

McDonald Park School

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

CONTEXT / BELIEF STATEMENT

At McDonald Park Schools we believe school should provide a safe, success orientated and caring environment. 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, enabling them to reach their full potential. School staff should set an example for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies. We believe the early detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance and the provision of organisational structures, which are responsible to the needs of students, is 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 as consistently as possible. ***Student attendance is everyone's business.***

GENERAL

A child who is at least six years old but not yet sixteen is of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability or not. These students are required to be enrolled at a registered or non-government school and must attend the school on every day instruction is provided at the school for the child, unless the Minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent/guardian. 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.***

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent's responsibilities

- ❑ Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.
- ❑ Children must arrive at school between 8.30 and 8.55am.
- ❑ Children must attend school on 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. Usually this comprises a letter or telephone call from a parent/caregiver or a medical certificate. After three days of illness a medical certificate is required.
- ❑ When a student is late for school, it is expected that the parent/caregiver explains the reason for lateness.
- ❑ Parents/caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely or if the school needs to arrange work at home for students. Request for extended absences of up to one calendar month need to be made in writing to the principals. Absences exceeding one month need approval from DECS.

Teacher's responsibilities

- ❑ Monitor each child's attendance.
- ❑ Record absence and reason for absence in absence folder and send to front office once per week on assigned day. EDSAS records only lateness, therefore, if concerned keep a record of time of arrival in 'NOTES' column in absence folder. EDSAS can record reasons for lateness, therefore, include that for record keeping.
- ❑ Contact home on third day of absence. Record in notes section of absence folder. Document any strategies/interventions and include in student's file.
- ❑ After contacting parent/caregiver alert the leadership team through a reminder notice.
- ❑ Other action: discuss with leadership team.
- ❑ Coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested.

Leadership team's responsibilities

- ❑ Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- ❑ The leadership team will complete the letter regarding the absence of a student and send home to parent/caregiver.
- ❑ The leadership team should document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in students file.
- ❑ The leadership team will refer to an attendance counsellor on an ED171 form if attendance issues are not resolved.
- ❑ Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve temporary exemptions from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month. Parents/caregivers should apply in writing and principals 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 applicants for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on Form ED 175 and forwarded to the Student Attendance Counsellor.

