

FORRESTDAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed March 2023



Forrestdale Primary School is an inclusive learning environment where every student experience success. We set high standards in Academic and Social/Emotional achievements for all students.

At Forrestdale Primary School we have four cornerstones which support our school and guide all we do:

1. High Expectations.
2. Explicit instruction/Teacher Directed.
3. Learning moved from Short Term to Long Term Memory.
4. Effective Relationships between staff and student.

High expectations for attendance are embedded in whole school practises for monitoring and follow up procedures. Regular and on time attendance enables children to access a full education optimising their opportunity to reach their full potential. School staff should set an example for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality. Successful students are well organised and start the day on time. Research shows that students who are absent for more than 10 days per year are disadvantaged both educationally and socially. Some of the effects experienced by these students include:

- Gaps in students' knowledge and understanding resulting in missing basic concepts.
- Lack of continuity and familiarity resulting in them feeling less secure within the school environment.
- Loss of opportunities for play activities which improve social emotional and cognitive development.
- Missing out on learning important basics such as class rules and behaviour norms.
- Belief that punctuality and attendance are not important.
- Inability to maintain friendships resulting in isolation and possibly teasing.
- Loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Increased likelihood of leaving school early.

Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk, as does the early implementation of intervention strategies. All school staff and parents/carers have a responsibility for the detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance. All members of the school community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance and work to the best of their ability to keep attendance for all students as close as possible to 100%.

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

This policy falls under the School Education Act 1999 (Act), School Education Regulations 2000 Legislation (Regulations) and the Department of Education (DOE) Attendance Policy.

RATIONALE

- Students need to attend school regularly to gain maximum benefit and reduce the risk of not achieving their potential.
- Early identification and intervention is the most effective way to manage attendance problems.
- Compulsory aged children are required to attend school or an educational program of the school unless an arrangement in writing has been entered into with the Principal.

PROCEDURE

Stage One

- Classroom teachers to complete **Integris (SIS)** attendance each morning before 9.20am. See Lesson Attendance Codes
- A text message is automatically sent to Parent / Caregivers for any absences marked with a "U" at 9.30am every morning.
- Absence should be in writing from the Parent/Caregiver indicating date, student's name, reason for absence and Parent/Caregivers signature.
- Absence can be verbal, Seesaw or email from Parent/Caregiver which is recorded and signed by staff member in Integris.
- If no reason for absence is supplied, the classroom teacher to remind student of note of absence and/or make contact with the Parent/Caregiver.
- If a student is absent for more than 3 days consecutive, the teacher is required to make contact with the family.
- Classroom teacher to notify Deputy Principal or Principal if after two weeks contact with parent has not been successful and there are still unexplained absences.
- If students are late to school, after the siren at 8.45am, they must come to the office first for a late note. If the student does not have a late note, please send them to the office. The office staff will record the late on Integris.
- Weeks 5 and 10 of each term a letter will be generated by the Admin staff and sent home for any unexplained absences. Parents will need to provide a reason for the absence, sign the letter and return it to school. It is the **teachers' responsibility** to update the information in Integris.
- Always remember any notes that are entered into Integris for any absences **must** include your initials.
- Parents/Caregivers **must** provide a letter for a student to leave the school grounds unaccompanied (senior students only).

Stage Two

- If student's attendance rate falls below 85% over a ten-week period Deputy Principal or Principal will contact the Parent/Caregiver for an explanation.
- If unsatisfactory explanation is provided and/or attendance is not restored a formal meeting to be requested with Parent/Caregiver. Individual Attendance Plans established with key stakeholders. Copies given to all stakeholders.
- All meetings, action plans and correspondence to be documented.
- If attendance not restored case referred to Regional Office Attendance Team.

PARENTS/CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school:

- Children must arrive at school between 8:30am and 8:45am
- Children must attend school every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (e.g. illness)
- Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. A diary note, Seesaw message, letter, phone call or medical certificate is required for each day of absence.
- Provide an explanation of student's absence within 3 days. Parents are asked to phone or SMS (Message You) the school by 9:00am if a student is to be absent.
- When a student is late for school it is a requirement that the child reports to the front office to receive a late note. Younger students will need to have a parent accompany them.
- Parents/caregivers are required to let the school know if an extended absence is likely.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

All teachers will:

- Contact the parent via phone, Seesaw or email (make a note of this in the 'Notes' section of Integris)
- Keep accurate attendance records for every student enrolled at the school through Integris, using the correct codes.
- Record a student as present for half a day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction.
- Record a student as present if they are on a school-approved activity or attending off-site under a section 24 arrangement.
- Record students arriving after 8.45am as late and request a late slip from the front office.
- Keep notifications from parents, explaining a students' absence until the end of the year, when it will be collected and stored by Administration.
- Request notification from parents to explain a student's absence
- Attendance comment included in Reporting to Parents.

ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- SMS sent out to parents at 9.30am each day.
- Monitor a student's absences through SARS.
- Investigate reasons for the student's absence.
- Distribute letters to families where there are unexplained absences.
- Notify teachers when student attendance is below 90% to ascertain reasons for absence.
- Contact parents of students with attendance below 80% either by telephone or letter. This may lead to a case conference to identify attendance improvement strategies and the development of a documented plan.
- Coordinate consultations with families requiring an Attendance Improvement Plan.
- Support parents of students with attendance issues.
- Document all intervention strategies used to address student's absences and contact made, so that, should it become necessary to proceed to prosecution, it can be clearly established that all reasonably practicable steps to restore attendance have been taken.
- Where absence persists, offer the option of an attendance panel to the parent, the purpose being to restore regular attendance.
- Comply with the requests from Education Regional Office and Central Office to provide information on student attendance.

PROFILING

90-100% regular attendance

80-89% at risk - indicated

60-79% at risk - moderate

0-59% at risk - severe

WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Deputy Principal or Principal refer to:

Department of Education: Student Attendance Policy, Effective: January 2015

Version: 3.6 Final Updated 11 March 2020

RECORDING/STORING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Administration staff to refer to:

Department of Education: Student Attendance Policy, Effective: January 2015

Version: 3.6 Final Updated 11 March 2020

All Forrestdale Primary School Policies function under the: Policies, Instructions and Guidelines of the Department of Education, Western Australia. They are to be reviewed upon changes to the overarching Policies, Instruction and Guidelines or upon a regular three year minimum cycle.

ATTENDANCE DATA AND RECORDING

Schools must record daily attendance for all enrolled students in accordance with the School Education Act (1999) (Section 28).

Accurate record-keeping of attendance is vital in satisfying **duty of care**²¹ requirements and in generating useful attendance data.

Daily attendance records are maintained in **Student Information System (SIS) Administration**²² using codes in the Lesson Attendance modul²³e. These codes enable data to be generated to inform local-level planning and monitoring of whole-school and individual student attendance strategies. Lesson attendance quick reference guides²⁴ are available on the STIMS website that include:

- Guidelines for lesson attendance codes
- Lesson attendance code descriptions
- Lesson attendance guide for primary schools
- Lesson attendance guide for secondary schools.

In addition to reports available in SIS, a number of central databases, that extract data from SIS, provide schools with several options to analyse their attendance data.

The **Student Attendance Reporting (SAR)**²⁵ application reports attendance rates and absence types, attendance profiles, year group breakdowns and authorised and unauthorised absences.

The **Student Achievement Information System (SAIS)**²⁶ provides a graphic application that can assist schools in analysing student achievement in relation to attendance.

The Department also utilises data collected through SAR for the purpose of regional and system-level planning for attendance and for reporting to State and Commonwealth governments.

For further information regarding student attendance data and reporting refer to **School and Student Performance Data on the Evaluation and Accountability website**²⁵.

LESSON ATTENDANCE CODES

There are 16 codes in the School Information System (SIS) Lesson Attendance module. These notes are provided to assist schools to accurately record student attendance and absences.

Code explanations for:

Students who are attending

Students who are late

Authorised Absences

Unauthorised Absences

Students not required to attend

Codes for students attending on or off site

/ - Present code, this is the default setting in Lesson Attendance.

E - Educational Activity

This code should be used when the student is participating in an approved educational program off school site, such as a Section 24, Alternative Attendance Arrangement, an excursion, work placement or programs such as PEAC. This code is not classified as an absence. This code is not to be used for students on the Participation List.

M - Medical or Sick Bay

The M code should be applied to students when they are on school grounds in the medical or sick bay. This code is not classified as an absence. Sick students that are not at school should be marked with an N – Notified as Sick.

W – Withdrawn

Where a student is withdrawn from school activities as a planned response to a breach of school discipline but is present at school. For example, when a student is sent to the office or a buddy class but is still at school. This code is not classified as an absence.

Codes for students who are late

L – Late

To be used when a student is late to school but is not late enough to be recorded as a half day absence. This code is not classified as an absence. NB: A student is absent if they have attended less than two full hours of continuous instruction.

Codes for Authorised Absences

R – Reasonable Cause

This code should be used when the principal has deemed the reason provided as acceptable other than an absence due to suspension, cultural absence, illness or family holiday (See code options below).

C – Cultural Absence

Absences authorised for cultural or religious significance to the family such as funerals, sorry time and religious observances. The principal should negotiate the duration of this absence prior to it being taken. If the absence extends beyond the number of agreed days, and no acceptable reason is provided, the additional absences should be recorded with an X (Unacceptable Reason).

N – Notified as Sick

Applied to a student whose reason for absence is due to illness. The principal may request a medical certificate.

V – Vacation

This code may be used when the absence has been negotiated in advance and the principal is satisfied that reasonable grounds for authorising the absence apply. Completion of a work package during the period of absence may be requested by the principal.

Z – Suspended

This code is automatically recorded in Lesson Attendance by the Behaviour Module when a student is formally suspended. Schools do not have to record attendance for students when they are on suspension. This code is classified as an authorised absence.

Codes for Unauthorised Absences

U – Absence – cause not yet established

To be used when a student is initially absent from school and no explanation has yet been provided. Further follow up is required to establish a reason for the absence and once obtained, the code should be changed accordingly.

K – Unauthorised Vacation

This code identifies students whose parents have taken them on an in-term holiday and the principal has not authorised the absence. A template letter, to notify parents of a decision not to approve an in-term vacation, is available online in [Microsoft Word](#)³³ and SIS [KST format](#)³⁴ on the STIMS website.

X – Unacceptable Reason

This code is used when the school has sought an explanation but the response from the parent is not considered reasonable, and the principal does not believe it satisfies the requirements of Section 25 of the School Education Act 1999.

T – Truant

This is be used for a student that is absent from school and an investigation has revealed that the student has truanted. This will usually require a teacher or parent witnessing the student leaving the school grounds or educational program without permission.

Codes for students not required to attend

Y – School Closure

This code indicates that students are not required to attend on the selected day and effectively reduces the number of half days available for that student. The Y code can be applied to the whole school or a cohort of students. Schools can use this code for critical events, natural disasters, infectious diseases or amending programs. It can be applied to AM, PM or the whole day for a selected date.

Note: This code is applied through the school diary and Lesson Attendance > Parameters > Enforced School Closure.

Q – Study Leave Year 11 and 12 only

Year 11 and 12 students who are on study leave, and are not on school site, are to be recorded with this code. This will not be counted as an absence and does not contribute to available half days.

This code is not to be used for students in Kindergarten to Year 10 or students on the Participation List.

Inappropriate use of code Q from Semester 1, 2019 will incur a red (i.e. must be fixed) conflict in Student Attendance Reporting (SAR).

Note: From the beginning of 2019, the Student Attendance Reporting (SAR) application has been updated to correctly remove half days with Q code from available half days. Due to programming limitations, SIS cannot be upgraded and will incorrectly count each Q code as an available half day, with the student counted as present. This error will artificially inflate attendance rates in SIS. Principals are advised to refer to the SAR totals as the official record of attendance.



Individual Attendance Plan

Date: _____

Student Name:		Year:	
OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED <input type="checkbox"/> DCP <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Families <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Justice <input type="checkbox"/> CAMHS <input type="checkbox"/> Bentley Health Service <input type="checkbox"/> PMH <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychologist <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
Parents/Carers:		Advisory and other staff:	
LONG TERM GOAL: Improve Daily Attendance			
Target Area	Actions/Strategies	When and Who?	Monitoring
Increase attendance from ...% to 90% or greater			

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Date: _____

LSC Signature: _____

Date: _____