Information for parents – Attendance at primary school

Going to school every day is vitally important so your child does not miss out on important ideas, concepts, knowledge and skills for future learning. At our school, we want your children to do their very best. To get the best education, they need to go to school every day. By working together, our school community can support your child's attendance.

What can you do to help?

- Have a set time for your child to go to bed at night and get up in the morning.
- Have their uniform and school bag ready the night before.
- Have a set time for breakfast.
- Set a time for daily homework activities.
- Talk about school positively.
- If running late, encourage your child to still go to school and reassure them that you will let the school know.
- Organise for your child to meet a friend before school so they can arrive at school together.
- Get involved at school through volunteering or participate in school programs, events or join the Parents and Citizens' Association.

Do you need to let the school know if your child will be away from school?

Yes, you need to let office staff know that your child will be absent from school and the reason why as soon as possible.

Having information about why a child is missing school helps us plan for their return to school and to work out whether we can provide any further help to you.

What will staff at our school do to help?

- Offer developmentally, socially and culturally responsive learning opportunities to engage students.
- Monitor every student's attendance and work with parents to overcome problems affecting attendance.
- Provide predictable routines to help students know what to expect to reduce anxiety about going to school.
- Talk with you about involving support staff such as and other agencies or organisations to help.
- Talk with you about local services that may also be able to help such as Headspace, Youthline and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

For more information you can contact the school to arrange for an interpreter.

Information for schools

Prior to use, principals should make a professional judgement on the information contained within this resource to ensure its relevance and validity within the context of their school.

This may include:

- adapting text within the resource where required
- whether the content is suitable for the whole school, a target group, or in individual cases
- whether the information would be best received as a supplementary resource to a meeting or face-to-face conversation with a parent or community member
- utilising key messages within this resource over a period of time as part of existing communications with parents and the community, rather than distributing the fact sheet as a once-off complete resource. For example, via SMS, the school app or social media, within the school newsletter, at assemblies or school events.

The requirements

Section 23 of the *School Education Act 1999* requires for every year of the student's **compulsory education period** (Pre-primary onwards) that the student attend the school at which they are enrolled, or participate in an educational program of the school, on the days on which it is open for instruction.

A student may be excused if they are prevented from attending due to temporary physical or mental incapacity, or other reasonable cause (Section 25), cultural or religious observance (Section 30) or suspension (Section 90).

When a student's attendance falls below 90% or is identified as a concern, the *Student Attendance in Public Schools* policy and procedure*s* requires the school to investigate the reasons for a student's absence, discuss with parents and implement strategies for improvement that are linked to the causes of absence.

Record-keeping

The principal has the authority to determine which lesson attendance code is most applicable for each circumstance.

The purpose of these codes is for schools to be able to disaggregate their attendance data to determine common reasons for absence and inform strategies for improvement.

Records of strategies utilized for students at risk should be maintained within the student's documented plan.

Determining appropriate strategies

The resources/strategies component of the Student Attendance Toolkit contains strategies and information relevant to the common cause/s of absence.

Accessing support

Schools can contact their Education Regional Office for support.

Join the Student Attendance Connect Community to connect with other WA public school staff about communicating with parents and strategies.