Penola High School

Attendance Policy

Rationale
In South Australia it is compulsory for children between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school. Parents or guardians are responsible for making sure children go to school. Parents or guardians can be fined if they persistently and knowingly do not send children to school.

Students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully in and gain maximum benefit from the educational experience.

Responsibilities
Students are asked to:
- Arrive punctually at school.
- Attend every day when instruction is offered unless the school receives a valid reason.
- Provide teachers/SSOs with an appropriate explanation (a letter or SMS message from a parent or caregiver) to explain absence, lateness, early departure, leaving school grounds.
- Report to the Front Office and log onto the incidental Absence Manager if arriving later or leaving earlier than normal school hours. 8.40am – 3.15pm. (Years 8 - 11 students require supporting notes for this.)

Parents are asked to:
- Actively encourage students to attend school.
- Notify the school regarding any absence. A written explanation or an SMS text message to the school is required.
- Respond via return SMS, upon receipt of an absence message from the school.
- Arrange for work to be sent home, if appropriate.

Teachers are asked to:
- Accurately complete home group and class rolls.
- Home group and lessons 1 and 2 must be marked by 9.45am.
- Encourage students to attend regularly by expressing appropriate support and interest.
- Coordinate the collection of work to be sent home for absent students.
- Verify notes regarding absences initial them and retain copies and provide copies to front office staff.
- Inform the student counsellor of any unacceptable absences, when there has been no information gained from a telephone conversation with parents and/or any irregular attendance pattern, including repeated lateness.

The Student Counsellor is asked to:
- Send SMS to parents/caregivers in case of unexplained absences.
- Investigate any irregular attendance problems and clarify the position to parents and staff.
- Ensure the smooth return of students into classes after extended absences.
- Document all strategies put in place to encourage chronic non-attenders.
- Refer specific cases to the Student Attendance Counsellor, as appropriate.
- Manage Sentral – student absences and unmarked rolls.

The Principal is asked to:
- Ensure the roll is accurately maintained.
- Consult with DECD support staff as required.
- Manage the process where an exemption from attendance is sought.
Summary of the Processes to be used in the Case of Student Absence

Student absence

- Explained appropriate action taken
- Unexplained or inappropriate
  - SMS message sent to parents mobile phone
    - Absence explained
    - Absence unexplained for 3 consecutive days
      - Home Group Teachers to call home
        - No replay or inappropriate response
          - Appropriate action taken
          - LSC to home visit with support person (possibly SAO)
            - Response to message
              - Appropriate action taken
                - Students under 17
                  - Student/Parent conference
                    - Attendance Officer
                  - Initiation of cessation of enrolment for 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence, referral by appropriate Year Level Organiser
                - Students 17 and over