BLACKWOOD
HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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Supporting attendance of students in years 7 – 12

Overarching Principles

Research shows that attendance at school all day and every day positively affects learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people. Learning is cumulative and it is disrupted if students often miss school.

Rationale

School attendance and the law

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education and Children's Services Act 2019 states that all children must attend school from 6 until they turn 17. This could be in a school or an approved learning program.

Parents or legal guardians (carers) can be prosecuted if they do not make sure their child goes to school. This can mean being fined or getting a criminal conviction.

The Department's attendance policy

The South Australian Department for Education's Attendance Policy guides the responsibilities of the whole school community to make sure that children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers and students.

Schools work with their community to develop positive attendance habits. This starts from the earliest years. They do this when they provide a safe, inclusive and culturally respectful environment. They use effective and consistent local practices to monitor and manage absences.

Students at risk from missing school

Students can be away from school for many reasons. Schools use categories to identify children and young people at risk. We make sure that appropriate follow up and support is provided.

- Habitual non-attendance: a student has 5 to 9 days absent in a term for any reason.
- Chronic non-attendance: a student has 10 or more days absent in a term for any reason.

How we implement the department's attendance policy

At Blackwood High School our attendance practices align with the department's attendance policy.
We support student attendance when we:

- promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout school
- assess patterns of non-attendance and develop ways to address this
- actively engage and include all children, young people and their families
- provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing
- monitor attendance to make sure progress is documented and supports are in place
- evaluate the need for further or ongoing support and referral for additional support.

We use data to create our attendance improvement plans. This is in partnership with our community. Our plan includes the actions we will take to make sure all students can attend school.

Blackwood High School's attendance expectations

School starts at 8.40 am each day and finishes at 3.10 pm.
Early finish at 2:20pm each Monday

A parent or carer must provide an explanation if their child is late or has to leave early. All students must give this to the Student Wellbeing Centre when they sign in or out.

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Responsibilities

Everyone has a role to make sure students attend school all day, every day.

Students *(**Note:** a student's age and circumstances affect the level of responsibility).*

- Attend school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Arrive at school and to all lessons and activities on time.
- Participate positively in all learning activities.
- If a student arrives late, or is required to leave school early, they are to report to the Student Wellbeing Centre to sign in or sign out. A parent or carer might be contacted for confirmation.

Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day the school is open, unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Make sure their child arrives at school on time, between 8.20 am and 8.40 am.
- Provide their child's school with up-to-date contact details.
- Provide a reason to the school if their child is absent, late or leaving early. Where possible, this should be provided on the same day.
- Provide a medical certificate or written explanation if their child is ill for 3 or more days in a row.
- Where possible, make appointments for their student outside of school hours. For example: dental check-ups, driving lessons, etc.
- Monitor their child's learning and attendance using DayMap and support their child to catch up on learning missed due to absence.

Teachers and leadership team

- Make sure all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies and procedures.
- Accurately record each absence, late arrival or early departure with the appropriate code.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence, or a pattern of absences.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact.
- Request a medical certificate from parents or carers if needed.
- Consult with the local Student Support Services if needed. For example Social Work, Truancy.
- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide.
- Refer frequent absences to the appropriate Case Management Team (Middle Year 7 - 9, Senior Years 10 - 12)
- Parents or carers will receive a DayMap notification if a student is absent, unexplained, from Care Group.

Authorisation of exemptions

In some circumstances, the principal has authority to approve an exemption from school. This can be for up to 1 month. It can also be for up to 12 months for a family holiday.

Before asking for an exemption, families should talk to a site leader. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved.

Blackwood High School requires an exemption for planned absences of more than 3 school days in a row. Forms to request an exemption are available from the Student Wellbeing Centre.

Parents or carers must apply in writing. The principal will advise them in writing of their decision. A copy is kept in the student record folder. Forms are available from the Student Wellbeing Centre.

Exemptions of more than 1 month (excluding holidays) must be approved by the department's central office.