Context /Belief Statement

At Vale Park Primary School we believe schools should provide a safe, success orientated and caring environment. We believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education.

Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies. We believe the early detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance and the provision of organisational structures, which are responsive to the needs to students, is vital.

All members of the school community are expected to meet requirements of attendance and work to the best of their ability and skill as consistently as possible.

Student attendance is everyone’s business.

General Information

A child who is at least six years old but not yet sixteen is of compulsory school age (from 01/01/03), irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability or not. These students are required to be enrolled at a registered government or non-government school and must attend the school on every day instruction is provided at the school for the child, unless the Minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent / guardian. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS).

DECS therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

Responsibilities (including procedures to be followed)

Parent responsibilities:

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

- Children must arrive at school on every day between 8:35 and 8:55am and be picked up by 3.30pm if not attending OSHC or Sports practice.
- Children must attend school on 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 non-attendance. Usually this comprises a letter or telephone call from a parent/caregivers or a medical certificate – after three days a written explanation is required.
- When a student is late for school, it is expected that a parent/caregiver will sign their child in at the Front Office. They will receive an orange late card, which is taken to the classroom teacher.
- When a student is leaving school early, parents/caregivers are required to sign the sign out book, which is in the Front Office. They receive a blue card, which is handed to the classroom teacher when the child is collected.
- If a parent is unable to pick up their child by 3.30pm they must advise the school by phone. Arrangements will be made for the child to go to OSHC (at the parent’s cost).
- Parents/caregivers must let the school know if an extended absence is likely or if the school needs to arrange work at home for students. Twenty-four hours notice must be given.
- Families who have no alternative but to take family holidays during term time must apply for their child to be exempted from attending school during that time. This is done on an ED175 form 'Application for Exemption from School Attendance'. The Principal approves exemptions of less than one month, while the Director, Central Coordination, Office of Service Delivery approves longer periods of time.

**Teacher responsibilities**

- Monitor each child’s attendance.
- Record absence and reason for absence in roll folder and send to the Front Office by 9:30am each day.
- If the child is late, record the time of arrival.
- The roll folder can be collected at recess time from the Front Office.
- Contact home on the third day of absence if the parent/caregiver has not contacted the school. Record details next to the student’s name in roll folders. Document any strategies/interventions, attempts to contact parents plus outcomes, and include in the student’s files.
- After contacting parent/caregiver alert the leadership team and discuss with a member of the leadership team if necessary.
- Coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is required. Parents need to give twenty four hours notice.

**Leadership Team responsibilities**

- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is completed accurately.
- The leadership team will complete the letter regarding the absence of a student and send home to parent/caregiver.
- The leadership team will ensure that interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls are documented and included in student’s file.
- The leadership team will refer cases to the District Attendance Counsellor on a Single Referral form if attendance issues are not resolved.
- Principals have delegated authority from the Minister to approve applications for temporary exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one calendar month. Parent/caregivers should fill out Form ED175 to apply for a temporary exemption. Copies are to be retained in school files, together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate department officers as required.
- All applicants for temporary exemptions exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are forwarded to the Director, Central Coordination, Office of Service Delivery.

**Flow Chart – following up student absence**

1) Students absent for three days without explanation OR
2) Pattern of lateness

- Teacher contacts parent/caregiver.
- Teacher notifies leadership team.
- Leadership team notifies Attendance Officer using the Single Referral form.
- Leadership team sends home parent/caregiver letter and/or meets with parent/caregiver.
- Teacher and leadership team monitor student attendance.