KEITHCOT FARM ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed by staff January 2020

RATIONALE

At Keithcot Farm Primary School we believe a high level of attendance for every student is critical in supporting their social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. We are therefore committed to developing policies and practices that encourage students to attend school every day on time. Research shows that success in learning is directly proportional to regular attendance and participation in education programs. The Keithcot Farm Attendance Policy places priority on the early identification of non-attendance and irregular attendance, and outlines practices to support regular attendance of students.

LEGALITIES

The *Education Act 1972* requires that children of compulsory school age be enrolled at school. A condition of that enrolment is that a student is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school. Such participation is to include engagement and attendance as required by the program.

A child who is at least 6 years old but not yet 16 is of compulsory school age. Every child of compulsory school age is required to be enrolled at a government or non-government school or the Open Access College and is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school.

POLICY STATEMENT

In partnership with families, Keithcot Farm Primary will provide an educational program that promotes attendance and engagement for all children enrolled.

Staff members will actively intervene when attendance and engagement patterns indicate that learners are at risk of not realising their educational and social development potential.

POLICY OUTCOMES

Implementation of this policy will result in the following outcomes:

- Improvement in children's attendance and participation- aiming for 95%.
- Improvement in learning outcomes
- Increased understanding of the importance of regular attendance by staff, students and families
- Increased understanding of responsibilities in relation to attendance
- Ongoing analysis of attendance data

STRATEGIES

Wave 1- classroom based

- Engaging instruction and curriculum that is differentiated to the needs of all students
- Regular communication home to families- email, phone calls.
- Welcoming school environment – friendly front office staff, appealing grounds, school values
- Attendance information provided to staff and families- brochure in information pack
- Teacher monitoring and recording student attendance

Wave 2- small group chronic or habitual non-attendance

- School meetings and site initiated Attendance Plan written with parents
- *Conversations with the young person on the days they do attend school. What are the barriers for them? When a child is at school (and they are missing a lot of days or chronically late) it is a priority for the school wellbeing leader or other support person to take some time to speak to them in a purposeful way and to ask them what is getting in the way of getting to school*
- Agency partnerships- termly meetings with Social Worker Attendance and Engagement
- Agency partnerships- Child Wellbeing Practitioner support
- Referrals to family mental health services ie UCWB, CAMHS and other assistive organisations
- Building strong partnerships with parents
- Letters sent home to families after 10 days accumulated absence to alert that this places their child at educational risk.
- Home Visits if required
- Negotiated programs

Wave 3

- DECD ROCs (Record of Consultation) and RAS (Request for Additional support) with Social Worker Attendance and Engagement
- Case management by Wellbeing Leader and Agency staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES and PROCEDURES

FAMILIES

The primary legal responsibility for attendance rests with the parent/carer. Parents are responsible for getting their children to and from school every day, on time. Children must attend school on every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason for being absent. Parents must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance. If your child is going to be away from school, please contact us via any of the following:

Email: dl.1847_info@schools.sa.edu.au

SMS: 04 0848 2972

Phone: 8289 1133

Or a note in child's diary/ communication book.

If your child arrives late at school, i.e. after 8:50am, please enter through the front office and collect a late form. If an adult is not with their child the reason for lateness is recorded as unexplained, unless the student has a signed note from their parent/caregiver or the office has been contacted.

TEACHERS

Teachers enter attendance on the school management system- Sentral, each morning. Students not present are recorded as absent. Teachers must check with late students that they have reported to the front office.

Teachers monitor student attendance and contact families (*This provides a more personalised contact where this teacher has specific knowledge of the young person's relationships and the things they may be missing*). If there are 3 days in a week that are unexplained or if a pattern of non-attendance is emerging, teachers record in Sentral their contact with family. If no contact is able to be made after multiple attempts (ie phone call in morning and afternoon, note home in diary/email) or satisfactory reasons provided, this child is deemed 'at-risk' and referred to leadership.

Teachers working with leadership and families on chronic non-attenders/lateness are required to document a dot point record of follow up and teacher actions. This will go in the student's file at the end of each term.

See Appendix 1

Note: *Education Department defines Habitual Non-Attendance* as a student with 5 or more absences per term (average of 1 day per fortnight) and
Chronic Non-Attendance: Where a student is absent for 10 days or more per term **explained or unexplained** (average of 1 day per week). This places students 'at-risk'.

Teachers will monitor if 10 days accumulated absence for any reason that occurs in a term. Teachers will communicate to Wellbeing Leader if they feel this leave hasn't been explained satisfactorily. A letter (example attached and saved in K:drive Attendance will be sent home by leader once notified by teacher that 10 days absence has occurred in a term that are not explained satisfactorily (ie even if sickness or family reasons given but the reasons are seemingly chronic/habitual without resolve)

See Appendix 2

See Appendix 3

See Appendix 4

During the term teachers are required to follow up unexplained absences by phone call, email or sending a letter generated in Sentral (see steps for accessing this below) that allows family's to explain any outstanding unexplained absences for the term.

See appendix 5

On the last day of each term teachers will be given an end of term absence report for their class. Teachers are required to check and sign off on this legal document.

OFFICE STAFF

Office staff check Sentral each morning for any unexplained absences. They cross check with emails, texts and phone calls from families who may have notified the school about their child's absence. Office staff then send a text to families of students with an unexplained absence and record that contact has been made. Office staff will generate attendance reports mid and end of term as well as at leadership request, to monitor for habitual and chronic non-attendance and lateness. Office staff and teachers will monitor for patterns of lateness and absence. They will notify leadership when 10 days or more are reached in a term.

Office staff generate the end of term absence report and provide to teachers.

LEADERSHIP/WELLBEING LEADER

When referred a student 'at-risk' a member of the leadership team responsible for attendance (Wellbeing Leader) will make contact with the family by phone call, then letters 1, 2 and 3 (see appendix) then home-visit if no contact is able to be made. They will document interventions, strategies, and contact made and include these in the student's file via Attendance Record Sheet (see appendix).

A letter will be sent home after 10 days accumulated absence in a term. If attendance does not improve then an Attendance Plan will be written up with families. If no further improvement then referral/RAS (Request for Additional Support) will be made to Truancy Social Worker.

The leadership team will refer families to the DfE Truancy officer if attendance issues are not resolved at the school level

INFORMATION FROM SENIOR ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER OCT 2017

The Education Act states that we should be doing everything practicable to reengage children and their families with school. Breaking this down, what are some of the ways we can connect and engage?

Contact methods

1. *Phone calls, texts or email from administration on days when the child is absent*
2. *Phone call to the guardian by teacher, home teacher or coordinator – whoever is most appropriate, to try to ascertain the barriers to attendance. This provides a more personalised contact where this teacher has specific knowledge of the young person's relationships and the things they may be missing).*
3. *Conversations with the young person on the days they do attend school. What are the barriers for them? When a child is at school (and they are missing a lot of days) it is a priority for the school counsellor or other support person to take some time to speak to them in a purposeful way and to ask them what is getting in the way of getting to school*
4. *It is also sometimes useful to call the emergency contacts when a child is missing school and there has been NO contact from the parents. This can be tricky but where you have concerns about a child's welfare it can be the only option. It is particularly useful if these contacts are a family member like a grandparent.*
5. *Letters to the parents explicitly stating their requirements in relation to the law. Escalating letters from less formal (asking for improvement), to more formal (asking them to attend a meeting).*

School meetings that identify the barriers to attendance and some solutions.

1. *A school meeting where the barriers can be talked about and support offered, may include a plan to manage anything from:*
For the child - investigation into what the child may be feeling at school, bullying, anxiety, motivation and incentives at school. Encouraging student independence in getting to school, part –time return to school, increase in connections and relationships. Enrolment in a Flexible learning program.

   For the parents – what are the parental issues? Which services can they go to for support, (suggesting a GP for referral to psychologists, pamphlets for services like Relationships Australia),

   It is beneficial to leave this meeting with some agreed actions. It is good to have the young person present for part or all of the meeting.

2. *Review meetings – make a time at the first meeting to review how things are going.*

Home Visiting

1. *Where parents don't attend a planned meeting, then a home visit may be necessary.*
The intention of a home visit is to try to engage the family to talk about the barriers to attendance.

2. *If a child has not been at school for 4 weeks and therefore you haven't seen them, it is appropriate to ask to see them and to check on their wellbeing. This can be done with a home visit or by asking the parent to bring them in to be sighted.*

Other important information.

· *At any point in the process you might return to one of the previous steps.*

· *In cases where you have concerns for the child you are also able to make a Child Protection Notification – it falls into the category of neglect.*

· *I would recommend as a school, that you gather some resources from your local support services that can be provided to parents or young people who need extra support.*

Appendix 1

Site Based Attendance Plan

Appendix 2

Letter 1: Informal

Appendix 3

Letter 2: More formal

Appendix 4

Letter re lateness

Appendix 5

Instructions for creating Sentral generated letter