The Education Act 1972 (the Act) provides for compulsory attendance of every child who is required to be enrolled at a school on every day, and for such parts of every day, as instruction is provided at the school for the child (subsection 76(1)) between the ages of 6 and 16 years.

What does this mean?
Every child is required to attend school everyday. It’s the law! … And all children who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided. The means – children from the age of 6 to 16 are required to be at school on time and daily.

What else does this mean?

If you have learnt that attendance and punctuality are not important, how long to you expect to keep a job if you constantly arrive late or don’t arrive at all?

How many AFL football players roll up to the match on Saturday late because ‘they slept in,’ or mum missed the alarm?

As a parent, are you seriously aware of the long term damage you are doing to your children by denying them access to a regular education? Are you aware of the opportunities that may be lost and the choices that may be limited?

As a parent, do you really want your child’s learning constantly interrupted because others do not value attendance and punctuality and they ‘role up at school when they feel like it’?

School begins at 8.55am and finishes at 3.20pm.

Regular attendance

We believe that students need to attend school regularly:
- In order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling;
- In order to not interrupt and interfere with the learning of others;
- To learn routines and participate in school;
And … Punctuality and attendance also:

1. Encourages practices that will advantage the child in later life;

2. Every time a child arrives at school late, the teacher needs to stop working with the others and engage the later arriving student in the lesson. This interrupts the learning of students who arrive on time and did the right thing.

3. Our school day is structured with a Literacy block and Reading Post each morning. By poor punctuality and arriving at school, the child is missing out on key learning time.

4. As a school we have made a number of commitments to assist students in their learning. These include employing staff to work individually with students. If students are late or absent the staff member will be reallocated to other children and the late child is again disadvantaged.

Monitoring of school attendance and punctuality identifies students at risk and allows the early implementation of intervention strategies.

Our Aim:

Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student attendance is everyone's business and all members of the school community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance.

The school have a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

Parent's/Caregiver’s Responsibilities

- Parents/Caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from school.

- Children are expected to arrive at school between 8.25am – 8.50am. (Breakfast is available to all students every school day).

- Children must attend school every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent eg illness.

- Parents/Caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student’s nonattendance or lateness or early departure, within a reasonable time. Ideally for safety and
accountability reasons, this explanation should be received on the day of the absence or within three days. This needs to be a written note or telephone call to the school office.

- Parents/Caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely i.e. five days or longer. If the school needs to arrange work at home for students, teachers require time to prepare this.

- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

**Teacher’s Responsibilities**

- Provide a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage all students and offers opportunity for success, thus encouraging attendance.

- Monitor each child’s attendance.

- Record absence and reasons for absence in the class absence folder and send to the front office each day – as soon as practical.

- If there is no explanation from the Parent/Caregiver regarding a student’s absence or lateness for that day, the absence or lateness will be marked as “Unexplained Absence” or “Late Attendance at School.”

- On the third day of an unexplained absence, lateness or if a regular pattern of non-attendance is observed the class teacher will contact the Student Counsellor for further investigation.

- All written explanations, replies to absentee notes, medical certificates and other documentation are to be kept at the school for a period of one year and made available to a Student Attendance Officer on request.

- The teacher must endorse each such note with the date on which it was received at the school. Written explanations in school diaries are acceptable. Where a diary is utilised, the school must retain a photocopy of the relevant written explanation.

- Set appropriate work for children unable to attend school when requested.

- Make Mandatory Notification as appropriate, document and store as per DECS procedures.
Principal’s Responsibilities

- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.

- Ensure intervention occurs after 10 days of accumulated absence or sooner if a student has a poor attendance record.

- If our best advice is that a student has left the school/district but there has been no transfer advice from another school after 2 weeks, the student will be made ‘not active’ and the Student Attendance Officer will be advised. Principal will complete a letter regarding the absence of a student and send home to the Parent/Caregiver.

- Where a student leaves school during the day without the teacher’s permission, the Principal will be notified immediately and parent and/or police assistance sought.

- Principal and staff will refer to a Student Attendance Officer on an ED171 (Report of Unsatisfactory Attendance) form if attendance issues are not resolved.

- Principal has delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month. Parents/Caregivers should fill in an ED175 (Application for Exemption from School Attendance) form and the Principal should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advices are to be retained in school files, together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate department officers as required.

- All applications for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on form ED175 (Application For Exemption from School Attendance) and forwarded to the Assistant Regional Director.

- Ensure that notifications about suspicions of neglect and/or abuse are made in addition to a referral to Regional Support Services.
Procedures

- Principal and staff will document interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls and include in student’s file. The Non Attendance and Late folder to be reviewed and updated regularly as interventions occur. These documents will be securely kept in a folder in the Student Counsellor’s office and clearly marked / labelled appropriately, and will be accessible by the Principal.

- The issue of continued unexplained or inadequately explained absences over a term or frequent late arrivals will be addressed through a family conference including some or all of the following: parents/caregivers, principal, school counsellor, teacher and student (if applicable).

1. Attendance Rolls are marked by the classroom teacher every morning ensuring accuracy and reliability.

   - This list can only include students who are physically present in the room or have been sighted by the teacher.

2. Attendance Rolls are sent to the Front Office – no later than 9.30am each day.

   - The attendance records are entered onto EDSAS as soon as practical after 9.30am each day.
   - Any issues or concerns, identified by the classroom teacher (note included) or by the SSO entering the data, should be directed to the Student Counsellor or the Principal, as soon as practical.

3. The names of students who are absent are entered onto the roll as per the above policy. Teachers must actively pursue written explanations for absence. These are to be kept and entered onto the rolls using the appropriate code.

4. Explained and Unexplained Lateness

   If a student arrives at school after the start of the school day they are marked as ‘Late.”

   All lateness is recorded by the school and the ‘slip’ from the student signing in is marked as ‘EL’ (explained) or ‘UL’ (unexplained).

   EL – Explained Lateness

   If the student has a written note from a Parent / Guardian the lateness is accepted as ‘Explained.’ Confirmation of Explained Lateness can also be verbal either in person or by phone.
Confirmation of Explained absence by a sibling or unrelated person, other than a Guardian, is not acceptable.

The Principal will make the final judgement regarding the acceptability of the ‘explanation’ for lateness.

Continued Explained Lateness:
Principal will meet with the Parent / Guardian and seek resolution.

U – Unexplained Lateness
Where the Parent / Guardian has not offered a reason for the lateness, the student will be asked to ‘make up’ part of the lost time by doing a lunchtime Time Out to a maximum of 15 minutes.

The **Time Out is to be given via the front office at the point of ‘sign in.’**

No student should enter a classroom late without a sign-in slip from the front office correctly endorsed.

School Council Approval

Council President _________________________________ Date _________
Principal _________________________________ Date _________