

Research shows that attendance at school all day and every day positively affects learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people. Learning is cumulative and it is disrupted if students often miss school.

School attendance and the law

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education Act 1972 states that all children must attend school from 6 until they turn 17. This could be in a school or an approved learning program. Parents or legal guardians (carers) can be prosecuted if they do not make sure their child goes to school. This can mean being fined or getting a criminal conviction.

The department's attendance policy

The South Australian Department for Education's Attendance Policy guides the responsibilities of the whole school community to make sure that children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers and students.

Schools work with their community to develop positive attendance habits. This starts from the earliest years. They do this when they provide a safe, inclusive and culturally respectful environment. They use effective and consistent local practices to monitor and manage absences.

Students at risk from missing school

Students can be away from school for many reasons. Schools use categories to identify children and young people at risk. We make sure that appropriate follow up and support is provided.

- **Habitual non-attendance:** a student has 5 to 9 days absent in a term for any reason.
- **Chronic non-attendance:** a student has 10 or more days absent in a term for any reason.

How we implement the department's attendance policy

At Burton Primary School our attendance practices align with the department's attendance policy. We support student attendance when we:

- promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout school
- assess patterns of non-attendance and develop ways to address this
- actively engage and include all children, young people and their families
- provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing
- monitor attendance to make sure progress is documented and supports are in place
- evaluate the need for further or ongoing support and referral for additional support.

We use data to create our attendance improvement plans. This is in partnership with our community. Our plan includes the actions we will take to make sure all students can attend school.

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Burton Primary School's attendance expectations

School starts at 8.45am each day and finishes at 3.05pm. The front office keeps a register of late arrivals/early departures. Parents/carers must sign their child in or out and provide an explanation. A printout slip must be presented to the classroom teacher when arriving late or departing early.

Attendance responsibilities

Everyone has a role to make sure students attend school all day, every day.

Students

- Attend school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Arrive at school and to all lessons and activities on time.
- Participate positively in all learning activities.
- Report to the front office if they arrive late or leave early. A parent or carer might be contacted.

Note: a student's age and circumstances affect the level of responsibility.

Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day the school is open, unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Make sure their child arrives at school on time, between 8.30am and 8.45am.
- Provide their child's school with up-to-date contact details.
- Provide a reason to the school if their child is absent, late or leaving early. The same day if possible.
- Provide a medical certificate or written explanation if their child is ill for 3 or more days in a row.
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.
- Let the school know if an extended absence is likely or if the school needs to arrange work at home for students.

Teachers and leadership team

- Make sure all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies and procedures.
- Accurately record each absence, late arrival or early departure with the appropriate code.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence, or a pattern of absences.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact.
- Request a medical certificate from parents or carers if needed.
- Consult with the local Student Support Services if needed. For example Social Work, Truancy.
- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – [CARL](#)) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care ([RAN](#)) training and the [Mandatory Reporting Guide](#).
- Notify the leadership team and front office when unable to contact parent/carers. Further attempts to contact parent/carers (phone calls, letters and home visits) will be made enquiring about the reason for absence.
- Analyse attendance data 3 times a term to identify students at risk. Copies of reports provided to classroom teachers for their own analysis of student attendance.

Authorisation of exemptions

In some circumstances, the principal has authority to approve an exemption from school. This can be for up to 1 month. It can also be for up to 12 months for a family holiday. Before asking for an exemption, families should talk to a site leader. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved. Our school requires an exemption for absences more than 3 school days in a row. This does not include illness. If the absences are for illness, a medical certificate is required for more than 3 school days in a row. Parents or carers must apply in writing. The principal will advise them in writing of their decision. A copy is kept in the student record folder. Exemption forms are available from the front office.

Exemptions of more than 1 month (excluding holidays) must be approved by the department's central office.

Note: Exemptions are counted as student absences from school.

Signed and endorsed by:



Principal

Date:

Governing Council Chairperson

Date: