



Moerlina School

MOERLINA SCHOOL
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Student Attendance

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**MOERLINA SCHOOL
STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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Note: Grants Auditing Program Inspection conducted 4 May 2021 by Dominic Hosgood, NGS Funding Officer, DoE WA

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Moerlina School monitors and manages student attendance in order to maximise the opportunities of all students to learn.

The Principal will manage student attendance in accordance with the School's Procedures. This includes:

- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- responding to Department of Education requests for reporting and disclosure of attendance data;
- managing alternative attendance arrangements where these are appropriate;
- addressing student absence;
- developing plans for students with persistent absence; and
- retaining all relevant documentation.

(Adapted from the Department of Education Attendance Policy 2020)

The Principal will report to the Moerlina School Council on matters of compliance.

2 BACKGROUND

At Moerlina there is a strong emphasis on the development and maintenance of a nurturing, safe and positive learning environment which promotes engagement and participation and impacts positively on the management of regular school attendance.

Consistent attendance and participation at school are essential factors in achieving social and academic learning outcomes. Parents/caregivers are requested to avoid booking appointments, holidays etc during school times so as to minimise disruption to student's learning.

Development of positive learning behaviours are a focus at Moerlina. As such parents/caregivers are requested to have students at school at least 10 minutes prior to commencement of classes, allowing students time to transition and prepare for their day - to be organised for lessons and make social connections.

The Education Act requires that students attend school on site, or for school educational programs conducted elsewhere (excursions, school camps etc), on each day designated a school day in the School's calendar for the given year.

On agreement with the principal, students with a disability or medical condition may attend less than fulltime, where alternative arrangements are deemed in the child's best interests and are in accordance with the requirements of relevant State government authorities.

The parents/caregivers of a child who is enrolled at the school are responsible under the Act for ensuring their child is attending on a daily basis. Full time attendance is compulsory for all students from Pre-Primary to Year 6. Parents/caregivers will be asked to provide an acceptable explanation in writing (hard copy or email) for any absence, to be kept with the Class Attendance Register.

The attendance of all students enrolled at the school is monitored according to the Act. Where attendance issues are identified for a student, appropriate measures to restore regular attendance will be implemented to ensure the student is able to access and fully benefit from social and academic educational programs provided by the School.

3 POLICY PROCEDURES

3.1 ENROLMENT CONTRACT

Attendance requirements are outlined in the Enrolment Package provided to all families during the enrolment process. They are also provided at the commencement of each year in the annual School Handbook.

The statement of the expectation of parents/caregivers in relation to the Moerlina School Student Attendance Policy forms part of the Parent Agreement, which once signed becomes a legally binding contract between the family and the School.

Statement of the expectation of parents/caregivers in relation to the Moerlina School Student Attendance Policy:

The Moerlina School Attendance Policy is guided by the School Education Act 1999 – Sections 23 to 28. Consistent attendance and participation at school are essential factors in achieving social and academic learning outcomes. It is an expectation on enrolment at Moerlina that parents/caregivers ensure their child/ren (for children in Pre-Primary to Year 6 classes) attend a minimum 90 per cent of school days over each term. It is also expected that children will attend all class sessions both on site and off site (excursions, school camps etc).

3.2 ATTENDANCE RECORDS

The class teacher will:

- keep accurate attendance records for every student enrolled at the school (including attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions for Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Pre-Primary and Primary students in the Class Attendance Registers provided at the commencement of each school year;
- record in Class Attendance Register a student as:
 - present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction [no mark];
 - absent for a half day when the student has attended less than 2 hours of instruction [a];
 - attending if they are on a school-approved activity [no mark];
 - late if they are not present when attendance is recorded [L];
 - short term leave when the student has left and returned within a day (eg appointment) less than half day absence [s];
 - early departure when the student leaves from school before the official end of school day but less than half day absence [e]; or
 - departed when the student has officially been withdrawn from the school, from the day following the last day of enrolment to the end of term/year [-].
- record the receipt of a written explanation for a student's absence in the Register and keep copies of all notes;
- note where a student is taken out of school by a parent/caregiver either during the day (eg. medical appointment) where they may or may not be returning, or before the end of the school day but are marked present on the Register;

- keep a written record where a student is taken out of school to attend regular appointments approved by the principal (eg. Speech Therapy);
- collate student numbers for each week; and
- submit the Register and all absentee notes to the office at the end of each school term.

The principal or nominee will:

- provide details of new students to class teachers for inclusion on the Class Attendance Register;
- send a written request and absentee slips to the parents/caregivers of students who have not provided explanations for absences at the end of each term; and
- archive Attendance Registers and absentee notes as required by governing regulations.

3.2.1 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS

School staff are made aware of the legal expectations in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of every student's information, including attendance data. Maintaining privacy over student attendance and associated records is a legal obligation, under the *Privacy Act 1981 (Cth)* and the *Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)*, which includes observance of the Notifiable Data Breach Scheme (NDBS).

3.2.2 RETENTION OF RECORDS

The principal or nominee will:

- keep records of all contact, or attempts to make contact, with the family of students deemed at educational risk due to absence;
- maintain documentation of all intervention strategies implemented in attempts to restore a student's attendance; and
- retain attendance records for each child in accordance with School Education Regulations. Reg. 21; Each student's attendance records must be retained by the school for seven years from the day on which the student's enrolment ceases.

3.3 MANAGEMENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

The class teacher will:

- provide an Absentee Slip to parents/caregivers via the Communication Book where a note/email has not been received following a student absence (Appendix A);
- remind the student's parent/caregiver of the importance/policy of arriving prior to the commencement of class when a pattern of late arrival appears to be developing;
- remind the student's parent/caregiver of the importance/policy of attending the full school day when a pattern of non-attendance for any part of a day appears to be developing (unless for educationally related purposes agreed with the school).

The principal or nominee will:

- request an explanation from the student's parent/caregiver when a student has been absent from school and a written explanation has not been provided (Appendix B);
- request a meeting with the student's parent/caregiver when a pattern of late arrival becomes evident (Appendix C);

- request a meeting with the student's parent/caregiver when a pattern of non-attendance for any part of a day becomes evident (Appendix D);
- manage absences in conjunction with the alternative provider for students participating in alternative attendance arrangements under Section 24 of the Act;
- commence attendance investigation and restoration procedures as outlined in the Attendance Intervention Flowchart (Appendix E) where:
 - attendance falls below 90 per cent over a term as shown on the Register; or
 - attendance for whole days or parts of the school day are not regular and may be deemed to be impacting on the student's engagement in social and educational programs.

3.3.1 ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION PLANS

Where student attendance has fallen below 90% for the term or attendance for whole days or parts of the school day are not regular and have been deemed to be impacting on the student's engagement in social and educational programs, the principal will:

- investigate reasons given for absences; and
- meet with the parents/caregivers to highlight concerns.

Where the pattern of non-attendance does not improve to meet the School requirements the principal and class teacher will:

- prepare documentation including; frequency of absences, reasons given for absences, outline of class programs (or parts of) missed and an overview of the concerns of the school;
- inform the School Council;
- meet with parents/caregivers to identify issues related to non-attendance;
- develop an attendance improvement plan with the parents/caregivers; and
- monitor progress.

Where the implementation of an attendance improvement plan is not successful, the principal and a representative of School Council will meet with parents/caregivers in an effort to restore the attendance improvement plan.

Where attendance is not restored to the satisfaction of the School, as agreed by the School Council, the Council will seek to make null and void the Enrolment Contract between the family and the School on the grounds that the family refuse to meet their obligations as agreed in the Terms of Enrolment (refer to the Enrolment Policy).

3.3.2 ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION FOR FULL FEE-PAYING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Attendance requirements for international students will be in accordance with the ISCA National Code 2018 Standard 11, apart from the requirement for attendance to be at 90% as required by the Moerlina School Attendance Policy.

Where student attendance has fallen below 90% for the term or attendance for whole days or parts of the school day are not regular and have been deemed to be impacting on the student's engagement in social and educational programs, the principal will follow the Attendance Intervention Plan processes explained in 3.3.1:

- investigate reasons given for absences; and
- meet with the parents/caregivers to highlight concerns.

Where the pattern of non-attendance does not improve to meet the School requirements the principal will:

- prepare documentation including; frequency of absences, reasons given for absences, outline of class programs (or parts of) missed and an overview of the concerns of the school;
- inform the School Council;
- provide a written overview of the attendance concerns of the School and notification of intention to report the student for not achieving satisfactory attendance through PRISMS should attendance not improve immediately to required levels;
- meet with parents/caregivers to identify issues related to non-attendance and to develop an attendance improvement plan; and
- monitor progress.

Where the implementation of an attendance improvement plan is not successful, the principal and a representative of School Council will meet with parents/caregivers in an effort to restore the attendance improvement plan.

Where attendance is not restored to the satisfaction of the School, as agreed by the School Council, notification will be made through PRISMS and the Council will seek to make null and void the Enrolment Contract between the family and the School on the grounds that the family refuse to meet their obligations as agreed in the terms of enrolment.

Where a student is absent and the School has concerns for the student's welfare the principal or delegate will make all reasonable efforts to locate the student, including notifying the police and all relevant Commonwealth and State agencies as soon as possible.

3.3.3 LONG TERM EXPLAINED ABSENCES

The Principals or nominees will request a medical certificate for prolonged absences due to sickness or injury. In the instance of long term/severe medical conditions impacting on the student's attendance, the principal or nominee will not investigate further if documentary evidence has been provided outlining the nature of the illness and the expected duration of the absence.

A comment relating to extended absence may be included on the student's written report where it is deemed that it has had a serious impact on the student's achievement.

4. SCHOOL INITIATED NON-ATTENDANCE

The Principal or nominee may require students' non-attendance, on the basis of advice from the Chief Health Officer or a registered medical practitioner, due to reasons of a medical condition, considered by the Principal to be infectious, contagious or otherwise harmful to the health of persons at school or participating in the school's educational programme.

The WA Government Health Department's Communicable Diseases Guidelines will be the key reference for the Principal to request a child be collected from school until the requirements have been met for them to be deemed safe to return to school. In the case of communicable diseases at school, health alert notes will be sent home to all families.

5. DEPARTED STUDENTS

Where a student has been withdrawn from the school during a school year the principal or nominee will inform the teacher of the official date on which enrolment ceased. This will follow written confirmation from the family in which the final date of attendance will be nominated.

The teacher will remove the student from the Attendance Register, following the guidelines for keeping the Register.

6. UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

The Department of Education manages the day-to-day operations of the Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown (SWU) list on behalf of all three education sectors. The SWU list details students who have been reported as missing from school (public, Catholic and Independent), Home Education, Notice of Arrangements and Exemptions.

A student is regarded as missing when they cannot be located, their parent/s cannot be contacted and the school has not received a transfer note.

The principal or nominee will report students who are missing within 15 days of their last date of attendance, after taking all reasonable steps to contact the family.

7. REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE OF ATTENDANCE DATA

The principal will comply with requests from the Federal Department of Education and the State Department of Education to provide information on student attendance (eg Census audits) for every student enrolled.

8. RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008

School Education Act 1999

School Education Regulations 2000

The School Education Act 1999 and the School Education Regulations 2000 provide the statutory framework for the operation of all schools in Western Australia. This legislation applies for the operation of public (government), private (non-government) and for families choosing to register as their child's home educator.

APPENDIX A: ABSENTEE SLIP

Absentee Slip

My child _____ was/will be absent from school
on _____ due to:

- illness
- specialist appointment
- family holiday
- other _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: / / 20

Parent/Guardian name: _____

APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE

Dear [Parents/caregivers' names]

Re: Request for explanation of absence

On checking the class Attendance Registers at the end of the Term it appears that we have not received a note regarding [Student's name] absence from school for [dates absent].

As this is a legal requirement please complete the Absentee Slip below and return to the class teacher at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards
Perette

Absentee Slip

My child _____ was absent from

school on [date/s to be inserted] due to:

- illness
- specialist appointment
- family holiday
- other _____

Parent signature: _____ Date: / / 201

APPENDIX C: LETTER FROM PRINCIPAL TO PARENT REGARDING FORMAL MEETING FOR LATE ARRIVAL

School Letterhead

[Parent First Name] [Parent Last Name]
[Address]
[SUBURB] WA [POSTCODE]

Dear [Title] [Parent Last Name]

NOTIFICATION OF FORMAL MEETING REQUIRED

I am writing regarding the attendance of your son/daughter, [Student Name] at school. Our records indicate a pattern of late arrival, and although this has been raised previously a consistent change is not evident. The expectation that students arrive prior to the commencement of the school day is clearly outlined in the *Moerlina School Student Attendance Policy* and is supported by the *School Education Act 1999*.

I am very concerned that [Student Name]'s late arrival at school is still at an unacceptable level and would like the opportunity to work together to resolve this issue.

I would appreciate if you would book a meeting to discuss this matter at a time most convenient to you so that we can develop a plan to address any issues and implement strategies to improve [Student Name]'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

[Name of Principal]
PRINCIPAL
[Date]

APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM PRINCIPAL TO PARENT REGARDING FORMAL MEETING FOR NON-ATTENDANCE PART DAYS

School Letterhead

[Parent First Name] [Parent Last Name]
[Address]
[SUBURB] WA [POSTCODE]

Dear [Title] [Parent Last Name]

NOTIFICATION OF FORMAL MEETING REQUIRED

I am writing regarding the attendance of your son/daughter, [Student Name] at school. Our records indicate a pattern of non-attendance for parts of days AND/OR early departures (modify as required), and although this has been raised previously a consistent change is not evident. The expectation that students attend school on a fulltime basis is clearly outlined in the *Moerlina School Student Attendance Policy* and is supported by the *School Education Act 1999*.

I am very concerned that [Student Name]'s pattern of attendance at school is still at an unacceptable level and would like the opportunity to work together to resolve this issue.

I would appreciate if you would book a meeting to discuss this matter at a time most convenient to you so that we can develop a plan to address any issues and implement strategies to improve [Student Name]'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

[Name of Principal
PRINCIPAL
[Date]

APPENDIX E: LETTER FROM PRINCIPAL TO PARENT REGARDING FORMAL MEETING FOR NON-ATTENDANCE FULL DAYS

School Letterhead

[Parent First Name] [Parent Last Name]
[Address]
[SUBURB] WA [POSTCODE]

Dear [Title] [Parent Last Name]

NOTIFICATION OF FORMAL MEETING REQUIRED/ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

I am writing regarding the attendance of your son/daughter, [Student Name] at school. Our records indicate a pattern of non-attendance in excess of the minimum 90% attendance expectation for each term. The attendance requirements are clearly outlined in the *Moerlina School Student Attendance Policy* and are supported by the *School Education Act 1999*.

I am very concerned that [Student Name]'s pattern of attendance at school is at an unacceptable level and would like the opportunity to work together to resolve this issue.

I would appreciate if you would book a meeting to discuss this matter at a time most convenient to you so that we can develop a plan to address any issues and implement strategies to improve [Student Name]'s attendance.

OR

I understand that [Student Name] non-attendance has been due to a family holiday/illness however, would like the opportunity to meet and discuss any implications for [Student Name]'s learning outcomes.

I would appreciate if you would book a meeting to discuss this matter at a time most convenient to you.

Yours sincerely

[Name of Principal
PRINCIPAL
[Date]

APPENDIX F: ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION FLOW CHART

Attendance Intervention Flow Chart

Student Attendance has fallen below 90% for the term
OR

Attendance for whole days or parts of the school day are not regular and have been deemed to be impacting on the student's access to social and educational programs

