MARK OLIPHANT COLLEGE

Mark Oliphant College Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy

Research shows that attendance at school all day and every day positively affects learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people. Learning is cumulative and it is disrupted if students often miss school. At Mark Oliphant College the engagement and wellbeing of our students is a shared responsibility amongst all staff where collectively we work together to support all young people to reach their full potential.

School attendance and the law

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education and Children's Services Act 2019 states that all children must attend school from 6 until they turn 17. This could be in a school or an approved learning program.

Parents or legal guardians (carers) can be prosecuted if they do not make sure their child goes to school. This can mean being fined or getting a criminal conviction.

The department's attendance policy

The South Australian Department for Education's Attendance Policy guides the responsibilities of the whole school community to make sure that children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers and students.

Schools work with their community to develop positive attendance habits. This starts from the earliest years. Schools do this when they provide a safe, inclusive and culturally respectful environment. Schools use effective and consistent local practices to monitor and manage absences.

Students at risk from missing school

Students can be away from school for many reasons. Schools use descriptive categories to identify children and young people at risk. We make sure that appropriate follow up and support is provided.

- **Habitual non-attendance:** a student has 5 to 9 days absent in a term for any reason.
- **Chronic non-attendance:** a student has 10 or more days absent in a term for any reason.

How we implement the department's attendance policy

At Mark Oliphant College our attendance practices align with the department's attendance policy.

We support student attendance when we:

- promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout school
- assess patterns of non-attendance and develop ways to address this.
- actively engage and include all children, young people and their families.
- provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing.
- monitor attendance to make sure progress is documented and supports are in place.
- evaluate the need for further or ongoing support and referral for additional support.
- We use data to create our attendance improvement plans. This is in partnership with our community. Our plan includes the actions we will take to make sure all students can attend school.
- We have a clearly defined attendance improvement process to ensure all students and families are supported to attend school regularly (appendix a).

Mark Oliphant College's attendance expectations

School starts at 8:50am each day and finishes at 3:10pm.

Sometimes it's different:

- Wednesday - early dismissal 2:20pm

A parent or carer must provide an explanation if their child is late or has to leave early. Explanations should be provided, by the parent or carer, to Student Services when children sign in or out.

Attendance responsibilities

Everyone has a role to make sure students attend school all day, every day.

Students

- Attend school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Arrive at school and to all lessons and activities on time.
- Participate positively in all learning activities.
- Report to Student Services (Secondary) or the Front Office (Primary) if they arrive late or leave early. A parent or carer will be contacted.

Note: a student's age and circumstances affect the level of responsibility.

Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day the school is open, unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Make sure their child arrives at school on time, between 8:30am and 8:50am.
- Provide the school with up-to-date contact details.
- Provide a reason to the school if their child is absent, late or leaving early on the same day through phone call, email or Daymap.
- Contact the school at a minimum 15 minutes in advance if their child is leaving early to allow time for children to be bought to the office to sign out.
- Provide a medical certificate or written explanation if their child is ill for 3 or more days in a row.
- Make appointments outside of school hours if possible.

Teachers, Non Teaching Staff and Leadership Team

Non Teaching Staff

- Accurately record each absence, late arrival or early departure with the appropriate code.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence, or a pattern of absences.
- Undertake home visits for students that have not been sighted for a period of 4 weeks where it is safe to do so.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact.
- Request a medical certificate from parents or carers if needed.
- Consult with the local Student Support Services if needed. For example, Social Work, Truancy for students that are not attending school regularly.

- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse & Neglect (RRHAN-EC) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide.
- Follow the procedure outlined in the attendance process (appendix A).

Teachers

- Monitor and support the engagement and wellbeing of students including engaging with and documenting contact with parents and carers, including attempts to contact.
- Make sure that class rolls are completed in the first fifteen minutes of lesson.
- Follow the procedure outlined in the attendance process (appendix A).

Leadership Team

- Make sure all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies and procedures.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence, or a pattern of absences.
- Undertake home visits for students that have not been sighted for a period of 4 weeks where it is safe to do so.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact.
- Request a medical certificate from parents or carers if needed.
- Develop Attendance Improvement Plans and Flexible Learning Programs to support young people that aren't attending school regularly.
- Consult with the local Student Support Services if needed. For example, Social Work, Truancy for students that are not attending school regularly.
- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse & Neglect (RRHAN-EC) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide.
- Follow the procedure outlined in the attendance process (appendix A).

Authorisation of exemptions

In some circumstances, the principal has authority to approve an exemption from school. This can be for up to 1 month. It can also be for up to 12 months for a family holiday.

Parents or carers can apply for an exemption from school attendance for the following reasons:

- family travel or holidays
- medical or health reasons
- home education
- full-time employment
- disability or behaviour concerns requiring part time exemption from school.

Before asking for an exemption, families should talk to the relevant Head of School. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved.

Our school requires an exemption for absences more than 5 school days in a row. This does not include illness.

Parents or carers must apply in writing. The Principal will advise them in writing of their decision. A copy is kept in the student record folder. Forms are available from Student Services.

Exemptions of more than 1 month (excluding holidays) must be approved by the department's central office.

Note: Exemptions are counted as student absences from school

For more information relating to exemptions please access the link below

SA.GOV.AU - Exemption from attending school

Flexible Learning Programs

What is a Flexible Learning Program (FLP)?
Flexible Learning Programs are a reduced timetable for students who have a barrier to attending full time that has a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. FLP programs are reviewed twice per term with the date stated when the program commences. These programs can then be extended pending the outcome of the review meeting. The intention of these programs is to support students to engage back into full time learning or pathways that support their future, still retaining full access to school support services with focussed wrap around support.

Who is an FLP for?
FLP is for students who have a significant wellbeing concern impacting their ability to engage with a full-time program, challenges with self-regulation, complex family situations, seeking alternative pathways to enter the workforce or re-engagement after a lengthy absence and other barriers to learning as negotiated.

Who can implement an FLP?
The Heads of School oversee and approve the implementation of FLP programs with delegacy designated by the principal who has the final sign off. This is in consultation with specified leaders in the school (Year level Managers and Wellbeing Leaders) who may take on case management responsibilities of students who are on an FLP. Respective leaders under the direction of the relevant Head of School will assign and manage the FLP Contract.

Procedure for FLP Implementation:
1.   FLP leaders respond to staff/family concerns and triage students who may be eligible to transition to an FLP program.
2.   FLP leaders and other relevant staff meet with student and parent/Caregiver to discuss, negotiate and sign the FLP Contract.
The meeting includes a discussion about the student engaging with a support program or additional support i.e. Youth Worker, Counsellor, Psychologist, Pastoral Care Worker or external service/agency. It also includes an agreement that the student will engage in online learning in the blocks they are not at school.
3.   FLP Contract written
4.   Relevant Head of School, Parent/Caregiver and Student and Principal sign the FLP Contract
5.   FLP contract uploaded to Daymap as an attachment on a pinned FLP note
6.   Classroom teachers notified of FLP via Daymap email by the FLP leader
7.   Assistant Principal of Timetabling notified of timetable for attendance recording/implementation of modified timetable
8.   Copy of FLP put in student file
9.   FLP leader to review the program on the review date in conjunction with parent/caregiver

Procedure for FLP Review:

- n review date, the FLP Leader will work through the following questions and connect with other support teams/staff as required.
    - ➢ Review of student engagement with the FLP conditions that they were required to demonstrate during the contract period
    - ➢ Has the student connected with the additional support agreed to (internal/external)?
    - ➢ Does the student and family think the FLP is meeting the needs of the student?
    - ➢ Does their timetable need to stay the same, or incorporate amendments for an additional five-week period? r are they ready to increase time at school or transition into an alternative pathway?
    - ➢ Programs that have very limited onsite contact, should have clear documentation of a range of support strategies and programs that the student can access with the intent to justify full the equivalent of time support they would get from being onsite.

If a student has not successfully engaged with the program during the five weeks, they are removed from FLP and referred to the Social Work Duty Line or alternative services. This may involve being marked 'left' if the student is over the age of compulsion (17). Home visits or Welfare checks will occur if a student has not been sighted as per standard Department for Education procedure.
Administrative process

● FLP plans need to be signed off by all parties, with the relevant Heads of School completing the final sign off through the principal.
    - ➢ Mainstream FLP plans are then submitted to the Assistant Principal of Timetabling for coding on Daymap and put in student file.
    - ➢ Codes will be Home study which will appear as 'Not at school' on the contract timetable. If this is a block that occurs during the day between lessons they attend, this will be coded 'School Activity'. Staff can refer to FLP contract for full details.
    - ➢ *In rare instances a student may be withdrawn from a class all together (eg. meeting SACE pattern due to VET). Please specify this via email in the communication to the Assistant Principal of Timetabling.
● FLP delegate communicates the plan to staff - this should be added to Daymap as a pinned Daymap Note and sent as Daymap email to all current teachers. Use record: '+Add > Note> Flexible Learning Program'. Set Date of commencement, link to FLP (can also attach PDF) and review date.

Mark Oliphant College Attendance Process Flow Chart

Wave 1 (80%–100%)

Daily attendance text message is sent home via ASO at 10am

No response from Parent/Guardian received

Parent/Guardian responds with a reason explaining the absence

ASO amends attendance on Daymap and moves message to archive folder in school inbox

ASO attempts to contact home for all students with unexplained absences in the previous week via a phone call . ASO accesses this information through the Daymap Attendance Map.

No response from Parent/Guardian received

Parent/Guardian responds with a reason explaining the absence

Attempted contact is logged on Daymap as a attendance record

ASO updates attendance on Daymap and ASO documents contact home as an attendance record.

If no response or attendance drops below 80% move to Wave 2 Processes

Wave 2 (Habitual (50%–80%)

A student receives Wave 2 supports when they are absent 3-5 days or their attendance drops below 80%. Where there has been no communication/response about previous absences or previous absences are demonstrating patterns of concern. Please note at this stage the ASO is to keep attempting to contact home weekly via phone call or text message with all attempts to be logged on Daymap.

Once the ASO makes contact with the family they will make a time for the family to meet with a relevant leader/ Youth Worker and put the meeting time in the leader/ YW calendar and log as an attendance record.

Leader/ Youth Worker will meet with the student and family and develop and attendance improvement plan.

If the meeting is not attended or there is no improvement made in relation to attendance the ASO will send an attendance letter home with another time to meet with a relevant leader.

If no response or attendance drops below 50% move to Wave 3 Processes

Wave 3 (Chronic below 0%–50%)

A student receives Wave 3 supports when they are absent for 5-10 consecutive days, or their overall attendance drops below 50%. Where there has been no communication/response about previous absence or previous absences are demonstrating very concerning patterns.

ASO continues to attempt contacting home and seeks support from other leaders as needed (Head of School, Wellbeing Leaders, Inclusion Leaders, Assistant Principals) ensuring all attempts of contact are entered on Daymap as a attendance record

Leader/ YW managing the students attendance to complete an ECARL and repeat each fortnight the student is not sighted and/or engaging in a learning program.

Leader and ASO or other delegated staff member attempts home visit ensuring students are sighted every 4 weeks.

Once student is sighted student and family are invited into the school to complete an Attendance Improvement Plan or FLP

If unsuccessful student is referred to Social Work Truancy by the ASO and the Z code is used until such a time that the student is sighted and plans are put in place to reengage with school or they are approved to be made where-abouts unknown (if missing) by SWT. (Z code can be used for a maximum of 50 days and after 9 consecutive days absent)

If student has prolonged absences and is not reengaging with school or they are whereabouts unknown they are removed from classes and added to the relevant HoS roll. The HoS will be responsible for maintaining this roll and liaising with other leaders/ ASO to put in place plans for the student