

## **Murray Bridge Special School**

### **Attendance Policy and Procedures**

#### **Context**

At Murray Bridge Special School we believe our school should be a safe, caring and success oriented learning environment. We believe our learners need to attend school regularly in order to engage fully in the curriculum and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables our learners to access all areas of the curriculum provided, enabling them to reach their full potential. Although primary responsibility for attendance belongs to the parent or guardian, all staff at Murray Bridge Special School actively encourages our learners to take responsibility where possible for their own attendance and punctuality.

**At Murray Bridge Special School we acknowledge learning will only occur when certain physiological and psychological needs are met. It is important our learners attend only in appropriate circumstances. For example if a learner is unwell or significantly stressed; is recovering from a recent illness; has had recent surgery or hospitalisation, or requires a standard of health or psychological care outside of the duty of care abilities of teaching or school support staff, then it is not in the learners best interests to attend Murray Bridge Special school.**

Our goal is to ensure all learners enrolled can access fair and equitable learning outcomes. Monitoring school attendance enables identification of young people at risk and the implementation of early intervention strategies. We believe early detection and assessment of attendance issues and the implementation of organisational processes that are responsive to the needs of individual learners and whole of school are essential.

#### **General**

A learner who is at least six years old but not yet seventeen is of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether the young person has a disability or not. This cohort of learners are required to be enrolled at a registered or non-government school and must attend the school on every day instruction is provided at the school for the learner, unless the Minister has granted an exception from school attendance.

The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent/guardian. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department for Education. The Department for Education therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of attendance.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Parent/guardian**

- Parents/guardians are responsible for getting their children to and from school.
- Learners must arrive at school between 8.30am and 8.50am unless negotiated with the principal.
- Learners must attend school on every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent.
- Parents/guardians must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for their child's non-attendance. This comprises a letter or a telephone call from the parent/guardian or a medical certificate – after three days a written explanation is required.
- When a learner is late for school, it is appropriate that the parent/guardian explains the reason for lateness.
- Parents/guardians must let the school know if an extended absence is likely or if the school needs to arrange work at home for the learner.
- It is the parents/guardians responsibility to contact the appropriate taxi service and inform them if their child will not be attending school that day, or does not require the service in the afternoon.
- Contact Child Youth Health (CYH) and inform them of the learner's absence if the learner receives a service from a Health Support Worker.
- If the school contacts either the parent/guardian or a listed emergency contact because they believe it is not in a learners best interest to attend school that day (eg due to illness) that person must arrange for the learner to be picked up immediately. Please note: the learner may not travel home unaccompanied in a taxi, the parent/guardian or nominated emergency contact must pick them up in person.

### **School Nominated Taxi Co-ordinator**

- Inform the Principal of any initial 'concerns' regarding learner absences.
- Write the daily absences in the Staff Day Book

### **Learning Facilitator**

- Consult with the leadership team if they believe it is not in the learners best interests to attend school that day (i.e. highly stressed, unwell).
- If it is decided the learner should go home the learning facilitator will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact to have the learner picked up from school.
- Monitor each young person's attendance.
- Record absence and reason for absence in roll book and send to front office by 10.00am each Friday.
- Contact family on third day of absence. Document initial information, strategies, and/or interventions in roll book.
- Share attendance information at site meetings.
- Collaborate with the Principal and contact other agencies i.e. local Department for Education Support Services Attendance Officer, Special Educator, and Behaviour Coach, Department for Child Protection,

Disability SA, or Child Youth Health (CYH) that may be of assistance in developing and supporting plans to resolve an attendance issue.

- Document further action in the learners One Plan.
- Co-ordinate learning for learners who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested.
- Collaborate with the Principal to complete a referral form for Support Services (Attendance) if attendance issues are not resolved.

### Principal

- Develop and implement the site's Attendance Improvement Plan
- Ensure the EDSAS roll is accurately completed
- Monitor and analyse attendance data and report to the school community through the site's Annual Report
- Ensure procedures, including parent/caregiver notification are in place to follow up non-attendance
- Ensure intervention occurs after 10 days of accumulated absence or sooner if the learner has a poor attendance record
- The Principal has the delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods up to one calendar month. Parents/guardians should apply in writing and principals should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advices are to be retained in young people's files, together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate Department for Education officers as required.
- All applications for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on the appropriate form and forwarded to the Attendance Counsellor.
- Approves the final decision whether to send a learner home.