

Naracoorte Primary School



Updated April 2013

Attendance Policy

At Naracoorte Primary School we believe that:

- **Regular attendance** enables children to access a complete education, assisting them to reach their full potential.
- **Parent attitude** to regular and punctual attendance is paramount in avoiding future truancy.
- **Successful students** are well organised and **start the day on time**.
- School **staff** should set an example for students, **encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality**.
- Absence from school can limit a student's achievement of essential knowledge and skills required for effective participation in work, relationships and families, and active citizenship.

The following benefits summary comes from DECD's Attendance Improvement Package.

Benefits of regular attendance for students	Benefits of regular student attendance for parents/caregivers
<p>Getting the maximum benefit from school will optimise your life choices.</p> <p>Attending school regularly will develop skills and attitudes that will help you to be successful in later life. These include self-discipline, punctuality, being organised and sticking to routines.</p> <p>Regular attendance leads to an increased likelihood of being successful at school.</p> <p>Attending regularly leads to making friends and learning to maintain relationships over a length of time.</p> <p>You will learn social skills necessary to live and work successfully with others.</p> <p>You are safer at school than on the streets.</p> <p>People will be more positive about you if you have a good attendance record.</p> <p>Attending school provides opportunities for socialising with your friends.</p> <p>The more you attend, the more you learn, and this will probably mean you will like school more.</p>	<p>By encouraging regular attendance you will know that you have positively influenced your child's education.</p> <p>You will know that your child is safe at school and not at risk elsewhere.</p> <p>You will know that your children are learning more appropriate things than if they were truanting.</p> <p>Regular attendance by your child will ensure that you have fewer contacts with government agencies.</p> <p>You will have peace of mind in knowing that children who attend school regularly are less likely to break the law and go to jail in later life.</p> <p>You will enjoy more structured family routines.</p> <p>Your child is more likely to finish year 12 and have broader opportunities.</p> <p>You will avoid a fine or legal action due to your child's poor attendance at school.</p>

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS



A child who is **between 6 years old and 16 years of age** is of compulsory school age and, irrespective of distance from the school, is **required to be enrolled** at a registered government or non-government school. They **must attend** the school **on every day instruction is provided**, unless the Minister has granted an **exemption** from school attendance.

If a child is enrolled at school at 5 years of age, they are then required to attend the school **on every day instruction is provided**, unless granted an **exemption**.

The **primary responsibility** for meeting this legal requirement rests with the **parent/guardian**. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD). The department therefore has a **legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance** and **take appropriate action** to rectify problems of non-attendance.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents' Responsibilities:

- Parents/caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.
- Children should arrive at school **between 8:30 and 8:50am**.
- When a student is **late for school (arriving at or after 9am)**, it is a requirement that the student **signs in** at the school office and the parent/caregiver explains the **reason** for lateness.
- Children should **attend school on every day** when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (eg. Illness).
- **It is a legal requirement that parents provide an explanation for all student absences.** This may be in the form of a letter, phone call or personal contact with teachers.
- Parents/caregivers must let the school know **prior to an extended absence (3 days or more)** and **apply in writing** to the Principal for an **exemption**.
- If the teacher needs to arrange **work at home** for the student, the teacher needs to be given **prior notice**.
- When a student is required to **leave the school grounds** for any part of the day (eg. appointments) parents/caregivers are required to **sign them out** through the front office. If the student returns to school they must be **signed back in**.

School Support Officers' Responsibilities:

- School Support Officers are responsible for **recording student absence** on the administration computer using EDSAS.

Absence Impacting on Student Learning

If absence (*be that continued, sporadic or repeated throughout the term*) appears to be **impacting on a student's academic or social learning**, teachers will contact parents to discuss issues. Teachers will also meet with the **principal** to plan a resolution.

10 days absence (*not necessarily consecutive*) over the course of a single term is of concern.

Teachers' Responsibilities:

- Teachers have a **legal responsibility** to accurately **monitor each child's attendance**.
- Teachers need to **record** absence and reason in roll book and **send it to the front office by 9:10am each day**.
- It is the teacher's responsibility to **check** that information that has been recorded on the computer is **accurate** and **sign-off** each week's EDSAS printout.
- Teachers need to **contact the parent/caregiver on the third consecutive day of unexplained absence** and request a reason. Contact/attempted contact will be noted in the roll book. **Absence notes** have been developed to support teachers in following up ANY unexplained absence. **Absence letters** can also be sent in the case of repeated unsuccessful contact attempts.
- The class teacher will **document** interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in student's file.
- Teachers will **discuss** any issues with the **principal**.
- Teachers should coordinate the **collection of work** for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested.

The Principal's Responsibilities:

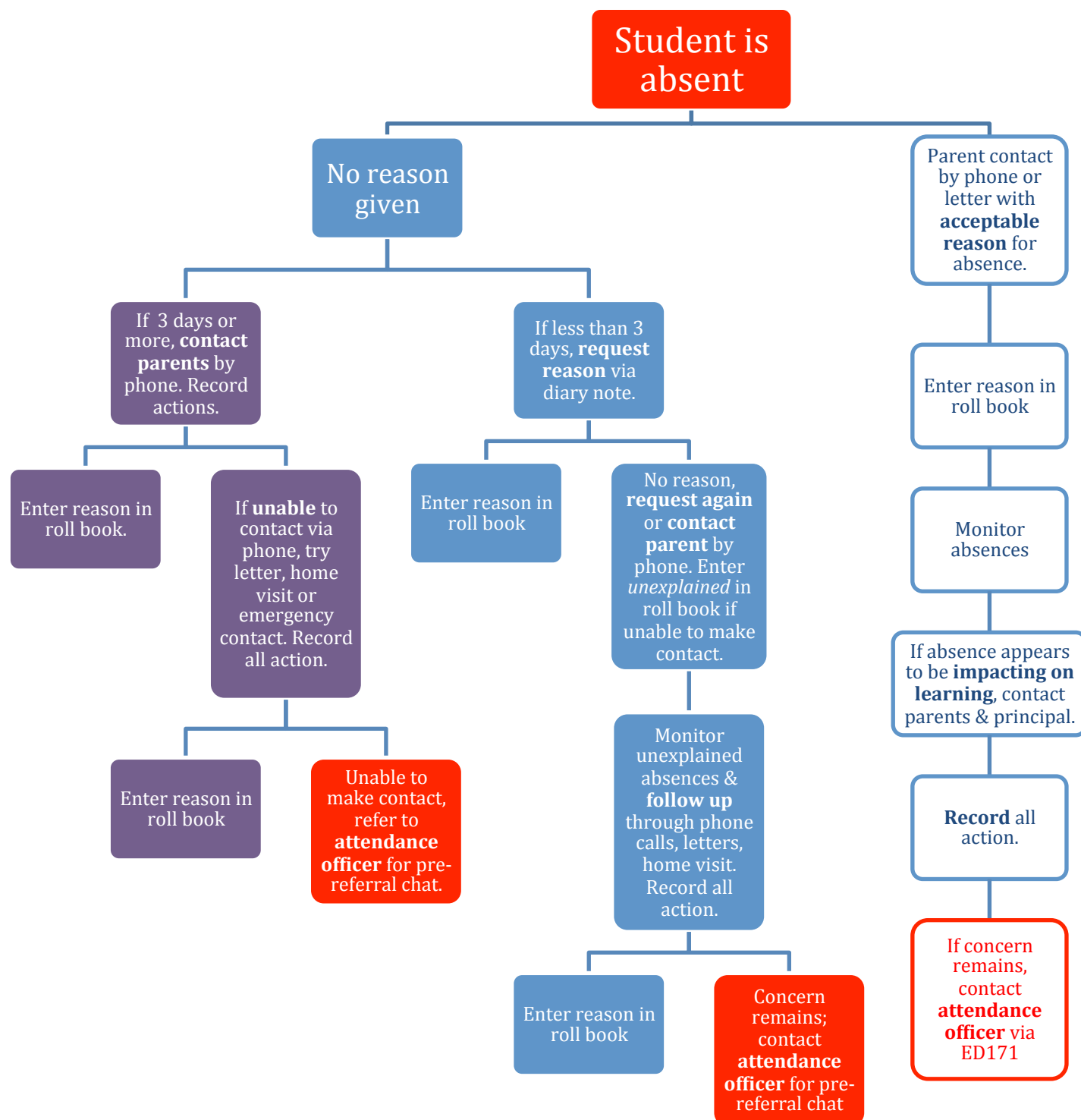
- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- The principal should **document** interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and **include in the student's file**.
- Principals have **delegated authority** from the Minister to **approve applications for temporary exemption** from school attendance for periods of **up to one calendar month or, for family travel up to 12 months**.
- An **application form** for requesting an exemption is available from the front office. The original signed copy of the form will be sent to parents while a photocopy will be kept in the student file and in the roll book.
- The principal *in consultation* with the teacher will **refer to an Attendance Counsellor** on an **ED 171** if **attendance issues are not resolved**.
- The principal will meet each semester with the counsellor to **review** attendance trends and issues.

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The target attendance rate for Naracoorte Primary School is 94%. Refer to attached Attendance Improvement Plan.

ATTENDANCE ACTION FLOW CHART

The flow chart reflects the course of action to be taken by staff regarding managing absences. Staff may, at any stage on the flow chart, discuss attendance concerns with the principal and school counsellor. Regular communication between school and home is the key to ensuring maximum attendance.



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Naracoorte Primary School - PO Box 534, Naracoorte, SA, 5271. Phone: 08 87622277 Fax: 08 87621677

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE LETTER

Sent on: _____

Dear parents/caregivers,

It has come to our attention that _____ has been absent from school without any explanation.

Dates: _____

It is a **legal requirement** that parents and caregivers **provide an explanation** for **all** student absences. You can phone, write a letter or personally contact your child's teacher or the front office.

It is vital that you contact the school regarding these absences.

Your responsibilities are to:

1. **Contact** the school via note or phone call, to indicate why your child is/was absent or late.
2. **Ensure children attend** school every day except in exceptional circumstances (i.e. illness).
3. **Ensure children attend on time** each day (by 8:50am).
4. **Apply** to the principal for an exemption when children will be absent for 3 or more days.
5. **Ensure your children's absences are not impacting on their academic and social learning.**

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- School **staff** should set an example for students, **encouraging** and **emphasising** attendance and punctuality.
- **Absence from school can limit a student's achievement** of essential knowledge and skills required for effective participation in work, relationships and families, and active citizenship.

The school attendance policy is available through the front office if you would like a copy.

Yours sincerely,

Class Teacher

Principal

Copy of letter to be kept in student file.

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UNEXPLAINED LATENESS LETTER

Sent on: _____

Dear parents/caregivers,

It has come to our attention that _____ has been late to school without any explanation.

Dates: _____

It is a **school requirement** that parents and caregivers **provide an explanation** for **all** student lateness. You can phone, write a letter or personally contact your child's teacher or the front office.

It is important that you contact the school regarding these absences.

Your responsibilities are to:

1. **Contact** the school via note or phone call, to indicate why your child is/was late.
2. **Ensure children attend** school every day except in exceptional circumstances (i.e. illness).
3. **Ensure children attend on time** each day (by 8:50am).
4. **Ensure your children's lateness is not impacting on their academic and social learning.**

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Yours sincerely,

Class Teacher

Principal

Copy of letter to be kept in student file.

ABSENT / LATE NOTE

STUDENT NAME:.....DATE of ABSENCE / LATENESS.....

**Legally we are required to have a reason why your child was absent or late.
Please complete this note and return to your child's class teacher for our records.**

REASON FOR ABSENCE / LATENESS:

ILLNESS FAMILY DOCTOR / DENTAL APPOINTMENT

OTHER (Please provide reason).....

PARENT / CAREGIVER NAME:.....

PARENT / CAREGIVER SIGNATURE:.....

ABSENT / LATE NOTE

STUDENT NAME:.....DATE of ABSENCE / LATENESS.....

**Legally we are required to have a reason why your child was absent or late.
Please complete this note and return to your child's class teacher for our records.**

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OTHER (Please provide reason).....

PARENT / CAREGIVER NAME:.....

PARENT / CAREGIVER SIGNATURE:.....

Attendance Improvement Plan 2013 - 2014

KEY OBJECTIVE: To improve attendance rates for all students

EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively develop a whole school approach to improving attendance • Communicate this approach in writing, electronically (website, intranet, common files) and via meetings to staff, parents and students • Monitor attendance data overall and for specific cohorts and focus areas <p>All staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively support school initiatives to improve attendance rates (everybody's business) • Consistently follow school procedures in handling of student absences • Implement agreed strategies for improving attendance
STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up all unexplained absences and lateness by absence/lateness note or telephone call to parent / caregiver (preferably the next day but within 3 days) using the procedures outlined on the school Attendance Flow Chart. • Focus on attendance in newsletters and school assemblies to inform students & parents about the way attendance is managed at the site and the impact of absences on learning • Teachers and support staff alert leadership to early warning signs of irregular attendance or poor engagement of students, including lateness • Where attendance is an issue, organise attendance-focused meetings with parents/carers and students • Positively support students returning to school from any absence and at risk students needs will be addressed through specific programs • Develop Individual Attendance Plans to support identified and at risk students. • Regularly discuss attendance at staff meetings, SOC and Governing Council, including analysis of data and success of intervention strategies • Refer individual students and parent/carers to regional support services and community agencies for further support • Principal and School Counsellor will review attendance trends particularly students who been absent for more than 7 days, not necessarily consecutive, over the term, at the end of Week 1 in Terms 2, 3 and 4. Staff are informed of concerns in writing and respond using the information they have recorded in their roll books and academic records. • Student absences are recorded on academic reports at the end of terms 2 and 4. • Attendance concerns are recorded on the student yellow cards for future teachers.
TARGETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve an overall attendance rate of 94% by December 2013 (trend 94.7% 2010, 95.3% 2011, 93.8% 2012)