

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Our aim is to ensure all students have access to a full and rewarding education. Regular attendance at school provides students with the opportunity to gain maximum benefit from their schooling. Monitoring of school attendance enables identification of students at risk and the implementation of appropriate intervention strategies. We believe that the early detection and assessment of the causes for school non-attendance along with the provision of organisational structures, which are responsive to the needs of individual students, are most important.

All members of our school community are expected to meet the requirements of Robe Primary School's Attendance Policy and work to the best of their ability to reinforce the importance of regular attendance and its contribution to learning. **Student attendance is everyone's business.**

GENERAL

A child who is six years old but not yet sixteen is of compulsory school age (D.E.C.S policy from 01/01/03), irrespective of distance of their residence from the school; is 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, unless the Minister or when appropriate the Principal of the school has granted an exemption from school attendance.

Children under six years of age and not under compulsion, but are required to attend school when the entire school day is open for instruction once enrolled. The Principal may exempt Robe Primary School's Reception students, on Wednesday's for the first ten weeks of their schooling and this time may be extended until they turn six years of age. The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement rests with the parent or guardian.

The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS). **The department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non/poor attendance.**

Teachers are responsible for children during school hours and need to know their whereabouts at all times. Parents are required to notify the class teacher in writing or personally, before taking their child from school for such things as dental, sporting or doctors appointments.

AT ROBE PRIMARY SCHOOL WE BELIEVE:

- That achievement in learning is strongly linked to regular attendance and appropriate participation in educational programmes.
- Good attendance provides the means for students to access a productive education, enabling students to reach their full potential.
- Positive parent attitude to regular and punctual attendance is vital in avoiding future poor attendance.
- Successful students are well organised and start the day on time.
- It ensures continuity of education.
- It enables students and families to develop positive relationships with peers and staff.
- It develops good work habits and ensures responsibility.
- It supports success in student's learning.
- It develops positive routines in student's daily lives.
- It trains students for future workplace requirements.
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ATTENDANCE IS:

- Being at school unless there is an acceptable reason.
- Arriving at school on time (between 8:30 and 8:50 am).
- Being at school until dismissal time.
- Not leaving the school grounds during the school day without permission.
- Being punctual when returning to class after breaks.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

We all have a legal responsibility to promote good attendance patterns and take action to rectify problems of non/poor attendance.

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS RESPONSIBILITIES:

Parents will;

- Ensure their children arrive at school, between 8:30am and 8:50am.
- Ensure their children are 'picked up' at the end of the school day, between 3:35pm and 3:45pm.
- Provide an explanation regarding every absence (early departure, late arrival, appointments, illness, family business etc.) punctually by a diary note, letter or phone call.
- Where there is an ongoing health or other reason for lateness or absence, parents must discuss these issues with the child's teacher, in the first instance.
- Contact the school if the child's absence is likely to be longer than 3 days.
- Work with the school to reinforce the importance of attendance and the value of learning
- Inform the class teacher or Principal of any difficulties relating to school attendance.
- Contact the school prior to any planned absences.
- For absences that exceed 5 calendar days, contact the Principal and seek an exemption. The Minister, through the Principal, must approve any period above that previously mentioned.
- Assist in the delivery of a work program provided by the class teacher during extended periods of absence.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students will;

- Attend school everyday, unless they have a valid reason not to be at school.
- Be punctual to all lessons.
- Provide an explanation to the teacher for their absence / lateness (usually a letter from parents / caregiver).
- Inform the class teacher or Principal of any difficulties relating to school attendance.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Teachers will encourage maximum attendance by:

- Ensuring that a safe, secure environment is provided for all students.
- Developing stimulating learning programs to meet the learning needs of individual students.
- Encouraging full participation by valuing each student's contribution and encouraging individual success.
- Fostering positive, open communication with parents / caregivers.
- Welcoming new students and their families into our school and making the school's expectations known clear to them.
- Gaining relevant knowledge about each child and factors that may affect their regular attendance.
- Providing extra or catch up work where requested, and / or address realistic renewed deadlines, if any work, needs to be caught up.

Teachers will monitor student attendance by:

- Keeping accurate attendance records and reasons for absence.
- Mark the roll and have it to the office by 9am.
- If a child is absent or late with no explanation, the parents will be contacted at approx. 9.30am to check on a reason.
- Send children who are late to the front office to notify that they are here, so the roll book can be altered.
- Contact parents on the third day of absence. Document this action in the attendance record. At this time, the teacher will inform the principal of any necessary information.
- Identifying non attendance patterns, using current records and working with relevant staff to develop intervention programs.
- Inform the principal of any concerns regarding student attendance.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

The principal will:

- Ensure that the EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- Follow up student attendance / lateness concerns expressed by teachers.
- Refer continuing problems to our District Attendance Counsellor for further action.
- Inform classroom teachers of progress or further action.
- Liaise with relevant support agencies.
- Document or delegate documentation to the class teacher of interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls, and include these in the student's file.

The Principal's authority:

- Principals have 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 apply in writing and Principals should also advise approvals and non-approvals on school letterhead. Copies of such advices are to be retained in the school files together with applications, and are to be made available to appropriate department officers as required.
- All applications for temporary exemption exceeding one calendar month, and for permanent exemptions, are to be set out on ED175 and forwarded to the Student Attendance Counsellor at the District Office.
- The principal in consultation with the teacher will refer a specific case to an Attendance Counsellor on an DE171, if attendance issues are not resolved, over a period of six school weeks.

