



Attendance Policy



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development

Ratified: Sept 2017
Review: Sept 2018

At Felixstow Community School we aim to create a positive, flexible and collaborative learning environment that encourages academic, social and emotional growth. To achieve this and gain maximum benefit from their schooling, we expect all of our students to attend school regularly and on time.

During school hours, teachers have duty of care and responsibility for students. As a part of this they have a *legal obligation* to ascertain reasons for student absence.

We work with parents to encourage attendance and participation to:

- provide a safe, success orientated and caring environment
- provide relevant learning programs for all students
- maintain accurate records of attendance
- ensure non-attendance is followed up through early intervention
- develop strategies to resolve attendance difficulties.

Parent Responsibilities:

- getting their children to and from school
- keeping children home when they are ill
- informing the school of the reasons for a student's non-attendance.
- where possible make appointments outside of school hours
- contacting the school if they know of a reason affecting school attendance
- ensuring that home and emergency phone numbers are up to date
- signing students in and out from the office when late or leaving early
- work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

If you are aware your child will be absent for a period of 3 days or more an exemption must be applied for and signed by the principal prior to the absence.

Situations where it is acceptable for a child to miss school include times when the:

- child is too sick to leave the house
- child has an infectious illness such as gastroenteritis, chicken pox or measles
- child needs to attend medical or dental appointments that could not be made out of school hours
- school principal is provided with a genuine reason that prevents the child attending school
- child has been granted an exemption from school
- child has been sent home or suspended from school for disciplinary reasons.

If a student is absent due to reported illness for three or more consecutive days a medical certificate is required.

Informing school about your child's absence

It is important to notify the school of your child's absence and the reason for it. If you are unable to notify the school in advance, send a note or email covering the days missed.

Refusal to attend school

All children aged between 6 and 16 years of age must be enrolled and attend school regularly, irrespective of distance from school or whether the child has a disability or not. Under the Education Act of South Australia, parents and/or carers are held responsible for the regular attendance of all children in their care.

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.

A child's refusal to go to school can be very distressing both to parents and the child. Non-attendance can take different forms. If you have difficulty with your child attending school you should immediately contact the school to seek help. You can discuss your concerns with your child's teacher, or the school principal.

Lateness:

Lateness can just as equally effect students over a period of time. It is important to make every effort to get students to school by 8.50. We recommend arriving 10-15 minutes before this to allow student time for play and organisation. The morning is an important part of the day with discussions about plans for the day, changes for the day, and a time for social catch up and community building within the classroom.

If there is a continued pattern of lateness staff will discuss ways to support you and your child and if deemed appropriate a *Lateness Improvement Plan* will be developed in collaboration with families.

ATTENDANCE PROCESSES

There are 365 days per year and 200 school days minus 5 closure/pupil free days = 195 school days. This leaves 170 days with family at home.

The following table outlines the actions staff are legally obligated to follow should there be an attendance concern:

	% attendance	Number of days per yr attended	Number of days absent per year	Number of days absent per term	Actions
Good	>95%	185 days +	Maximum 10days absent/school year	2 days per term	
Worrying	91 – 94%	176 - 184	11 – 19 days absent per year	3-4 days per term	Discussion with family
Serious concern	<90%	<175 days	20 school days or more absent per year	5 or more days per term	Attendance improvement plan implemented in discussion with family
Referral activated	< 85%	<165 days	>30 days absent per year	7 days or more per term	Referral to DECD Attendance Officer

ABSENCE CODE	Reason	Explanation
I	Illness	Illness prevents a students attending – note, message or phone call from family regarding medical condition required
C	Ill with Certificate	Verified by a doctor's certificate or health professional's communication.
F	Family	Absence for family, social or cultural reason (not family holiday). A pattern of regular use of this code may indicate need for intervention
U	Unexplained	Absence without explanation by family or school.
LATENESS CODE		Explanation
L	Late	After the bell & before 11.10am
M	Morning	after 11.10am
A	Afternoon	leaving before 1.40pm
E	Early	Leaving after 1.40 & before bell

Minutes late per day	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	10 Days	17 Lessons
10 mins	7 Days	35 Lessons
15 mins	10.5 Days	52 Lessons
20 mins	14 Days	70 Lessons
30 mins	21 Days	104 Lessons