



PORT AUGUSTA WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Rationale and Beliefs

At Port Augusta West, we believe the future of student success is influenced by regular attendance at school. Regular attendance develops skills and attitudes that help students to optimise their life choices. Family attitude to regular and on-time attendance is critical in positively supporting their children's education. The Education Act 1972 requires that children of compulsory school age (6 years), be enrolled at school. A condition of that enrolment is that a student is required to fully participate in the education program.

Parents' & Caregivers Responsibilities

Parents / caregivers are responsible for ensuring that:

- Children arrive at school between 8.30 and 8.45am
- Children attend school every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent (e.g. illness)
- They provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance or lateness, either via a phone call, Text Message, conversation or written note as early as possible, but should be within two days
- When possible provide the school with a medical certificate for illnesses. A medical certificate is required after 3 reported illness absences.
- Where a student is absent due to reported illness for three or more days in any term medical evidence might indicate that a care plan is required from a treating health professional i.e. asthma, allergies, injuries
- They let the school know if an extended absence is likely and coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons and for whom work is requested as soon as they are aware of absence
- They apply for temporary exemptions when children are going to be absent for periods of time up to a month e.g. family holiday that can only be taken at certain times e.g. due to work
- Parents/caregivers must collect a blue 'Early Dismissal' card from the front office and sign out their child before collecting them from class

Teachers Responsibilities

Teachers will:

- Maximise the chances of engagement, success and motivation for learning by differentiating curriculum and delivery, implementing all areas of AITSL on a daily basis for every student, greeting students in classes before the morning bell, monitoring student well being throughout the day and intervening if necessary.
- Develop positive relationships with students and parents/caregivers.
- Monitor each child's attendance and punctuality.
- Record absence and reasons for absence, if known on Sentral.
- Make a mandated notification to CARL, where a student's explained absence is either excessive, unexplained or suspicious.
- Provide meaningful, worthwhile and inclusive learning experiences for all students.
- Discuss patterns or concerns re non-attendance/lateness with the Deputy Principal.

- Follow up a child's non-attendance or lateness with parents/caregivers via notes in diaries/communication books, phone calls, meetings or home visits with another member of the leadership team.
- Liaise with support staff e.g. ACEO, Deputy Principal to improve attendance and lateness.
- Document all interventions, strategies, home visits, phone calls in a confidential and discreet manner.
- Coordinate the collection of work for students who are unable to attend school for acceptable reasons within a reasonable time limit of a request from parents.
- Demonstrate sensitivity when handling attendance issues with students/parents/caregivers (Eg, Ask why they are late at an appropriate time, discreetly and in private.)
- Refer to the leadership team when absences persist despite the above intervention.
- Keep school leaders informed about student absences that are concerning (eg, more than 3 days absence, or a pattern of unexplained absence, or regular unexplained OR explained absence that appears suspicious).
- Send students to the Front Office to record their arrival if they arrive after 9:00am or after the daily roll has been completed.

Student Responsibilities

Students need to:

- If late, collect a late card from the front office, enter the classroom with as little disruption as possible and place late card in allocated area.
- Stay on the school grounds, unless they are signed out by an adult and have given the teacher an 'early dismissal' card or have the appropriate consent to leave (e.g. SAPSASA, Sports Day, Concerts, music lessons or excursions).
- Show a level of responsibility towards their own attendance (age appropriate) i.e. arrive at school organised and prepared, go to bed on time, set an alarm clock, get up on time, get ready for school before watching TV, unpack their school bag when they arrive at school before playing with others and not arrive at school before 8:30am.
- Student Representative Group (SRC) to be positive role models and encourage student responsibility re attendance.
- Student leadership roles performed with rigor and vigilance.

Front Office Responsibilities

Front Office Staff will:

- Record late arrivals in the 'Late Arrivals' book and on Sentral /EDSAS.
- Welcome students to school with a smile, and supporting students feeling embarrassed as a result of their lateness, understanding that the lateness is more often than not, not their fault. Adult parents have the ultimate responsibility to ensure their child arrives at school on time.
- Give students a 'Late Card' to give to teachers when students arrive late to school.
- Maintain an Early Dismissal Log Book (recorded also on Sentral) in which parents/caregivers sign a child out early with documented reason.
- Ensure that caregivers signing a child out are authorized to collect the student, and are not subject to custody restrictions.
- Ask parents to wait in the office area, whilst the class is contacted to send the student to the office. Parents do not collect their children from the class, to minimize class or lesson disruption; maximize child protection; not cause concern for young students seeing parents walking through the yard; and student mental health.
- Contact a parent/caregiver to confirm any unexplained absences/lateness on that day.
- When the front office have difficulty making phone contact with a particular parent/caregiver over a period of more than 2 days in a week, they will make this aware to the deputy principal.
- Ensure that the Sentral /EDSAS roll is accurately completed.
- Ask for medical evidence for the cause of absence for a student who has been absent due to reported illness for three or more consecutive days. This is to occur when making regular follow up phone calls to parents.
- Assist in the documentation of interventions, strategies and phone calls and communicate them to the class teacher and/or Deputy, to be included in the student's file.
- Ensure that a copy of the schools attendance data from EDSAS is printed off twice per term (in weeks 3 and 8, before Wednesday). This will be discussed at leadership meetings for analysis and follow up.

- Make Mandatory Reports to the Child Abuse Report Line about any student for whom they have concerns of abuse or neglect and report all concerns to the Principal.
- Transfer attendance records from Sentral to EDSAS no less than weekly (eg, Friday), and preferably daily.

Deputy Responsibilities

The Deputy Principal will:

- Review and monitor whole school attendance data and individual profiles at meetings.
- Send home an attendance letter if a student has had 3 unexplained absences or late arrivals to school at any time during the term and unsatisfactory efforts have been made by the Front Office Staff/Class Teacher to obtain reasons for the absences.
- Work together with parents/caregivers, teachers, students, support agencies to develop an Attendance Plan for students who are absent/late for 5 or more unexplained days in a term. (5 days per term: habitual, 10 days or more: chronic)
- Where a student is absent for 5 days with an explanation, but without a medical certificate, that student's absence can be considered suspicious and worthy of investigation or reporting.
- When a student is absent intermittently and verbal reasons are given by the parent, that student's absence can be considered suspicious and worthy of investigation or reporting.
- Make recommendations to the Class Teacher/s re strategies to improve student attendance/punctuality.
- Maintain documentation on each student to show what actions have been undertaken.
- Discuss organisation of parent meetings with Class Teacher/s to discuss non-attendance or lateness.
- Refer a student to the Support Services Attendance Officer if there has not been satisfactory improvement in attendance or punctuality after an Attendance Plan has been put in place and monitored for 10 school days.
- Keep notes of Attendance Meetings and actions taken for individual students.
- Write a report at the end of each year for the Annual Report.
- Write articles in the School Newsletter to promote attendance and punctuality.
- Make Mandatory Reports to the Child Abuse Report Line about any student for whom they have concerns of abuse or neglect and report all CARL reports to the Principal.
- Closely monitor the progress of students on Attendance Plans and recommend a referral to the Support Services Attendance Officer if there has not been satisfactory progress after two weeks or patterns of poor attendance/lateness reoccur
- Support Teachers to remember their legal obligation and familiarity with attendance procedures, through ongoing agenda items at staff meeting.

ACEO Responsibilities

The ACEO will:

- Participate in parent meetings to discuss absence of Aboriginal students.
- Be consulted in attendance matters involving Aboriginal students.
- Document all phone calls/actions to support an Aboriginal student's wellbeing, learning or improvement in attendance/punctuality.
- Conduct home visits with AET/deputy/Class Teacher/Leadership for Aboriginal students.
- Regularly visit Aboriginal students in the classroom to monitor progress and wellbeing.
- Attend (if appropriate) Parent/Caregiver meetings to discuss Aboriginal student's attendance/lateness.
- Contribute information of the Attendance Profiles at meetings.
- Make Mandatory Reports to the Child Abuse Report Line about any student for whom they have concerns of abuse or neglect and report all CARL reports to the Principal.

Principal Responsibilities

The Principal will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented to maximise student safety, learning and wellbeing, and minimise staff concern, as well as meeting departmental and legal obligations around child safety and welfare.
- Make final decisions re student referrals to the Support Services Attendance Officer, which may be delegated to the deputy/delegate.
- Monitor the progress of all student attendance/lateness through the leadership team.
- Attend home visits as required.
- Approve student attendance exemptions as per Department for Education guidelines.
- Make Mandatory Reports to the Child Abuse Report Line about any student for whom they have concerns of abuse or neglect.

Home Visit Procedure

If a phone, written or electronic response is not made by a parent/caregiver to a request for information regarding their child's attendance or punctuality at school after 3 days, the deputy/delegate may make a home visit.

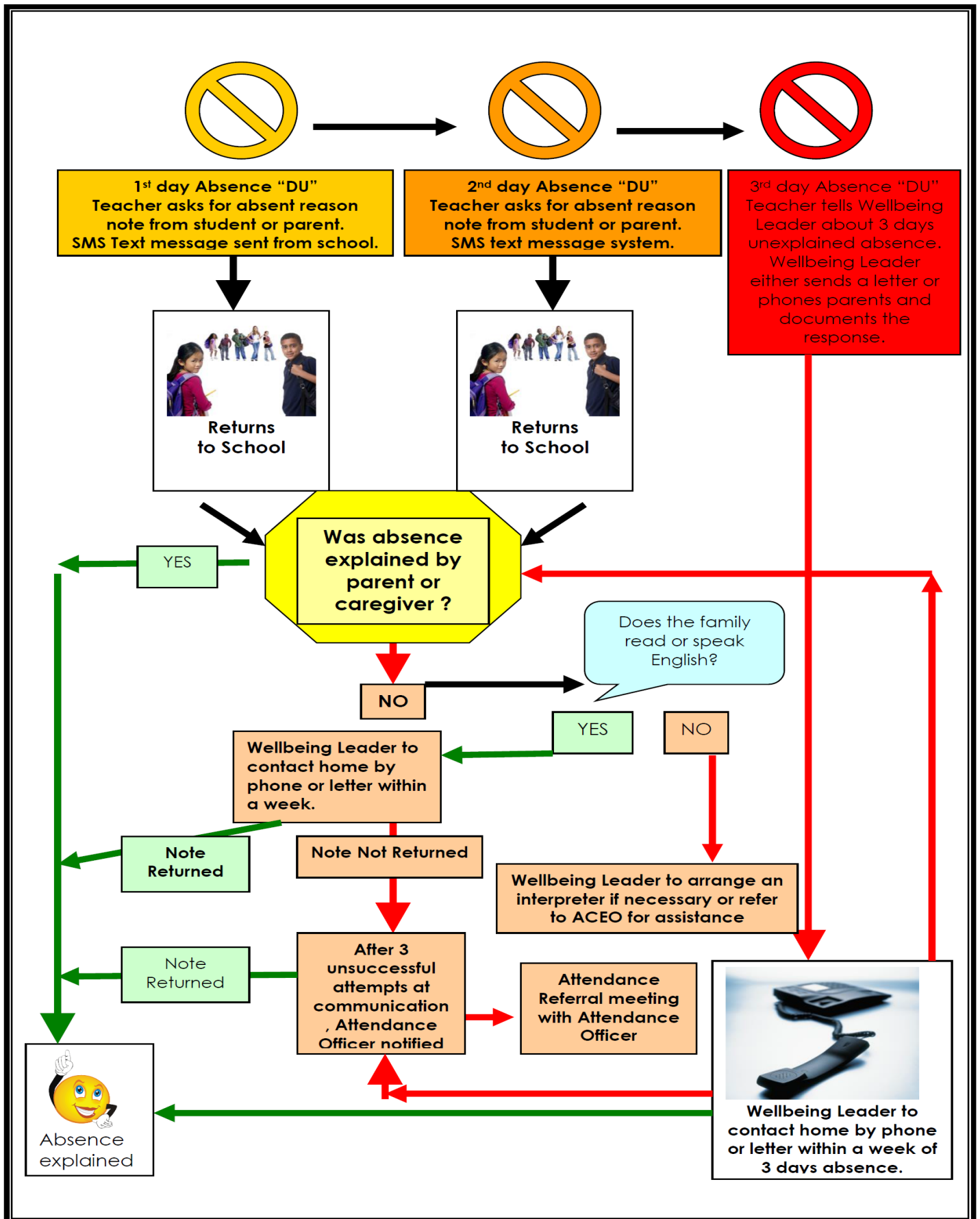
All Department for Education employees who make home visits in the course of their duties must adopt suitable precautions to ensure their wellbeing, including being accompanied by a second staff member/Department for Education employee/agency member. Recommended practices include :

DO NOT	DO	REASON
Visit a home alone	Take a second person for a home visit	Safety and self-protection from possible assault or false accusations in a potentially volatile situation
Park in the driveway	Park on the road	In case of a need for quick get-away, or to prevent being boxed in by arriving cars
Arrive unprepared	Rehearse the content of the conversation you are about to have and keep it brief and straight to the point	The parent / family might feel threatened and not thinking clearly, and not able to comprehend too much information. Keep it simple and straight to the point. You are checking the welfare of the student, reasons for absence, and expected date for return, that's all
Visit a home without a mobile phone	Take a mobile phone with you	Phone may be required for assistance, or to make any necessary calls
Both speak to the parent / family when visiting	Decide who will speak. One speaks and the other observes without speaking	One person focusses on the conversation and keeps it less threatening. Second person is a support person and takes note of other factors
Choose suspicious behaviour, looking in windows or over fence	Walk on the designated path or driveway and front porch entrance	Other neighbours might report you for suspicious behaviour. This leaves you vulnerable to be accused of any damage to the property afterwards. It is also impolite
Raise any other issue, other than the intended purpose of the visit, to satisfy attendance requirements	Invite the parent to meet at an alternative time for other issues, or finish the conversation about attendance completely, first	Raising attendance could be interpreted as threatening or intimidating. A second topic may overwhelm the parent and confuse the parent afterwards about the purpose. Allow the parent to raise a different topic 'after' and 'only after' the expectations have been made and an agreement established regarding student attendance

In the event that the parent/caregiver is not at home, a 'Home Visit Notice' is to be filled in and placed in the letter box requesting the parent/caregiver to contact the PAWPS deputy/delegate as soon as possible to discuss the reasons for the home visit.

Endorsed by Governing Council, February 2023. Next Review due February 2025.

Responding to unexplained absences flowchart



EDSAS Absences Codes

C

Ill with certificate – Verified by a doctor’s letter, doctor’s certificate, dentist’s appointment card or some other health practitioner’s communication

E

Exemption – Approved temporary exemption from school attendance by either the Principal (up to one calendar month) or the Director, Site and Regional Improvement and Accountability, eg overseas travel.

F

Family/social/cultural – Absence condoned by parent/guardian as being for family, social or cultural reason (not including family holiday – refer to exemption). A pattern of regular use of this code may indicate the need for intervention.

G

Off-site learning programs – Absences to attend off-site learning programs, where the curriculum is offered by other providers, but where the student’s learning program is still managed by the school. This code can also be used for students who are doing transition visits to their future high school. In these cases include a comment in the notes for these absences “Transition visit to XYZ High School”.

H

Home study

I

Ill without certificate – absence covered by notes, messages or phone calls from parent/guardian stating a medical condition or illness preventing the student’s attendance.

K

Take Home – Absence due to a student being sent home for disciplinary reasons

M

Camps and Excursions

N

Not approved – Absent without parent/guardian approval

P

Alternative Program/Exclusion – This code is used for students who have been excluded and are undertaking an alternative program. The appropriate behaviour management details must still be completed for students on exclusion. When this absence code is being used, attendance will be noted at the host site and communicated back to the home school for recording.

R

Covid close contact

S

Suspension – Suspended externally from school to an agreed place, usually home.

T

School Sport

U

Unexplained – Student who is absent without explanation by parent/guardian or school or another authority (eg Families SA)

Z

School following up – Students enrolled who have been absent without an acceptable reason for at least 9 days, where your school is actively following up (ie less than 10 school days between each contact) through regular phone calls, home visits, SAC referral or other strategies to re-engage the student in regular attendance.

NOTE: This code can only be used after 9 continuous days of unexplained absence for any student. Those days should be recorded as “U” with the “Z: code being used from the tenth day. This code does not apply to those students whose whereabouts are unknown.

NOTICE OF SCHOOL VISIT

Today we attempted to contact you at home, however you were not available.

Date of visit : _____

Time : _____

We need to meet with you to discuss supporting you to have your child attend school on a regular basis.

Please contact the school on 8642 2637 at your earliest convenience, to arrange a time to meet the Deputy or Principal to discuss ways to support you.

Yours sincerely

Principal/Deputy

CONFIDENTIAL ATTENTION TO :

FIRST NOTICE

Dear Parent / Carer,

Your child _____ is recorded as being **absent from / late to** (delete which) school on the following dates :

To prevent this matter being reported for further action, please state the reasons on the bottom of this form, and return it to the school as soon as possible.

Today's date : _____

Principal signature : _____

School : Port Augusta West Primary School

Please return this entire page to the principal in an envelope or folded, addressed to the principal

Attention the principal

In reply to your letter, I wish to say that my child _____ did not attend school or was late on the above dates because *(please write a reason for each date listed above)* :

Signed (parent/caregiver) _____ Parent name printed _____ Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL ATTENTION TO :

SECOND NOTICE

Dear Parent / Carer,

I refer to my previous letter advising that your child _____ is recorded as being **absent from / late to** (delete which) school on the following dates :

Please respond to this letter within 7 days, to so that we can finalise this matter. We shall arrange a home visit if you are not able to respond within the next 7 days.

Today's date : _____ principal signature : _____

School : Port Augusta West Primary School

Please return this entire page to the principal in an envelope or folded, addressed to the principal

Attention the principal

In reply to your letter, I wish to say that my child _____ did not attend school or was late on the above dates because :

Signed (parent/caregiver) _____ Parent name printed _____ Date _____

CONFIDENTIAL ATTENTION TO :

**THIRD NOTICE
HOME VISIT**

Dear Parent / Carer,

Today we visited your home to seek an explanation for the absence of your child _____ from school, however you were not at home. Please provide the reasons below and return to school within the next 7 days. In the event that we do not hear from you within 7 days, the following action may be taken to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of your child.

- SA Police may visit you at your home to conduct a child welfare check, to ensure your child is safe.
- The matter may be referred to SA Education Department for investigation.
- The Department for Child Protection may contact you to discuss your child's safety.

They are recorded as being **absent from / late to** (delete which) school on the following dates :

Today's date : _____ principal signature : _____

School : Port Augusta West Primary School

Please return this entire page to the principal in an envelope or folded, addressed to the principal

Attention to the principal

In reply to your letter, I wish to say that my child _____ did not attend school or was late on the above dates because :

Signed (parent/caregiver) _____ Parent name printed _____ Date _____