Chairperson: Wade Wilson**

**Review Date: May 2023**