



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

# Mulga Street Primary School – Attendance Policy

Last Updated: November 2023

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.

## 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. (<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/attendance-policy>)

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 Mulga Street Primary 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.

## Mulga Street Primary School's attendance expectations

School starts at 8.55am each day and finishes at 3.15pm.

- If your child is unwell for a period greater than three days, a medical certificate from a General Practitioner may be requested by the school.
- If your child is absent due to family reasons (events, travel etc.), this must be communicated to the school.

A parent or carer must provide an explanation if their child is late or has to leave early via the sign in/sign out tablet located at the front office.

## Attendance responsibilities

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

### Students

- 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.

### 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 8.30am and 8.55am.
- 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. The same day if possible.
- Provide medical certificates (where appropriate) or communicate if their child is ill.
- Work collaboratively with school staff to support and maintain consistent student attendance.

### 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](#)

(<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN (<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/working-us/responding-abuse-and-neglect-training/ran-ec-childprotection-training>) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide ([https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/107099/mandatory-reporting-guide.pdf](https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/107099/mandatory-reporting-guide.pdf))

- Make sure the list of absences and late arrivals are given to front office each day by 9:15 AM
- Staff actively refer to and use the local 'Mulga Street Attendance Process' for managing student attendance.

## Authorisation of exemptions

Parents and carers wanting to take their child out of school must apply for an exemption through their school. Students must attend school regularly until the exemption has been approved.

Parents can be referred to the SA government's [attendance at school](#) webpage for more information on compulsory attendance.

Principals have the authority to approve exemptions of up to 1 month.

If the exemption is for more than 1 month, approval must be sought from the central delegate as outlined in the [exemption from school procedure](#).

[Student exemptions from attending school \(edi.sa.edu.au\)](#)

[Exemption from school procedure \(edi.sa.edu.au\)](#)