

Modbury Special School ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

At **Modbury Special School (MSS)** we work in partnership with families to provide children with special learning opportunities that will equip them with the skills and abilities for meaningful and rewarding participation in the community at the completion of their schooling. Research shows that success in learning is directly related to regular attendance and participation in education programs. Patterns of attendance and absence that are set up in the early years usually persist through education and life. Regular attendance at school is important to a child's learning and development. Poor attendance may lead to a lack of the skills and abilities required by our children to be active, participatory members of the wider community.

At MSS we understand that our students experience a range of issues directly related to their disability which may impact on their attendance. We are always prepared to work with families to address issues which may impact attendance.

LEGALITIES

A child who is at least 6 years old but not yet 16 is of compulsory school age. Children who are not yet 17 are still required to participate in a full time learning program which may be outside of school (e.g. TAFE). Every child of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether disabled or not, is required to be enrolled at a government or non-government school and is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Schools/ Leadership

- The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that attendance records are maintained and monitored at school.
- The student's teacher and/or the Principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.
- Schools are required to advise DECD Attendance Officers if student absences exceed 10 consecutive days (particularly if unexplained) in order to follow up what is considered to be 'excessive' absences and 'persistent' lateness.

Parent/Caregiver

- Parents/Caregivers must enrol their child in an education program from 6 years (the age of compulsion).
- Enable their child to attend punctually and regularly. School children are expected to arrive at school no earlier than 8:30am and no later than 9.00am.
- Arrange pick up and care of students at 3pm (no later than 3.20pm).
- The primary responsibility of a student's attendance rests with the parent/caregiver.
- Provide explanation of failure by a student to fully participate in their education program by providing a written explanation for that absence or by contacting the school within a reasonable time. Ideally, for safety reasons, this explanation should be received on the day of the absence or within three days of the commencement of the absence at the latest.
- Let the school know if an extended absence is likely and negotiate with the principal if a temporary exemption from attendance is required.
- When a child is late for school it is appropriate that the parent/caregiver explains the reason for the lateness.
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve punctuality and attendance if required.

Children

Children enrolled in school have responsibility related to their attendance. The level of responsibility is determined by individual circumstances (i.e. degree of disability). With the support of our specially trained staff and specialised programs, children are expected to participate appropriately in the education program.