



VALLEY VIEW  
SECONDARY SCHOOL  
— Every Student Matters —



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy revised	Endorsed by	Next revision date
File path: \\vv-server\admin common\QUALITY ASSURANCE\POLICIES_PROCEEDURES		



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Purpose

The vvss attendance policy describes the compulsory nature of education and underlines the responsibilities of all members of the vvss community to ensure children and young people are attending school. It also reflects research that indicates attendance at school positively affects learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people.

### Scope

The purpose of this attendance policy is to:

- reflect the intent of the education act 1972 (the act) and the associated education regulations 2012 (the regulations)
- guide the actions of all staff working with children and young people and their parents and caregivers on matters relating to school attendance and participation
- inform the development of associated guidelines and procedures for promoting, monitoring and reporting on attendance
- promote and support attendance in schools,
- reinforce parent and caregiver's obligations to ensure all children and young people are enrolled and attend school on every day that instruction is provided for the child at the school or approved learning program.

### The policy applies to:

- all departmental staff
- volunteers (as defined in the volunteer policy) and providers of services for children and young people where:
  - any provision of service has an impact on a child or young person's attendance
  - a provider has an obligation to adopt the policy in accordance with the terms of their service agreement or contract with the department
- parents and caregivers of children and young people all children and young people of compulsory age
- all procedures, guidelines and strategies developed to support the attendance of children and young people.

There is no legal requirement for children over the age of 17 years to be engaged in schooling or an approved learning program.

It also allows for the provision of timely and strategic interventions before:

- children have fallen behind academically and socially
- families have disengaged
- family complexities interfere with children's participation in early learning.

Staff should therefore interact with children and young people and their families to optimise attendance this policy reinforces the position of the department to encourage, welcome and support all children and young people to access and participate in appropriate education and learning programs.

### Detail

#### Compulsory attendance requirements

The act and the regulations impose statutory responsibilities in relation to attendance at school.

The act requires that children must be enrolled in a school or approved learning program from the age of 6 years until they turn 17 years of age.



**The act also requires that a child must:**

- attend the school at which they are enrolled on every day the school is open and at all school activities the school requires the child to attend, or
- participate in the approved learning program in which they are enrolled.

Parents have a responsibility under the act to ensure their children attend school regularly. If a child or young person does not attend, without a 'prescribed reason' for their non-attendance or an approved exemption, their parents may be guilty of an offence.

**Section 42 of the regulations stipulates that: a leader's responsibilities include:**

- the management of the day-to-day operations of the school
- the welfare and development of the students.

**School staff responsibilities include:**

- being actively concerned with the welfare and development of the students in the teacher's care
- participating in processes for determining school policies and properly implementing those policies
- assisting in the general management of the school as required by the principal.

The department's position is that the management of attendance is a central element of day-to-day operations and is essential to student learning and wellbeing. Therefore all vvss staff have a fundamental obligation to follow policy and procedures that ensure attendance by students at school and encourage participation in other education and care opportunities.

Vvss staff have a duty of care which requires them to take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm to students. This policy and its associated procedures outline the specific functions to be undertaken to fulfil this duty of care in respect of student attendance.

Authorised officers under the act are required to exhaust all practical efforts to ensure attendance at school and approved learning programs by children and young people. They have specific powers to support this work. People who refuse to answer an authorised officer's questions or obstruct them in this work may be fined.

**Compulsory school age**

A child who is at least 6 years old but not yet 16 years of age is known as being of compulsory school age. Every child of compulsory school age is required to be enrolled in school and is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school.

All young people between the ages of 16 and 17 are required to participate in an approved learning program until they turn 17 years, or until they have achieved an appropriate qualification under an approved learning program, whichever happens first. This is called compulsory education age.

**Approved learning programs include:**

- traditional schooling, including
  - SACE (South Australia certificate of education)
  - vocational education training (vet), technical and further education (Tafe) courses or accredited courses offered by registered training organisations (RTOs)
- apprenticeships or traineeships
- university degrees, diplomas or other university award courses
- other programs authorised by the minister (or delegate)

Or a combination of the above.



## Policy requirements

The policy requirements provide an overview of the department's commitment to actions which ensure attendance by children and young people at school and encourage participation in other education and care settings

Shared understandings, collaborative development and promotion of attendance improvement practices are essential to support all members of the school community to positively influence children and young people's wellbeing, learning and life through attendance at education programs.

### Attendance strategies must be purposeful and directed by the 6 core functions of attendance improvement:

- promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout the schooling years as a school community priority of the highest value.
- assess patterns of non-attendance and circumstances to inform the development of appropriate targeted, intensive and coordinated interventions.
- actively engage and include all children, young people and their families in education and interventions which support attendance.
- provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing and ensuring inclusive support for children and young people so they can be physically present and engaged in education.
- monitor attendance to ensure that risks are identified, supports are in place, and progress is monitored.
- evaluate the need for further or ongoing interventions, referrals for external support and mandatory notifications.

## Roles and responsibilities

### The department

- lead and manage south Australia's public education system in government school, preschool and other education and care settings.
- provide advice and support to leaders and educators to ensure the establishment, maintenance and promotion of effective preschool and school attendance improvement processes are in place (including collaboration with other agencies).
- education directors
- ensure attendance improvement is implemented consistently across their partnership as part of the preschool and school improvement planning cycle.
- monitor the development and implementation of school attendance improvement plans via site review processes.
- oversee reports and analysis of attendance data for their sites including via school annual reports. Monitor and report on partnership improvements in attendance.
- provide advice to the department about potential state-wide strategies based on local information.
- inform executive directors or directors of children and young people identified to be at high risk in regards to attendance and actions undertaken to support them as appropriate.

### Student support services

- responsible for ensuring the delivery of specialist advice and services to support targeted, intensive and coordinated interventions for children in education, early childhood and care services who require high-quality multi-disciplinary support.
- they consist of social workers (truancy), psychologists, special educators, speech pathologists, behaviour support coaches, aboriginal services engagement officers and their managers. Refer to student support services – catalogue of services (pdf, 247.2 kb) and student support services delivery model (pdf, 1.6 mb).



### School leaders

Ensure that the attendance of all children and young people is optimised.

#### Ensure that:

- all school staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the attendance of children and young people
- they work with staff and the school community to develop and implement their attendance improvement plan. These plans should reflect this policy and describe local strategies to support attendance and engagement
- information about the attendance improvement plan is communicated and easily accessible by staff, children, families and members of the public, especially vulnerable populations (including aboriginal people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities and students in care)
- data is analysed to inform strategies and the review of local procedures that support attendance improvement
- reports on attendance are provided through the department's formal reporting cycles
- procedures, including parent/caregiver notification and home visits, are in place to follow up non-attendance responses and ensure interventions are documented
- attendance records are maintained in EDSAS
- student attendance is monitored to identify habitual and chronic non-attenders so the provision of early, timely and appropriate supports can be put in place
- they refer to, consult with and work collaboratively with department staff and other relevant agencies to address attendance and related concerns, review whole-school systems, strategies and processes to ensure a continuous improvement cycle for individuals, families, schools and partnerships
- they remain engaged with the child or young person and their family before, during and after any interventions undertaken with student support services
- mandatory notifications to child abuse report line (carl) are made by staff as required by the children and young people (safety) act 2017, for concerns regarding:
  - a parent/guardian/caregiver's refusal to send the child to school or engage with any other education options available (including open access college or home schooling)
  - refusal of offers of support or attempts to help the family to overcome barriers to attendance a family having disengaged
  - the child's education being seriously interrupted by patterns of non-attendance that are enduring or ongoing in nature (noting that an enduring pattern does not require extended consecutive absence) as defined by the department for child protection (DCP) in the mandatory reporting guide (pdf 604kb).

### School staff

- support departmental requirements and locally developed and agreed upon attendance improvement processes for the school.
- provide a relevant and dynamic learning program and environment that seeks to engage all children and young people and offers opportunity for success, thus encouraging regular attendance.
- record non-attendance according to departmental requirements.
- contribute to the analysis of attendance trends and the development of attendance improvement plans. Implement attendance improvement plans. Implement procedures, including parent/caregiver communication, to follow up non-attendance.
- work with parents/guardians and government/non-government agencies to support children and young people's regular attendance in the education program.
- refer to student support services if support is required.
- make mandatory notifications as required by the children and young people (safety) act 2017 and document and store as per departmental procedures.



- in addition to the roles and responsibilities of departmental staff, parents/guardians or caregivers, families and students are participants in attendance improvement and have the following roles and responsibilities.

### **Parents, legal guardians, caregivers and families**

Parents and legal guardians must:

- enrol their child or young person in a school or approved learning program
- provide information to the school that may help planning for the child's learning. For example medical conditions, developmental milestones and family issues
- ensure their child attends punctually on every day the education program is offered and to comply with the education program being offered
- provide an explanation to the school whenever their child is absent
- where appropriate, apply for an exemption when they wish to take their child out of school, such as family holiday
- work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

Parents can discuss with the principal any concerns relating to abuse and/or neglect that may require a mandatory notification as per the responding to abuse and neglect guidelines.

### **Children and young people**

Children and young people enrolled in a school have responsibility for their attendance. The level of responsibility will be determined by the individual circumstances of the child. It is expected that children and young people will:

- attend school or an approved learning program on every day the program is offered
- be punctual in arriving at school or the approved learning program and for all associated lessons and activities
- participate appropriately in school and approved learning program activities

### **Definitions**

#### **Adult**

Person who has attained 18 years of age.

#### **Authorised officers**

The act sets out people who are authorised officers. This includes any member from SAPOL.

In exercising its power under this section, the following people have been authorised by the department to also be an authorised person:

- senior social workers and social workers
- aboriginal services engagement officers.

Authorised officers can ask a child or young person (or the adult they are with) in a public place for their:

- name, age and address
- reason for not being at school.

Authorised officers may at any time attend at residential premises and request any person in the premises to provide the officer with:

- the full names of all children and young people resident in the dwelling house
- the respective ages of those children
- the schools or the approved learning program in which, (if any) they are enrolled.

SAPOL officers also have the additional discretion to:



- return the child to the school or
- return the child to the guardian.

A person is guilty of an offence if they:

- hinder or obstruct an authorised officer, or a person assisting an authorised officer
- use abusive, threatening or insulting language to an authorised officer, or a person assisting an authorised officer
- when required by an authorised officer to answer a question, refuse or fail to answer the question to the best of the person's knowledge, information and belief
- falsely represent, by words or conduct, that they are an authorised officer.

#### **Carer or caregiver**

A carer or caregiver is an unpaid or paid person who supports a child or children in their care with activities of daily living. They are not a legal guardian and do not have parental responsibility for the child.

#### **Chronic non-attender**

A student who is absent for 10 days or more per term (average of 1 day per week) for any reason.

#### **Compulsory school age**

A child of or above the age of 6 years but under the age of 16 years (ie from 6 years 0 months to 16 years 0 months inclusive).

#### **Compulsory education age**

A young person who is 16 years of age to 17 years of age.

#### **EDSAS**

The education department school administration system (EDSAS) is the mandated electronic database provided to all department schools and contains student information including absence data.

#### **Home education**

A child exempted from attending school whose education will be conducted by one or both of a child's parents from a home base. A child must be registered for home education with the department.

#### **Home visits**

Home visits describe any meeting with clients and families outside of the school/educational setting. By definition they most regularly occur in the home but they may also be held in other public places such as a local café or library.

#### **Legal guardian**

A legal guardian is a person who has the legal authority (and the corresponding duty) to care for the personal and property interests of another person.

#### **Parent**

Pursuant to the act a parent of a child includes:

- a person who has legal custody or guardianship of the child and
- a person standing in loco parentis in relation to the child (having the same authority as a parent).

#### **Prescribed reason for non-attendance**

Under the act the following are prescribed reasons for non-attendance at school and approved learning programs by children and young people:



- the child was prevented from attending on the occasion in question by his or her sickness, or by his or her temporary or permanent infirmity
- there was a danger of the child being affected by an infectious or contagious disease
- the child was prevented from attending on the occasion in question by some other unavoidable and sufficient cause.

Additionally the following is also a prescribed reason for non-attendance in an approved learning program:

- the child was prevented from participating in the approved learning program on the occasion in question by reason of having to care for a member of their family.

#### **Providers of services**

Non-government personnel who provide services to children and young people under compulsion to attend school. This may include personnel contracted to the department, for example pastoral care workers through the national schools chaplaincy program, case managers through flexible learning options (FLO) and providers through the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS).

#### **Qualification**

Means a SACE (year 12) or at least a certificate 2 (or equivalent qualification), under an approved learning program.

#### **Schools, preschools and other education and care settings**

Government education, early childhood and care services at which education services (courses of instruction in preschool, primary or secondary education) are provided, or students enrolled, and who are registered with the education standards board per the education and early childhood services (registration and standards) act 2011.

#### **Staff**

Applies to all persons who are employed in the department.

#### **Supporting information**

Further information can be obtained at <https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/controlled-policies/attendance-policy>



# ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The Valley View Secondary School Attendance Management Process describes the responsibilities of all members of the VVSS community to ensure children and young people are attending school.

\*This document is in partnership with the Valley View Secondary School Attendance Policy

## DAILY ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

### STUDENT

- Attend school or an approved learning program on every day the program is offered
- Be punctual in arriving at school or the approved learning program and for all associated lessons and activities
- Participate appropriately in school and approved learning program activities.

### PARENT/CAREGIVER

- Ensure their child attends punctually on every day the education program is offered and to comply with the education program being offered
- Provide an explanation to the school whenever their child is ABSENT.

### MENTOR TEACHER

- Accurately records student attendance via DayMap
- Follows-up with families and caregivers regarding unexplained/explained absences and records on DayMap

## LATENESS

### STUDENT

- Reports to Student Services
- Provides any documentation regarding lateness.

### PARENT/CAREGIVER

- Provide an explanation for lateness via phone call, note in school diary or in person via the front office.

### MENTOR TEACHER

- Has conversations with students during Mentor Group regarding attendance and lateness and communicates with parents and caregivers (Recorded on DayMap)

### STUDENT SERVICES OFFICER

- Enters late students onto Spreadsheet (with or without reason)
- Rings parents to determine reason for lateness on the day and records on DayMap with note to mentor teacher
- Enters detention on DayMap for 3 Consecutive Days of unexplained lateness
- Reports to Leadership each fortnight
- Updates EDSAS absence report

- If no explanation is provided, Lateness will be recorded as '**U (UNEXPLAINED)**' and an '**EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE**' stamp will be placed in the student's diary to be approved by parent.
  - After 3 consecutive days of unexplained lateness students will be issued with a detention. If detentions are not completed school behaviour management processes will apply.

## 3 CONSECUTIVE DAYS UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

### MENTOR TEACHER

- Phones Parent/Caregiver and records on DayMap (for answered and unanswered communication)
- Legitimate absences are updated on DayMap
- Notify House Manager (Middle School) or Assistant Principal (Senior School) via DayMap attendance email note, if no explanations for absences have been obtained or for further support.

### PARENT/CAREGIVER

- Provide an explanation for absence via phone call, note in school diary or in person via the front office or directly via the Mentor teacher.

### HOUSE MANAGER and ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

- Regularly check for attendance emails from Mentor Teachers and ensure Quality Assurance of documentation.

## 6 CONSECUTIVE DAYS UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

### MENTOR TEACHER

- Contact Parent/Caregiver and record on DayMap (for answered and unanswered communication)
- Legitimate absences are updated on DayMap
- Notify House Manager (Middle School) or Assistant Principal (Senior School) via DayMap attendance email note, if no explanations for absences have been obtained or for further support.

### PARENT/CAREGIVER

- Provide an explanation for absence via phone call, note in school diary or in person via the front office or directly via the Mentor Teacher.

### HOUSE MANAGER and ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

- Regularly check for attendance emails from Mentor teachers and ensure Quality Assurance of documentation.
- Email sent to Student Services Officer requesting 6-day letter to be posted to Parent/Caregiver.

### STUDENT SERVICES OFFICER

- Issues 6-day absence letter to families initiated via House Managers or Assistant Principal
- Provides letter to Executive Admin Officer

### EXECUTIVE ADMIN OFFICER

- Obtains Principal signature
- Uploads 6-day absence letter to DayMap via DayMap attendance email note, attaches letter to DayMap and informs House Manager or Assistant Principal and Mentor teacher of completion.
- Mails and emails letter to the parent/caregiver

## 10 CONSECUTIVE AND NONCONSECUTIVE DAYS UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

### MENTOR TEACHER

- Monitors attendance throughout term for consecutive and periodic absence
- Contacts Parent/Caregiver and records on DayMap (for answered and unanswered communication)
- Notify House Manager via DayMap email note if student has 10 days consecutive or periodically absent over the Term.

### PARENT/CAREGIVER

- Provide an explanation for absence via phone call, note in school diary or in person via the front office or directly via the Mentor Teacher.
- Where appropriate, apply for an exemption when they wish to take their child out of school, such as family holiday
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

### HOUSE MANAGER / MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADER and ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

- Send email to Student Services Officer requesting 10-day consecutive or periodic letter to be posted to Parent/Caregiver
- House Manager initiates case management of student with support from the Middle School Leader (Middle School Students)
- Assistant Principal initiates case management of student (Senior Students)
- House Manager and Assistant Principal to communicate to Mentor Teacher outcomes of case management and strategies put in place to resolve attendance issues.

\*\*\*If no positive outcomes from case management House Manager to notify the Wellbeing Team

### STUDENT SERVICES OFFICER

- Issues 10-day absence letter (consecutive or periodic) to families initiated via House Managers
- Provides letter to Executive Admin Officer

### EXECUTIVE ADMIN OFFICER

- Obtains Principal signature
- Uploads 10-day absence letter to DayMap via DayMap attendance email note and informs House Manager or Assistant Principal and Mentor teacher of completion.
- Mails and emails letter to the parent/caregiver

### WELLBEING TEAM

- Contacts Parent/Caregiver
- Family conference and attendance plan developed
- Makes CARL Report, if required, and documents on DayMap
- Conducts a home visit if not sighted
- Initiates referral to Student Support Services – Truancy
- Informs Principal of all students being case managed as a result of 10-day absenteeism
- Communicates outcomes to House Manager and Mentor Teacher

## ONGOING ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

### MENTOR TEACHER

- Completes EDSAS reports in week 5 and 10 and return to Student Services Officer
- Complete EDSAS term report and return to Executive Admin Officer
- Inform students during Mentor Group if they have a detention that day
- Follow behaviour management process for students who have not completed their detention for lateness.

### PARENT/CAREGIVER

- Provide an explanation for absence via phone call, note in school diary or in person via the front office or directly via the Mentor Teacher
- Where appropriate, apply for an exemption when they wish to take their child out of school, such as family holiday
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

### HOUSE MANAGER and ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

- Address attendance at Case Management meetings with Mentor Teachers
- Will communicate whether 'Z' *school follow up* code is to be used.

### STUDENT SERVICES OFFICER

- Generates EDSAS reports to Mentor Teachers at week 5 and week 10 of each term
- Prints EDSAS reports for key whole school events eg Parent Teacher Interviews, Course Confirmation
- Supports Leadership with Attendance Initiatives

### WELLBEING TEAM

- Supports the Mentor Teachers and House Managers in case managing students with chronic absenteeism
- Will communicate whether 'Z' *school follow up* code is to be used.