



Wilmington Primary School

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Government
of South Australia

Department for Education
and Child Development

Wilmington Primary School Attendance Policy

Rationale

Wilmington Primary School is committed to educational excellence.

Ensuring regular attendance at preschool and school is a shared responsibility between parents/caregivers, preschools and schools.

Research shows that success in learning is directly proportional to regular attendance and participation in educational programs.

DECD, together with other government agencies and the community share a responsibility to support young people's regular to attendance at school.

The Education Act 1972 (the Act) provides for compulsory attendance of any child required to be enrolled at the school for which she or he has been enrolled on every day, and for such parts of every day, as instruction is provided at the school for the child (subsection 76(1)) between the ages of 6 and 16 years.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Principals and Preschool directors

Principals and preschool directors are responsible for ensuring that the attendance of all children and students is maximised and will:

- Develop and implement the site's Attendance Improvement Plan
- Ensure the maintenance of attendance records
- Ensure intervention is documented
- Monitor and analyse attendance data and report to the school community through the site's annual report
- Ensure procedures, including parent/caregiver notification and home visits, are in place to follow up non-attendance
- Ensure intervention in preschools and schools occurs after 10 days of accumulated absence or sooner if the child or student has a poor attendance record
- Make referral to, and seek support from, agencies and support services when a learner's pattern of attendance becomes irregular
- Ensure that the analysis of data is used effectively to inform action at the site with the involvement of the preschool's or school's community
- Remain engaged with the family throughout the referral and case management process undertaken by DECS Support Services
- Ensure that notifications about suspicions of neglect and/abuse are made in addition to a referral to Regional Support Services.

Responsibilities of preschool and school staff

Staff in preschool and school sites 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 students 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 preschool and school Attendance Improvement Plans

- Implement preschool and school procedures, including parent/caregiver notification, to follow up non-attendance
- Work with parents/caregivers and government agencies to support learners' regular attendance in the education program
- Refer all students, under compulsion, with unsatisfactory attendance to student attendance counsellors if the actions above have proved unsuccessful
- Liaise with the student, the family, any involved agencies and the student attendance counsellor once a referral is made.
- Make Mandatory Notifications as appropriate, document and store as per DECD procedures

NOTE: While it is acknowledged that children are not under compulsion to attend preschool or school until their sixth birthday, staff in these sites should work with parents/caregivers to establish a regular attendance pattern as early as possible.

Responsibilities of parents/caregivers

Parents/caregivers must enrol their child in an education program from 6 years (the age of compulsion). When they enrol their child in a preschool or school they accept the responsibility to:

- Provide information to the preschool or school that may assist planning for the child's learning; for example, medical conditions, developmental milestones and family issues
- Enable their child to attend punctually and regularly on every day the education program is offered and to comply with the education program being offered
- Provide an explanation to the preschool or school whenever their child is absent. Apply for an exemption whenever their child is removed from the school
- Work with the preschool or school on intervention strategies to improve attendance
- Discuss with the principal/director any suspicions of neglect and/or abuse that may require a mandatory notification.

Responsibilities of children and students

Children and students enrolled in a preschool or school site have responsibility for their attendance. The level of responsibility will be determined by the individual circumstances of the child.

The expectations are that they:

- Attend preschool, school or other educational program as negotiated regularly on every day the program is offered
- Be punctual in arriving at preschool, school or the educational program and for all associated lessons and activities
- Engage appropriately in the education program as negotiated

Procedure for late arrival

- Students need to enter the school through the front office, and sign in, preferably with a note from their parents
- Staff will follow up any unexplained lateness

Procedure for leaving school during the day

- Parents/Caregivers need to come to the front office and sign the student book before the student leaves the grounds. If the child returns to school he/she must report their presence to the Office staff.

Procedure for preschool students attending preschool

- Preschool students need to be signed in upon arrival and out at the end of the day in the preschool by a parent/caregiver or negotiated adult.

Principal Approved Temporary Exemptions

The Principal of the school in which the child is enrolled can approve applications for temporary exemptions for the reasons of:

- *Family Travel /Holiday* for a period up to twelve months.
- *Ongoing Medical Condition and Other/Conditional* for a period of up to one month.

Family Travel / Holiday – up to twelve months

Students of Compulsory School Age and Compulsory Education Age (6 to 17 years of age) require an exemption if they wish to travel or go on a family holiday during school time. Principals have the authority to approve **temporary** exemptions for up to twelve months for *travel / family holiday* where students are not enrolling in another school during that time. If enrolling at another school Central Delegate approval is required.

Ongoing Medical / Other / Conditional – up to one month

If the exemption sought is **temporary** (*Ongoing Medical Condition and Other/Conditional*) and less than a period of one month, the Principal can approve the application.

Awaiting approval for Home Schooling – up to one month

Principals can grant a temporary exemption for up to one month for home schooling after confirming that an ***application for Exemption from Attendance at School for the Purposes of Home Education*** has been lodged by the parent/guardian with the Manager Home Education.

NOTE TO PRINCIPALS

Principals should take care in exercising their delegation. Principals should work with the parent/guardian to ensure there is a plan in place for the student to ensure they keep up with schooling and are not educationally disadvantaged during their exemption period. Consideration should be given to the following;

- Frequency and length of previous exemptions and absences. The school should provide clear messages about the impact of regular absences in term time (this may also include other types of parent condoned absences e.g. shopping days, dentist appointments, visiting relatives, day off for birthdays etc.)
- Important dates when leave of absence will cause major disruption for the student or the school on the day or in the lead up to the event, e.g. school examinations, NAPLAN, sports events, camps/excursions and performances.
- For longer periods an alternative education program such as enrolment in the **Open Access College** or **Home Education** may be an option.

Parents requesting an exemption could be invited to school to discuss the proposed absence and implications for their child in missing school time. There is no obligation for schools to provide school work during an exemption however it is reasonable for schools to provide information about what will be covered during the exemption period.

Exemptions for periods longer than this need to be approved by a DECD Central Delegate.

Preschool Attendance Recording Procedure

4.1. Attendance Recording Requirements

Preschool services are required to:

4.1.1 Collect enrolment data using the DECD approved Preschool Enrolment Form.

4.1.2 Ensure that an accurate attendance record is maintained for each child, every day that a service is in operation.

4.1.3 Collect and provide accurate attendance and enrolment data to fulfil the requirements of the department's resource allocation and national reporting processes.

4.1.4 Manage preschool enrolment and attendances through the department's Early Years System (EYS).

4.1.5 Ensure a child, once in care, may only leave the premises if:

- the child is given into the care of a parent of the child, or
 - a person authorised by the parent to collect the child, or
 - in accordance with the written authorisation of the child's parent or authorised nominee
 - taken on an excursion and written authorisation in accordance with regulation 102 has been obtained
 - the child requires medical care
 - in the event of an emergency (including rehearsed emergency evacuations).
- 4.1.6 When a parent or authorised nominee is unknown to staff, then the identification and authorisation confirmation of the collecting person is to be determined prior to the child being given into their care.

4.2. The Attendance Record

4.2.1 *The attendance record will include:*

- Date of attendance
- Full name of each child
- Time of arrival (to be amended by exception if a child arrives after the session starting time)
- Time of departure (to be amended by exception if a child departs before the session finishes).

4.2.2 *The accuracy of an attendance record must be confirmed on a daily basis by the signature of:*

- The person who delivers and collects the child, or
- The nominated supervisor, or
- An educator authorised by the director or principal.

Note: Sites that operate programs, for which families are eligible for Child Care Benefit (for example long day care), are required to meet their obligations under the Australian Government's funding legislation. This obligation requires the parent and/or guardian to sign for each arrival and departure time.

4.2.3 The attendance record is to include all children present in the service for which the Nominated Supervisor is responsible, at any time during the service's operation.

4.2.4 Attendance records may be in a daily or weekly format dependant on the size and complexity of a service. The attendance sheets available from the Early Years System (EYS) are the required format for sites to use to record children's attendances.

4.2.5 Attendance records are to be retained at a service for a 12 month period, in a safe (dry and vermin free) environment which will not damage the records. After a period of 12 months sites may seek off-site storage through the DECD Records Management Unit (DECDRecordsManagementUnit@sa.gov.au) or continue to store the records on site until disposal action is approved by the DECD Records Management Unit.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

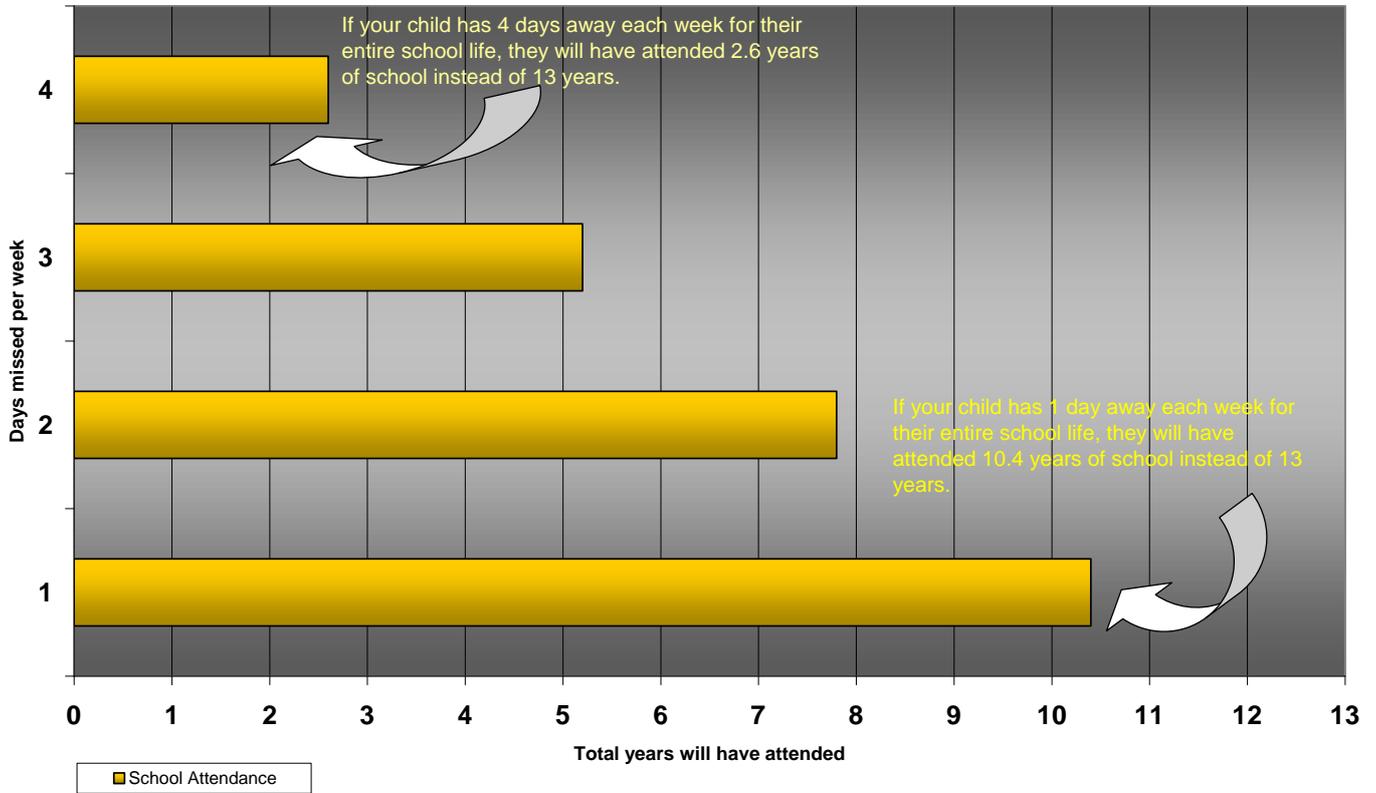
Preschool director or principal

- Overall responsibility for the implementation of the Preschool Attendance Recording Procedure.
- Compliance with the requirements of the Preschool Attendance Recording Procedure to ensure compliance with the National Law and Regulations 2011

Updated and approved by Governing Council – 27/11/2017

Review date - 2019

Cumulative Effect of Missing Days at School



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