

School Attendance Agreement

(this agreement is accompanied by the LMN Preschool Attendance Agreement).

In the Lower Mid North B-12 Partnership we believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling and reach their full potential. Our aim is to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality identifies students who may be at risk and allows the implementation of intervention strategies

Student attendance is everyone's business and all members of each site community are expected to meet the requirements of attendance.

DECD requirements

Children are required to attend school from when they enrol until they turn 16 (Section 76 of the Education Act 1972). Children aged 16 must participate full-time in an approved learning program (Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Act 2007), unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no compulsion to attend school once a child turns 17 or is 16 years old and has achieved a qualification under an approved learning program.

All children are required to attend every day that instruction is provided, unless prior exemption has been granted. Students who are under six years of age are expected and encouraged to attend school every day from when they are enrolled.

The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Children Department and therefore all sites within the LMN B-12 partnership. All Partnership sites therefore have a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of poor attendance. All school staff are responsible for encouraging students to remain in school and work closely with parents and guardians to maximise learning opportunities.

Parent/Caregiver's responsibilities

- + Parents/Caregivers are responsible for getting their children to and from schools on time, every day that instruction is offered.
- + Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance within a reasonable time. Ideally this explanation should be on the day of absence or within 3 days. This can be by a written note, a telephone call, text, email, site based digital program or in person.
- + If children are absent for medical reasons it is preferable that a medical certificate be provided to the school or pre-school.
- + Parents/Carers must let the school know if an extended absence of 5 days or longer is likely. If the absence is planned Parents/Carers will need to apply to the site leader for an exemption at least a week before the extended absence.
- + If an absence from school is sought for longer than one month Parents/Carers will need to apply to the school for an exemption from DECD with the principal's endorsement, at least one prior to exemption period.
- + Work with their student's school on intervention strategies to improve student attendance.

Teacher's responsibilities

- + Provide a relevant and engaging learning environment for all students, making them feel welcome and valued.
- + Monitor and record each child's attendance daily as per site processes ensuring accurate recording.
- + Ensure all unexplained student absences, for their class, of 3 days or more are followed up.
- + Take part in designing and implementing attendance improvement plans and strategies for improvement of students who have poor attendance patterns.

Teacher's and Leadership responsibilities

- + Teachers and Leaders ensure intervention occurs after 10 days of accumulated absence or sooner if a poor attendance pattern is evident, including late arrivals and those who leave early, recording details of any strategies/interventions in student files.
- + Teachers and Leaders develop an attendance support plan for students with attendance concerns.
- + Teachers and Leaders establish practices to recognise students with good attendance rates eg awards, positive information in newsletters.
- + Teachers and Leaders refer to the DECD Student Attendance Officer if attendance issues are not resolved within agreed attendance plans ensuring records of all interventions and actions taken (letters, meetings) and outcomes are maintained.

Principal's responsibilities

Principal has authority to approve applications for exemption from school attendance for periods of up to one month.

- + Principal has the authority to recommend/not recommend applications for exemption from school attendance for periods over a month, which needs to be submitted to DECD for approval.
- + Make Mandatory Notification as appropriate, document and store as per DECD procedure.

Partnership responsibilities

Continue to examine analyse and take action on attendance data sets at partnership level at least twice a year.

Ensure links are made between leaders of sites with low attendance rates and those with higher attendance rates to both build leader capacity and better attendance rates across the partnership.

Useful DECD resources

STUDENT ATTENDANCE Data Management & Information Systems Fact Sheet Version 7 – March 2016; Attendance in schools information from DECD website; DECD Attendance Policy April 2009

