



Virginia Primary School - Attendance Improvement Plan

Students must come to school every day the school is open. This is known as regular attendance. Students are more likely to want to come to school and achieve if they feel:

- included
- valued
- respected
- supported.

Students who miss school often

The [attendance policy](#) defines the following groups of students as at risk because of how often they miss school.

- **Habitual non-attendance:** a student misses 5 to 9 school days in a term. This is for any reason.
- **Chronic non-attendance:** a student misses 10 or more days in a term. This is for any reason.

For students in these groups, we assess the level of risk to their learning and wellbeing. When a student is at risk we will talk with the family about the issues.

Our school's vision

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students which addresses their educational needs. We expect students to be at school all day, every school day. This means that students will be in class ready to start learning at 8.50am and remain until 3.15pm. Our attendance policy aims to ensure that students are reaching their full potential by attending school all day, every day and where that is not possible, our attendance policy sets out procedures to minimise the impact of non-attendance. It is important that students, staff and parents / carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.

Virginia Primary School:

- Is committed to promoting the message that everyday counts;
- Believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend all day, every school day;
- Monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance; and
- Believes that attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

How we follow up if a student misses school

Virginia Primary School has developed the Attendance Policy to:

- Improve student access and participation;
- Improve student achievement and success;
- Develop lifelong positive routines and practices;
- Intervene early if the need arises;
- Provide support for students, parents/caregivers and teachers;
- Maximise learning opportunities by ensuring student absenteeism is kept to a minimum;
- Ensure that the maintenance and approach towards regular school attendance is the responsibility of all school staff, parents/guardians and students; and
- Put in place agreed processes for managing students' absences within the school.
 1. If a student misses school, we record their absence. We also record the reason given by the parent or carer.
 2. If we receive no reason, we follow up with the parent or carer. This is usually by phone or text (SMS).
 3. If the absences continue or there are concerns raised by the absence, we keep following up. This might be by phone, email, meeting or a letter.
 - We support the family to look at any issues that stop the student from going to school.
 - If needed, we connect the family to other services. For example student support services.

Our data

At Virginia Primary School our student attendance records help us to plan how we improve school attendance. We routinely analyse data. We look at patterns. For example the attendance of different year levels. We also look at individual student attendance.

Our attendance rate has decreased since 2018. This might be due to:

- We shared information in newsletters and at assemblies.
- We talked about why attendance is important for learning, wellbeing and future success.
- We shared information in staff bulletins e.g. attendance rate percentages, share habitual and chronic non-attenders
- We included individual attendance rates in student reports. This makes sure parents know how many times their child was away from school in a term.
- Teachers talked about absences at parent-teacher interviews.
- We reward students who have 100% attendance. We presented them with certificates.

Our approach to improving attendance

At Virginia Primary School our attendance strategies are guided by the South Australian Department for Education's attendance policy.

We will plan, implement and review the following attendance improvement actions. We will do this with our governing council, staff, students, families and local community.

Promote

We will promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout the schooling years as a school community priority of the highest value.

Our actions

- Communicate why going to school every day matters. Explain how absences affect learning, wellbeing and future success.
- Share how education helps students to build routines and habits.
- Promote ways parents and carers can use routines in the early years to create good habits later.
- Recognise good or improved attendance. This might be for students, classes or the whole school.
- Set up attendance expectations. Share this with families. Lead by example.
- Include information about student attendance in school reports.
- Share why going to school every day matters when there is a big change in a student's life.
- Discuss attendance in staff meetings.

Assess

We will assess patterns of non-attendance and circumstances. We will use this to inform the development of appropriate targeted, intensive and coordinated interventions.

Our actions

- Record daily absence. Make sure it is recorded correctly. Import the data into the department's reporting system (EMS).
- Set up a process for quick and consistent recording and follow up of all absences.
- Analyse attendance data for trends and patterns of absence.
- Review attendance data with staff. Discuss students at risk.
- Check on all students with individual learning plans. This includes students who have agreed changes to their attendance. For example an exemption.
- Display attendance data in the school.
- Create ways to let staff know about any worrying student absences.
- Check on all students who have habitual and chronic non-attendance. Find out what support they might need.

Engage

We will actively engage and include all children, young people and their families in education and interventions which support attendance.

Our actions

- Create a welcoming and inclusive school.
- Engage and challenge students. Allow for different student abilities and needs. Modify the curriculum and teaching practices if needed.
- Build relationships with parents and carers. Offer different activities over the year.
- Set up programs that support student wellbeing and school connections.
- Support students to build resilience.
- Support students to develop relationships.
- Build staff skills to talk with students and families about attendance issues.
- Build staff skills to provide an inclusive, relevant and engaging curriculum.
- Support students identified as habitual and chronic non-attenders as early as possible. This might include home visits.
- Encourage staff to talk with families and students about attendance.
- Create safe and supportive learning spaces. This is so all students can learn and engage.
- Build student voice into school decision-making.
- Ask students and staff for feedback about the learning environment.

Support

We will provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing. We will make sure there is inclusive support for children and young people so they can be physically present and engaged in education.

Our actions

- As early as possible, support students who have attendance and wellbeing issues.
- Work with Student Support Services on student attendance issues.
- Set up attendance improvement or learning plans for students with attendance issues.
- Work with families to find out why students are away from school. Make sure the support fits their individual needs.
- Support Aboriginal students with attendance issues. Make sure the support fits the student's individual and cultural needs.
- Support children and young people in care with attendance issues. Make sure the support fits the student's needs.
- Support students with disability who have attendance issues. Make sure the support fits the student's needs.
- Set up a process to follow-up attendance issues that students and families tell us about.
- Set up supports when there are big changes in a student's life. Support students to plan for their education needs now and in the future.

Monitor

We will monitor attendance to make sure that risks are identified, supports are in place, and progress is monitored.

Our actions

- Set up an attendance team. This team can identify, check on and lead support for students with attendance issues.
- Check on students we are supporting. Share how the student is going with their family.
- Make sure staff understand their duty of care to check on and follow up attendance issues.
- Set up ways for staff to escalate attendance issues.

Evaluate

We will evaluate the need for further or ongoing interventions, referrals for external support and mandatory notifications.

Our actions

- Work with the Social Worker - Truancy for extra attendance support.
- Connect families to external services for support.
- Train staff and volunteers in mandatory reporting of attendance issues.
- Keep in contact with families of students who have attendance issues.
- Work with local community groups and agencies to support students to go to school.



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

