

## Frequently Asked Questions

What are acceptable reasons for school absences?

Acceptable Reasons	Unacceptable Reasons
Illness Essential appointment Injury Infectious disease Bereavement Principal approved absence	Birthdays Visiting relatives Out of school sports Helping parents at home Weather (i.e too hot) Holidays (unless prior approval granted)

Must I send my child to school?

Yes: all children between the ages of 0 and 5<sup>1</sup> are required by law to attend school regularly.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances the minimum acceptable attendance rate for the school year is 93%. If your child is, missing more than 3 days per term they will not be meeting the expected attendance requirements.

Is regular attendance important?

Yes from the first day!  
If students miss the basic skills in the early years of school, they often experience difficulties later on. It has been shown that irregular attendance in the Junior Primary and Primary years often leads to the development of poor attendance at secondary school.

Should I notify the school if my child refuses to go to school?

Yes: you should contact the Principal and seek assistance immediately.

What kind of assistance is available?

There are many staff members who can assist you if attendance is an issue for your child. You can discuss your concerns with your child's class teacher or Principal. If the problem persists, Student Attendance Counsellors, based at the DECD Support Services Elizabeth Office, can provide additional support to school students and their parent/caregivers to maintain regular patterns of school attendance.

At the beginning of each term

Attendance awards will be handed to those who meet the 93% school goal and

Attendance reports will be sent home

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Government of South Australia

Department for Education

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Care Respect Personal Growth

Attendance



At Hampstead Primary School everyone has the right to an education.

**Compulsory enrolment and attendance at school**

Under the Education Act of South Australia, parents and/or caregivers are held responsible for the regular attendance of all children in their care.

There are legal implications for those parents who are unable to demonstrate they are meeting this responsibility.

## Facts About Attendance

- Missing one day a week of school from reception to year 10 means missing more than two years of schooling.
- Being half an hour late to school each day from reception to year 10 equals missing over one year of schooling.
- Being absent five days a term from reception to year 10 adds up to more than one year of missed schooling.
- There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement.
- Frequent absences make it difficult for teachers who have to continually re-teach information and skills.
- Patterns of attendance/absence are set up in the early years of schooling.
- Poor attendance makes it difficult for students to form positive relationships with their peers.
- Research shows that students who are often absent from school are more likely to end up homeless, are over represented in the Juvenile Justice System and likely to earn less than their peers as adults. Girls who are frequently absent from school are over-represented in the statistics for teen pregnancies.
- School staff will contact you if regular absences occur or there are unexplained absences.



## Responsibilities for Parent/Caregiver

- Children must arrive at school between 8.30am and 8.45am and head to classes when the first bell rings at 8:40am.
- Children must be picked up at 3:05pm.
- Children must attend school every day unless the school receives a valid reason for absence (e.g. illness).
- Parents/caregivers must provide the school with an appropriate explanation for the student's non-attendance via note, phone, email or medical certificate.

### Late Arrivals/Early Pickups

- Up until 9:00am if a student is late for school, he/she must report immediately to his/her class.
- If a student arrives after 9:00am the parent/caregiver must sign the '**Late Arrival Register**' at the front office. The late arrival slip will be issued to the student to forward onto the teacher.
- An explanation for lateness must be given by parent/caregiver in person or via a note, email or phone call.
- Parents/caregivers must notify the school if an extended absence is likely and if the school needs to arrange work at home for the student.
- Parents/caregivers are to report to the front office and sign the '**Early Departure Register**' if taking the student from the school before the 3:05pm bell/siren. After signing the '**Early Departure Register**' the front office staff will issue the parent/caregiver with an early departure slip which is given to the class teacher by the parent/caregiver collecting the student.

## Unexplained Absences

- The Education Department requires a reason for every student absence.
- To maintain accurate school attendance records we need to be notified by phone, in person or by a signed note about your child's absence from school.
- The school will follow up unexplained absences in accordance with Hampstead Primary School's Attendance Procedures.

### Short Family Holidays During School Term

- Parents/caregivers should complete an application for exemption from school form and forward to the principal giving relevant details of the holiday. Exemption forms are available from the front office. Parents will be notified in writing if the temporary exemption has not been approved.
- Parents should try to organise holidays within the school holiday period.

### Illness/Medical Appointments

- Wherever possible, dental and medical appointments should be made out of school hours.
- If your child has seen a medical practitioner, a note from the practitioner will help.
- A doctor's certificate is required for absences of 3 days or more.

### Family Reasons

- Sometime there may be family reasons why a student is not able to attend school. However, an ongoing pattern of absences due to family reasons is concerning and may require a meeting being organised to discuss what supports can be put in place to minimise the student's time away from school for family reasons.