

# WILLIAMSTOWN NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL No 1409

## Student Attendance Policy and Procedures

Date: October 2013

### 1. Rationale

Williamstown North Primary School is located in a neighbourhood, which is predominately populated by professional and semi professional families. The school community has high expectations in terms of academic outcomes, resources, facilities and extra curricula opportunities for children. School attendance is highly valued and while our attendance data is around the state mean, absenteeism is typically by parent choice, related to illness and in many cases extended family holidays and overseas travel.

- 1.1 At Williamstown North Primary School it is expected that all children will regularly attend school. Learning extends beyond the classroom and it is important for families and the school to collaborate to maximise all opportunities to develop the child's academic, social and emotional learning. Research on Resilience has indicated that regular attendance is a protective factor for children and frequent, or prolonged absences from school may indicate a child and/or family are at risk.
- 1.2 School Councils are required to develop a local policy on the support and maintenance of student attendance as part of their School Accountability and Improvement Framework, they are accountable to their community and the Minister for Education, within their annual reporting process.
- 1.3 Records of student attendance are a legal requirement for all schools. The records: -
  - 1.3.1 Monitor the daily attendance for students under 16,
  - 1.3.2 Supply accurate information for DEECD Attendance audits,
  - 1.3.3 A part of the school's duty of care requirements.
- 1.4 Legislation in Victoria allows for the prosecution of parents/guardians for the regular truancy of their child/ren.
- 1.5 At Williamstown North Primary School children are required to be at school by 8.55am to ensure they are not interrupting their learning and that of their peers by arriving late.

### 2. Aims

- 2.1 To further develop a whole school approach for the support and maintenance of student attendance to enhance student learning and engagement.
- 2.2 To further develop and implement effective strategies, processes and procedures for the support and maintenance of student attendance.
- 2.3 In support of student attendance, to liaise with, and utilise the expertise of: -
  - 2.3.1 Student Support Service staff,
  - 2.3.2 Regional and Central Office staff,

### 2.3.3 Locally based Support Agencies.

2.4 In recognition of the fact that late attendance and/or early departure may impact on each student's learning, the school will: -

2.4.1 Develop and implement specific strategies and education programs to support students and their families to arrive at school by the commencement time each school day i.e. 'It's Cool to be On Time for School', (Student Attendance Support Kit-DEECD)

2.4.2 Students are expected to be at school and to be on time. 'It's not okay to be away', (Student Attendance Support Kit-DEECD)

2.5 To clearly communicate with parents/guardians of their obligation to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence and to inform parents of the processes that will be followed where an absence occurs.

## 3. Implementation

### 3.1 Monitoring Student Attendance

(a) The Attendance Roll is a permanent record of the attendance of students and is marked twice a day, **9.05am each morning** and **2.05pm each afternoon**.

(b) Attendance records are entered electronically into CASES (DEECD computer system) weekly.

(c) Attendance records will be carefully monitored by the Class Teacher and Assistant Principal/Principal to identify any educational and social difficulties and to identify and implement any appropriate action or required support.

(d) Parents/guardians are required to notify the school of a student's absence, preferably in advance. This can be done verbally, by phone, a written note or by email. Parents/Guardians will be informed of this process on enrolment and information on processes are also included in the Community Information Booklet. Reminders will also be placed in the school Newsletter at the start of each Term.

(e) Written notification must be named and dated and the period and reason for the absence stipulated.

(f) In the event that no written documentation is provided to the school pertaining to the student's absenteeism, an explanation will be sought from the parent/guardian.

(g) Invalid reasons for student absence may require action by the school under the School Support and Attendance Plan, as per 4.1.

(h) Where there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a student, prompt communication will be made with the parent/guardian.

(i) When a child is genuinely ill and unable to participate in the daily learning, parents/guardians are required to make arrangements to keep their child/ren home.

(j) Where parents are aware of a 'planned' absence of any length, they are required to contact the school to determine a support plan.

### 3.2 Lateness

(a) Students arriving at school after 9.00am will be issued with a 'Late Pass' from the General Office and given to the supervising teacher.

- (b) 'Late Pass' details will be analysed regularly by the Classroom Teacher, Assistant Principal/Principal and appropriate action, as deemed necessary, (as outlined in Section 4) taken.

### **3.3 Early Departure (other than due to illness)**

- (a) Parents/Guardians collecting students before the end of the school day are required to complete an 'Early Leavers Pass', in the Early Leavers Book located at the General Office.
- (b) The 'Early Leavers Pass' must be presented to the supervising teacher before any child/ren can be collected.
- (c) Use of the 'Early Leavers Pass' will be maintained regularly by the Assistant Principal/Principal and appropriate action, as deemed necessary (as outlined in Section 4) taken.

## **4.1 School Plan to Support Attendance and Prompt Arrival**

### **4.1.1 Attendance**

- (a) Following an unexplained absence of **3 days** (consecutive and non-consecutive) in any one-week, the class teacher will contact the Principal/Assistant Principal and the Principal/Assistant Principal will make verbal contact with the parent/guardian.
- (b) If the problem with a student's attendance persists, a meeting with the parent/guardian will be convened. The meeting will include the parent/guardian, the Principal/Assistant Principal and class teacher. The purpose of the meeting is to: -
  - ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the absence and fully appreciate its implications,
  - examine the reasons for non-attendance,
  - identify whether further support and assistance is required to re-establish regular attendance.
- (c) If the informal arrangements of such a meeting do not result in an improvement to the student's attendance, the school will establish an on-going attendance support process to develop and monitor an appropriate program of assistance and support for the student. The plan could involve such action as: -
  - modification of the curriculum,
  - increased supervision of the student,
  - personal support and counselling for the student,
  - referral to other support agencies,
  - counselling and support as required for the parent/guardian or student.
- (d) Where the action taken through the school plan does not lead to a resumption of satisfactory attendance, the Principal/Assistant Principal should determine if it is necessary to convene an Attendance Conference in the interest of the education of the student.
- (e) The purpose of an 'Attendance Conference' is to: -
  - review strategies initiated to support the attendance of the student,
  - examine why resolution of the non-attendance has not been possible,

- make recommendations to the school and parents/guardians on further action (note: the Attendance Conference does not have any disciplinary connotations, but rather aims at effectively retaining the student at school).
- (f) Action considered at an Attendance Conference may include: -
- use of wider resources and expertise available in the Department of Education and early Childhood Development (DEECD), the Department of Human Services, or other supporting agencies,
  - transfer to another educational setting.
- (g) The Principal/Assistant Principal or nominee should convene the Attendance Conference. Participants should include: -
- Principal/Assistant Principal or Nominee,
  - Parent/guardian,
  - The student (if appropriate),
  - Parents advocate (if requested by parents),
  - The class teacher or appropriate staff member,
  - Consultant/Regional personnel (as appropriate).
- (h) Where a student is in 'out of home care' or where someone other than the parent has guardianship, the Principal/ Assistant Principal should ascertain who has the legal responsibility for the student when considering action to be taken in relation to attendance problems.

#### **4.1.2 Late Arrival/Early Departure (other than due to illness)**

- (a) Following a pattern of late arrival/early departure over a fortnight, the class teacher will notify the Assistant Principal and the Assistant Principal will make contact with the parent/guardian.
- (b) If the problem persists, a meeting with the parents/guardians will be convened. The meeting will include parents/guardians, Principal/Assistant Principal and class teacher (as appropriate).  
The purpose of the meeting is to: -
- ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of and fully appreciate, the implications of late arrival/early departure,
  - examine the reasons for late arrival/early departure,
  - identify whether further assistance is required to support prompt arrival and student attendance until the end of the educational day.
- (c) If the informal arrangements of such a meeting do not result in an improvement to the student's attendance, the school will establish an on-going "Attendance Support" process to develop and monitor an appropriate program of assistance and support for the student and family.

This policy to be reviewed annually.

*Reference to DEECD Policy.*

*Reference to the Exclusion List*

This policy was ratified by School Council on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013.