



Newbery Park Attendance - Context / Belief Statement

"Student attendance is everyone's business."

Importance of regular Attendance

The likelihood of success in learning is strongly linked to regular attendance and appropriate participation in educational programs. It is crucial that children and students develop habits of regular attendance at an early age, even from the time they are enrolled in a preschool setting.

Children and students who have poor patterns of attendance are at risk of not achieving their educational, social or psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations.

These learners may:

- be socially isolated
- place themselves at risk of harm during times of absence
- be more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable and/or illegal activities
- have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts
- feel insecure in the preschool or school environment
- be more likely to leave school early
- be over-represented in the juvenile justice system
- be the victims of bullying and harassment.

Once learners have begun to absent themselves from preschool or school, and the initial cause of this remains undetected or unexplored, it is likely that the pattern of absence will continue and escalate through the student's subsequent school career. Late arrival at school through the primary years is often related to non-attendance during secondary school.

Benefits of regular student attendance for parents/caregivers

- By encouraging regular attendance you will know that you have positively influenced your child's education.
- You will know that your child is safe at school and not at risk elsewhere.
- You will know that your children are learning more appropriate things than if they were truanting.
- Regular attendance by your child will ensure that you have fewer contacts with government agencies.
- You will have peace of mind in knowing that children who attend school regularly are less likely to break the law and go to jail in later life.
- You will enjoy more structured family routines.
- Your child is more likely to finish year 12 and have broader opportunities.
- You will avoid a fine or legal action due to your child's poor attendance at school.

Benefits of regular attendance for students

- Getting the maximum benefit from school will optimise your life choices.
- Attending school regularly will develop skills and attitudes that will help you to be successful in later life. These include self-discipline, punctuality, being organised and sticking to routines.
- Regular attendance leads to an increased likelihood of being successful at school.
- Attending regularly leads to making friends and learning to maintain relationships over a length of time.
- You will learn social skills necessary to live and work successfully with others.
- You are safer at school than on the streets.
- People will be more positive about you if you have a good attendance record.
- Attending school provides opportunities for socialising with your friends.
- The more you attend, the more you learn, and this will probably mean you will like school more.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

At Newbery Park Primary School 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.

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 Compulsory Education Age Legislation requires all young people between the years of 16 and 17 to participate fulltime in an approved learning program.

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 may arrive from 8.30am but must be at school between 8.50 and 9.00am to begin classes.
- 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 a written explanation 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 every 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 ED 171form 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.



Attendance Improvement Plan – Newbery Park Primary School 2015 - 2017

'At the core of school improvement and education reform is an assumption so widely understood that it is rarely invoked: Students have to be present and engaged in order to learn'.

Desired outcome	Performance indicators	Strategies to achieve outcomes	Who involved	Timeline for reporting and review
<p style="text-align: center;">Wave 1</p> <p>Maximum student attendance rate at 90-100%</p>	<p>Attendance Data – unexplained absences at or below 1.3%</p> <p>Parent/Student opinion data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent - 'I think my child receives high quality teaching at this school' at or above 90% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on attendance in newsletters, school assemblies to inform parents about the way attendance is managed and the impact of any absences on learning ● Follow-up of all unexplained absences by classroom teacher. Marked and identified by admin staff in roll summary forms ● Breakfast Club and before school (library/music room) provided to help build welcoming environments and linked to curriculum and other well being programs. ● Teachers contact parents personally after 2 days ● Once 4 days absence in the term occurs an attendance administration letter is sent home ● If the absenteeism occurs home visit by the Principal and attendance officer contacted ● Make sure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in following up attendance ● Make attendance a regular item at staff meetings, SRC, Governing Council as well as part of staff performance and development review processes ● Involve the whole school community in a planning process to gather information about existing and projected strategies ● Staff to review attendance data report issues to principal. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Principal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Teacher</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Family</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CPSW</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">One class and whole school review per term</p> <p style="text-align: center;">As required depending on individual students</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Daily roll books and communication with students and families as required</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wave 2</p> <p>Reduced unexplained absences for those students whose attendance rate is 70-90%</p>	<p>Attendance data review as per staff meeting and accountability schedules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student – 'I really like to go to school each day' at or above 90%. 	<p><i>As above and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be consistent in the handling of student absences. It can be very confusing for students and parents when staff follow different processes for managing absenteeism ● Be alert to early warning signs of irregular attendance or poor engagement of students, including lateness ● Alternative learning program (Garden/ICAN etc programs) for targeted students ● Communicate with parents regarding notification process to explain reason for absence. ● Personal calls work best and the earlier the better ● Home visits and/or meetings at agreed off-site locations ● Ensure there are positive supports for students returning to school from <u>any</u> absence ● Referral of individual students and parent/carers to regional support services and community agencies for further support ● Once a term meeting between principal and Student Attendance Counsellor. ● Use of text message/email to contact parents where possible 	<p style="text-align: center;">Teacher, principal and family</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Follow up phone call or identification of pattern of non attendance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing monitoring</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wave 3</p> <p>Significant intervention for those</p>		<p><i>As above and...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organising attendance-focussed meetings with parents/carers and students ● Individual attendance plans are developed to support identified students 	<p style="text-align: center;">Principal and staff</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Principal and Student Attendance</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Processes are consistently followed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Week 6 each term</p>

students whose attendance is less than 70%			Counsellor. All Staff	Week 5 each term
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Date	Student	Concern	Action/Recommendation	Comment