

Mount Barker High School Attendance Policy

Research shows that attendance at school 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.

Legal Requirements

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education and Children's Services Act 2019 requires all children to attend school from 6 years until they turn 17 years of age. This can be in a school or an approved learning program. Parents or legal guardians (carers) can be prosecuted if they do not ensure their child attends school, which may result in fines or being guilty of an offence.

Department for Education's Attendance Policy and Procedure

The South Australian Department for Education's Attendance Policy and Attendance at School Procedure guide the responsibilities of the whole school community to ensure that children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers, and students. It is mandatory for department employees to record, monitor, and follow up on student attendance.

Mount Barker High School is committed to working with our community to develop positive attendance habits by providing a safe, inclusive, and culturally respectful environment. We use effective and consistent local practices to record, monitor and manage absences.

Students at risk from missing school

Students can be away from school for many reasons. Schools use categories to identify children and young people at risk. We ensure that appropriate follow-up and support are 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.

Implementation of the Department's Attendance Policy

At Mount Barker High School, our attendance practices align with the department's Attendance Policy. We support student attendance by:

- Promoting the importance of education throughout school.
- Assessing patterns of non-attendance and developing targeted interventions.
- Actively engaging and including all children, young people, and their families.
- Providing support to address barriers to attendance, learning, and wellbeing.
- Monitoring attendance to ensure risks are identified and supports are in place.
- Evaluating the need for further or ongoing interventions and referrals.

We use data to create attendance improvement plans in partnership with our community. These plans include actions to ensure all students can attend school.

Mount Barker High School's Attendance Expectations

School starts at 8:40 am each day and finishes at 3:15 pm, except for each Wednesday when dismissal occurs at 2 pm. A parent or carer must provide an explanation if their child arrives late to school or has to leave early. All students must sign in and out via the Student Hub.

Attendance Responsibilities

Students

- Attend school every day unless ill, have an authorised reason or an approved exemption.
- Arrive on time for all lessons and activities.
- Participate positively in all learning activities.
- Report to the Student Hub if arriving late or leaving early.

Parents and Carers

- Ensure their child attends school every day unless ill, have an authorised reason or an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Ensure their child arrives on time, between 8.30 am and 8.40 am.
- Provide up-to-date contact details.
- Provide reasons for absences, lateness, or early departures on the same day, if possible.
- Provide a medical certificate for absences of three or more consecutive days due to illness.
- Schedule appointments outside school hours if possible.
- Monitor attendance via DayMap, Parent portal.

Staff

- Ensure all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies, and procedures.
- Accurately record absences, late arrivals, or early departures on DayMap.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence or a pattern of absences.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences.
- Request medical certificates if needed.
- Consult with Student Support Services if required.
- Make mandatory notifications as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.
- Contact parents or carers within three days of a child's absence.

Authorisation of Exemptions

In some circumstances, the principal can approve an exemption from school for up to one month, or up to 12 months for a family holiday. Families should discuss with a site leader or delegate before requesting an exemption. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved.

Exemptions for absences of more than five consecutive school days require written application. The principal will provide a written decision, and a copy will be kept in the student record folder. Exemptions of more than one month (excluding holidays) must be approved by the central delegate in the Department for Education. Exemptions are counted as student absences.

Cultural Considerations

We support students from diverse backgrounds and ensure cultural considerations are respected in relation to attendance.

Support for Students with Disabilities and Tailored Learning

We provide tailored support for students with disabilities, special needs or significant barriers to ensure regular attendance.

Review and Evaluation

The attendance policy is reviewed annually by the Mount Barker High School executive team to ensure effectiveness and relevance.

Community Engagement

We engage with the community through initiatives and programs aimed at supporting student attendance and fostering a collaborative environment.