

Attendance

Berri Regional Secondary College

Overview

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.

Scope

School attendance and the law

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education and Children's Service Act 2019 states that all children must attend school from 6 until they turn 16 (refer to [Earn or Learn](#)) 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 communities 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. BRSC ensures that the 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 BRSC implements the department's attendance policy

At BRSC 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 support are in place
- Evaluate the need for further on 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.

BRSC attendance expectations

School starts at 8:45am each day and finishes at 3:15pm.

A parent or carer must provide an explanation if their child is late or has to leave early. This can be done by phone, in person via Daymap or by providing a note to student services as students enters or leaves.

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 student services if they *arrive late or leave early, *leave school due to illness (a parent or carer will be contacted for approval)

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

Parents or carers

- Make sure their child attend schools every day 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 8:00am and 8:45am
- Provide their child's school with current 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
- Make appointments outside of school hours if possible. For example dentist or National Disability Insure Schemes (NDIS) providers
- Engage in any school attendance follow-up:
 - * Monitor their child's attendance
 - * Reply to missed calls from the school
 - * Respond to automated SMS
 - * Participate in Attendance Plan meetings if required

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
- Contact the parent or carer on the day their child is absent, via automate text message
- 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
- Ensure their class roll is accurately marked as early as possible each lesson

Authorisation of exemptions

In some circumstances, the Principal has authority to approve an exemption from school. This can be for or up to 1 month or for up to 12 months for a family holiday.

Our school requires an exemption for absences more than 3 school days in a row. This does not include illness. A doctor's certificate is required for illness over 3 days.

Parents or carers must apply in writing on forms available from Student Services. The school will advise parents/carers if the exemption is *not* approved. A copy is kept in the student record folder.

Before asking for an exemption, families should talk to a site leader. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved.

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

Note: Exemptions are counted as student absence from school.

Related policies

South Australian Department for Education [Attendance Policy](#)

Approvals

Status: Approved

Version: 1.0

Policy officer: Emily Griggs Principal

Approved by: Governing Council

Approval date: 01 December 2021

Review Date: October 2022