



Elizabeth Grove Primary School

Respect Community Honesty

Attendance Improvement Policy

Students must come to school every day the school is open. This is known as regular attendance.

Students are more likely to want to come to school and achieve if they feel:

- included
- valued
- respected
- supported.

Students who miss school often

The attendance policy defines the following groups of students as at risk because of how often they miss school.

- **Habitual non-attendance:** a student misses 5 to 9 school days in a term. This is for any reason.
- **Chronic non-attendance:** a student misses 10 or more days in a term. This is for any reason.

For students in these groups, we assess the level of risk to their learning and wellbeing. When a student is at risk we will talk with the family about the issues.

Our school's vision

All students have a right to an education. This gives them the best opportunity to reach their full potential. We have a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where students can learn and grow. Each student is engaged in their learning. Parents and carers are important partners in this process. We keep a check on any students who might fall behind. We work with parents, carers and students to find out why someone is missing school. We provide supports that are specific to each student's needs.

How we follow up if a student misses school

A quick follow up helps us to manage risks early and reduce absences.

Daily Text messaging service: All families of a student with an unexplained absence will be notified by text requesting an explanation of the absence.

Classroom teachers, administration staff or leadership will make contact with families via phone, diary note or in person concerning all unexplained absences

1. If a student misses school, we record their absence. We also record the reason given by the parent or carer.
2. If we receive no reason, we follow up with the parent or carer. This is usually by phone or text (SMS).
3. If the absences continue or there are concerns raised by the absence, we keep following up. This might be by phone, email, meeting or a letter.
 - We support the family to look at any issues that stop the student from going to school.
 - If needed, we connect the family to other services. For example student support services.

Our data

At Elizabeth Grove Primary School our student attendance records help us to plan how we improve school attendance.

We routinely analyse data. We look at patterns. For example the attendance of different year levels. We also look at individual student attendance.

Table 1 shows our attendance data for 2018 - 2021.

Our attendance rate has decreased slightly since 2018.

This might be due to:

- students refusing to attend school due to anxiety or mental health issues. These issues can make it harder for a student to come to school. We work with families to connect their child to appropriate supports.
- medical certificates received from parents and carers. This lets us know that children have received medical care. It also means we have less unexplained absences.
- difficulty getting to school. We work with families to support their individual needs and refer to external support services, when needed.
- lack of food to send children to school with. The school has a supply of emergency sandwiches and snacks to support families.

Table 1: School attendance data Term 1,2 and 3

Year level	2018	2019	2020	2021
Reception	89.10%	87.30%	81.00%	79.70%
Year 1	88.70%	87.00%	81.70%	82.10%
Year 2	86.20%	82.90%	80.80%	87.20%
Year 3	89.30%	84.50%	83.20%	86.50%
Year 4	86.10%	85.80%	79.20%	86.40%
Year 5	87.20%	85.30%	86.50%	74.60%
Year 6	91.40%	85.30%	79.10%	85.00%
Year 7	87.50%	87.50%	78.60%	81.70%
Primary	85.60%	84.20%		
Total	88.20%	85.80%	81.30%	83.10%

Our approach to improving attendance

At Elizabeth Grove Primary School our attendance strategies are guided by the South Australian Department for Education's attendance policy.

We will plan, implement and review the following attendance improvement actions. We will do this with our governing council, staff, students, families and local community.

Promote

We will 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.

Our actions

- Communicate why going to school every day matters. Explain how absences affect learning, wellbeing and future success.
- Share how education helps students to build routines and habits.
- Promote ways parents and carers can use routines in the early years to create good habits later.
- Recognise good or improved attendance. This might be for students, classes or the whole school.
- Set up attendance expectations. Share this with families. Lead by example.
- Include information about student attendance in school reports.
- Share why going to school every day matters when there is a big change in a student's life.
- Help students develop career goals. Work with higher education and local groups.
- Use attendance messages and data in classroom activities.
- Discuss attendance in staff meetings.

Assess

We will assess patterns of non-attendance and circumstances. We will use this to inform the development of appropriate targeted, intensive and coordinated interventions.

Our actions

- Record daily absence. Make sure it is recorded correctly. Import the data into the department's reporting system (EDSAS or EMS).
- Set up a process for quick and consistent recording and follow up of all absences.
- Analyse attendance data for trends and patterns of absence.
- Review attendance data with staff. Discuss students at risk.
- Check on all students with individual learning plans. This includes students who have agreed changes to their attendance. For example an exemption.
- Display attendance data in the school.
- Create ways to let staff know about any worrying student absences.
- Check on all students who have habitual and chronic non-attendance. Find out what support they might need.

Engage

We will actively engage and include all children, young people and their families in education and interventions which support attendance.

Our actions

- Create a welcoming and inclusive school.
- Engage and challenge students. Allow for different student abilities and needs. Modify the curriculum and teaching practices if needed.
- Build relationships with parents and carers. Offer different activities over the year.
- Set up programs that support student wellbeing and school connections.
- Support students to build resilience.
- Support students to develop relationships.
- Build staff skills to talk with students and families about attendance issues.
- Build staff skills to provide an inclusive, relevant and engaging curriculum.
- Support students identified as habitual and chronic non-attenders as early as possible. This might include home visits.

- Encourage staff to talk with families and students about attendance.
- Create safe and supportive learning spaces. This is so all students can learn and engage.
- Involve students in the design and delivery of their learning.
- Build student voice into school decision-making.
- Ask students and staff for feedback about the learning environment.

Support

We will provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing. We will make sure there is inclusive support for children and young people so they can be physically present and engaged in education.

Our actions

- As early as possible, support students who have attendance and wellbeing issues.
- Work with Student Support Services on student attendance issues.
- Set up attendance improvement or learning plans for students with attendance issues.
- Work with families to find out why students are away from school. Make sure the support fits their individual needs.
- Support Aboriginal students with attendance issues. Make sure the support fits the student's individual and cultural needs.
- Support children and young people in care with attendance issues. Make sure the support fits the student's needs.
- Support students with disability who have attendance issues. Make sure the support fits the student's needs.
- Set up a process to follow-up attendance issues that students and families tell us about.
- Set up supports when there are big changes in a student's life. Support students to plan for their education needs now and in the future.

Monitor

We will monitor attendance to make sure that risks are identified, supports are in place, and progress is monitored.

Our actions

- Set up an attendance team. This team can identify, check on and lead support for students with attendance issues.
- Check on students we are supporting. Share how the student is going with their family.
- Make sure staff understand their duty of care to check on and follow up attendance issues.
- Set up ways for staff to escalate attendance issues.

Evaluate

We will evaluate the need for further or ongoing interventions, referrals for external support and mandatory notifications.

Our actions

- Set up an attendance team. This team can identify, check on and lead support for students with attendance issues.
- Check on students we are supporting. Share how the student is going with their family.
- Make sure staff understand their duty of care to check on and follow up attendance issues.
- Set up ways for staff to escalate attendance issues.

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