



Tanunda Primary School & Disability Unit

Attendance Policy

Rationale

At Tanunda Primary School & Disability Unit we are committed to educational excellence. We work in partnership with families to provide children with learning opportunities that will provide a solid foundation for their future. Research shows that success in learning is directly proportional to regular attendance and participation in education programs. The Tanunda Primary School & Disability Unit Attendance Policy places priority on the early identification of non-attendance and irregular attendance, and outlines practices to support regular attendance of students in our school community.

Legalities

All children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required by law to attend school full time and children between 16 and 17 must participate in a full-time approved learning program (Education Act, 1972). If a child is 5 and enrolls to attend school, then they must attend full time, as any other student. If a student is going to be absent from school for an extended period of time, the parent/caregiver must inform the school immediately. If a child has been ill and has seen a doctor, a certificate from the doctor will assist in accounting for the absence. Classroom teachers are responsible for keeping an accurate and up to date roll book. Roll books are legal documents and must be an accurate reflection of a student's attendance. All notes and slips given to a classroom teacher to account for absences must be kept with the roll book and not destroyed.

Responsibilities

Families

Parents/Caregivers must enrol their child in an education program from 6 years (the age of compulsion). Once a child is enrolled, even if it is prior to their sixth birthday, they are expected to attend school regularly. The primary responsibility of a student's attendance rests with the parent/caregiver. Having positive parenting in relation to schooling helps children to appreciate the importance of education and learning. Good habits such as structure and routine in the mornings assist children in getting used to getting up and ready for school.

When Parents/Caregivers enrol their child at school they accept the responsibility to:

- Provide information that may assist in planning for the child's learning; for example medical conditions, family issues, developmental milestones
- Enable their child to attend punctually and regularly. At Tanunda Primary School & Disability Unit children are expected to arrive at school no earlier than 8:25am and no later than 8:50am
- Provide an explanation to the school whenever their child is absent via a letter, a telephone call, personal contact or a medical certificate. After three days a written explanation is required
- Apply for an exemption whenever there is a planned absence such as a family holiday
- Let the school know if an extended absence is likely and negotiate with the class teacher if work is required
- When a child is late for school it is appropriate that the parent/caregiver explains the reason for the lateness and ensure a late slip is obtained from the front office
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve punctuality and attendance if required



Children

Children enrolled in school have responsibility for their attendance. The level of responsibility will be determined by the individual circumstances of the child.

Children are expected to:

- Attend school regularly
- Be punctual
- Collect a late slip from the office if arriving after the 8:50am bell
- Engage appropriately in the education program

Teachers

Staff are responsible for supporting the agreed attendance improvement processes for the site and will:

- Provide a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage all children and offers opportunity for success, thus encouraging regular attendance
- Record attendances/absences according to DECD requirements
- Contribute to the analysis of attendance trends and the development and implementation of school Attendance Improvement Plan
- Make contact with the family on the third day of absence if communication from the family has not been received
- Document any strategies/interventions to improve attendance and include these in the child's file
- Advise the Leadership Team of frequent or prolonged absences
- Work with Leadership Team and families to develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (See Appendix 1)
- Co-ordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested
- Make Mandatory Notifications as appropriate

Leadership Team

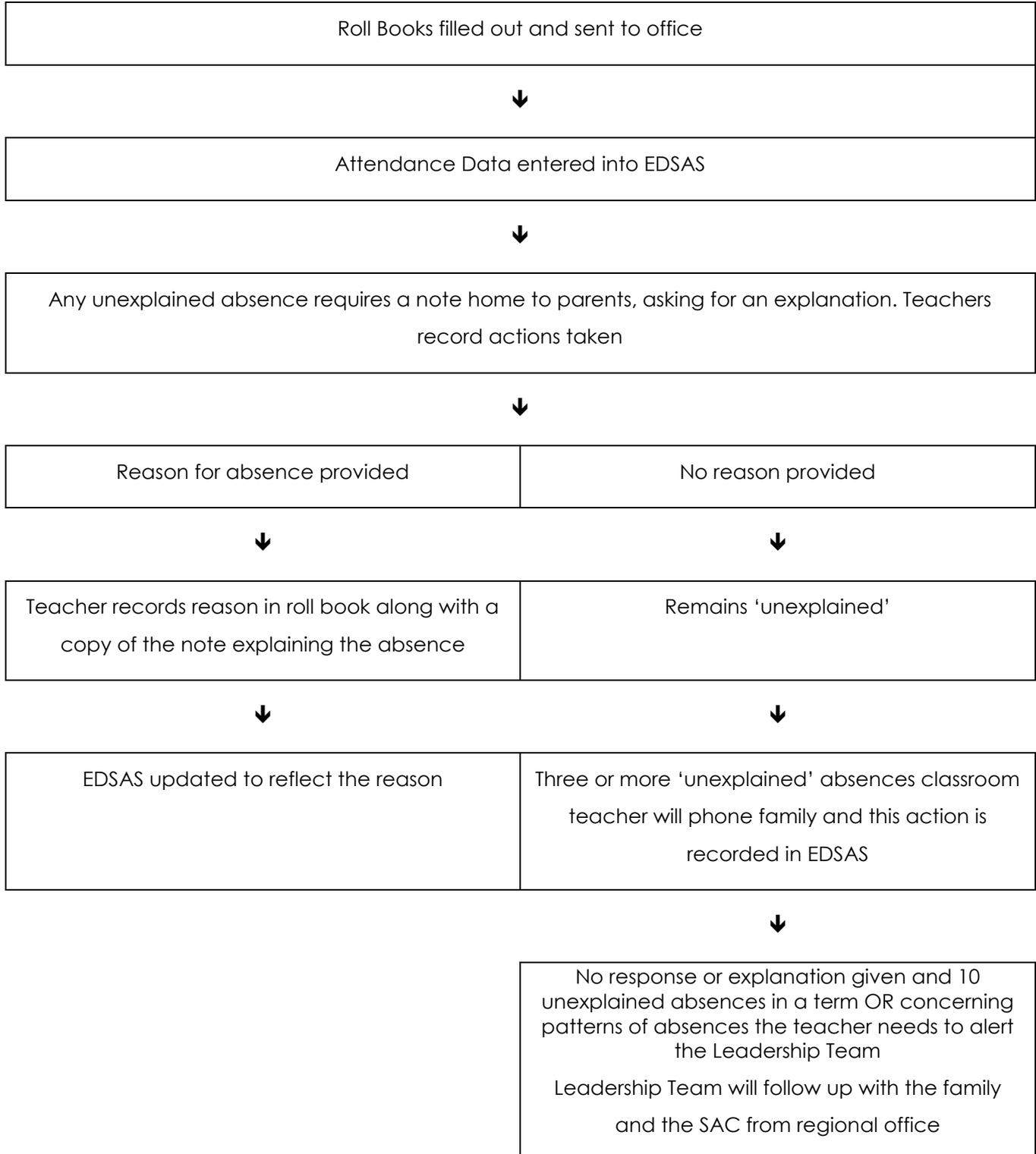
The Leadership Team are responsible for developing and supporting the site attendance improvement processes.

The Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that absence data is processed according to DECD guidelines
- Ensure that the appropriate follow up has been completed before a letter regarding the absence of a student is sent home to families (See Appendix 2)
- Document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include them in the child's file
- Work with teachers and families to develop an individual Student Attendance Improvement Plan
- Work with teachers and families to determine underlying causes of frequent absenteeism and/or late arrival
- Refer to an Attendance Counsellor on an ED171 form if attendance issues are not resolved



Attendance Flowchart





Appendix 1 – Attendance Improvement Plan

Student Attendance Improvement Plan

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

IDENTIFIED NEEDS	GOAL/TASK	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE

ANY ADDITIONAL RELEVANT INFORMATION

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Caregiver Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Leadership Staff Signature: _____

REVIEW DATE: _____





Appendix 2 – Attendance Letter

Dear

One of our continuing priorities is to address issues of attendance among students. Our records for Term/s _____ (2019) show that your child _____ has been absent on _____ days and/or late on _____ days. We understand that this may be due to unavoidable reasons, including illness or family holidays, which cannot be taken at any other time of the year.

However, irrespective of the cause, research shows that students who are absent for more than 10 days per year are disadvantaged both educationally and socially.

Your child is at risk of falling into this category and you should be aware that their absences and lateness over the course of this year so far will have had a detrimental effect on their education. Some of the effects experienced by these students may include:

- Gaps in knowledge and understanding resulting in missing basic concepts.
- Lack of continuity and familiarity resulting in them feeling less secure in the school environment.
- The loss of opportunities for play activities which improve social/emotional and cognitive development.
- Missing out on learning important basics such as class rules and behaviour norms.
- Belief that punctuality and attendance are unimportant.
- Inability to maintain friendships resulting in isolation, bullying or teasing.
- Loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Increased likelihood of leaving school early.

The reverse side of this letter answers some "Frequently Asked Questions" regarding school and processes around attendance.

We ask you to consider the reasons for your child's absences/lateness and try to improve his/her attendance. Should you be experiencing a problem getting your child to school, please call us and make a time to talk as we can possibly help you or bring in Support Services that can assist with such problems.

Yours faithfully,

Class Teacher

Principal





Frequently Asked Questions - Attendance

What are the starting times at Tanunda Primary School & Disability Unit?

Students are expected to arrive between 8:25 and 8:50am. Classes commence at 8:50 and students are deemed to be late if they arrive after this time.

Can my children arrive before 8:25am?

We do not wish to curb children's enthusiasm about attending school, however yard supervision commences at 8:25am.

Does my child need to be at school every day?

Students must attend school on every school day. This is necessary if they are to cover all the work set out in the school program for the year. Schools are required to advise DECD Attendance Officers if student absences exceed 10 days (particularly if unexplained) in order to follow up what is considered to be 'excessive' absences and 'persistent' lateness.

What if my child is ill?

Students who are obviously ill, need to be home resting and most likely in bed. They may even need to visit the doctor. Remember, however, each day a child misses school they miss a part of their learning program. Parents/caregivers must contact the school and give a reason for the child's absence, preferably on the morning of the absence. This should be followed up with a written note when the child returns to school.

What if my child arrive late in the morning?

If your child arrives before 8:50am they can go straight to the classroom. Lateness is viewed as a serious matter and is recorded in the Roll Book by the teacher – including the arrival time. If your child arrives after 8:50am, they must report to the Front Office and collect a "Late Slip" to take to the class teacher. Students arriving after 9:30 require a note from the parent/caregiver explaining the lateness.

Being late or absent from school impacts on your child's learning, their routine organisation and their relationships with others.

If we consider a child's schooling from Reception through to Year 10, we can see the impact through these statistics.....

- **5 days away a term** adds up to more than 1 year of schooling missed. That's 220 days over this period of schooling.
- **1 day a week** away adds up to 2 years and 1 term or 451 days over this period.
- **Half an hour late per day** also equates to more than 1 year away from school.

If my child becomes ill at school, will I be informed?

Yes and if an accident or illness is potentially worrying or serious, this will be done as soon as possible. For this reason is critical that the school is provided with up-to-date and reliable contact numbers for home and work and names and numbers for emergency contact if the parent/caregiver is not able to be contacted.

What if my child has an appointment (Medical, Dental, Other important appointment)?

Where possible, appointments outside of school hours are preferable. If the appointment is within school hours, a written note from the parent/caregiver should be given to the teacher advising of the appointment.

What does the law say about attending school?

In South Australia it is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend school. Parents or guardians are responsible for making sure the child attends. Parents or guardians can be taken to court and fined if they persistently and knowingly do not send a child to school. Once a child is enrolled at school, even if it is prior to their sixth birthday, the child must attend school regularly.