Attendance Policy

RATIONALE

Recent research clearly shows the need to engage students and establish positive attendance behaviours in the early years of schooling and to raise parent and community awareness of the fact that, where academic achievement is concerned, every day counts. Phoenix Primary School recognises that students need to attend school on a regular basis to gain the maximum benefit from schooling in order to optimise their life opportunities. At Phoenix Primary School we understand that for maximum transfer of knowledge 95% attendance is necessary. Attendance rates lower than 95% could impact on student performance.

At Phoenix Primary School there is an expectation that once enrolled, students will attend on a regular basis, and positive attendance patterns will be fostered.

GUIDELINES

NOTIFICATION

The School Education Act 1999 requires that an explanation of a student's absence is provided within three school days from the start of the absence.

Parents can notify the school on the day the student is absent, either in person, by phone, email (from the school website), SMS or a written note. All records will be maintained electronically on Integris and in physical form.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Phoenix Primary School will ensure that accurate attendance records are kept for each student enrolled at the school. This includes recording attendance at both morning (by 9.00am) and afternoon (by 12pm) sessions for all students. See *Appendix 1* for codes to be used. Teachers will enter a note into the 'notes' section on Integris to give further information about the absence and initial the entry.

A student who arrives after 9.00am (or after the class lesson attendance has been completed) must report to the office to sign in. This will be recorded as L (Late) on Integris by office staff.
School Office staff will also be responsible for entering notes into Integris, when phone calls, SMS or emails are received through the front office.

If a student attends for any continuous 2 hour block before 12:30pm or after 12:30pm then it is considered that they are present. Students who arrive late but still meet this requirement are recorded as late and not included as a half-day absence.

Students who are on an excursion, participating in an off campus program or in some other school-approved activity are **not** to be counted as absent.

Students on suspension are to be recorded as absent during the period of suspension. The code Z will automatically appear on Integris.

Attendance records will be kept in electronic form and will be kept for a period of seven years.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Teaching staff will check the previous week's records, to ensure data entered is up to date and accurate.

When a student has been absent from school for two days and an acceptable explanation has not been forthcoming, the classroom teacher will contact the student's family to establish the reasons for non-attendance. If they are unable to make contact they will inform admin.

If a student's attendance rate falls below 90% over a ten-week period, the Phoenix Primary School Deputy Principal will inform parents of the child's attendance status in writing.

If a student's attendance rate falls below 80% over a ten-week period, the Phoenix Primary School Deputy Principal will further investigate the reasons why the student is not attending school.

Phoenix Primary School will use a case management approach for attendance issues, resulting in an Attendance Plan being written to assist improvement, if deemed necessary.

Phoenix Primary School will consult with all stakeholders, and access support from other community groups and agencies if required.

Phoenix Primary School will keep detailed records of all contact, or attempts to make contact, with the student's family and the intervention strategies implemented to restore a student's attendance.

DATA COLLECTIONS

Phoenix Primary School will present attendance data to the School Board periodically, as well as in the Annual Report.

STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE ATTENDANCE AT PHOENIX PRIMARY SCHOOL

Phoenix Primary School is responsible for promoting to parents the importance of their children attending school every day. The following strategies are implemented to enhance attendance:

1. Target setting through DoE processes. In particular, cohorts identified by the previous year's data.

2. Telephone call home from class teacher after 3 days of unexplained absences.

3. Letters sent to parents once per term asking for an explanation of unexplained absence.

4. Attendance letters for indicated, moderate and severe at-risk attendees that highlight the child's attendance.

5. Engaging and motivating curriculum.

6. Notifying the community about attendance issues in regular newsletter updates.

7. Fortnightly analysis of attendance data and parent contact made for students at risk, severe and moderate.

8. A case management approach wrapping additional support around students having attendance issues.

Appendix 1: Lesson Attendance Codes

Code	Who uses it	When to use it
Codes for students attending on or off site		
/	Office staff	Present code, this is the default setting in Lesson Attendance
E – Educational Activity	Teachers Office staff	This code should be used when the student is participating in an approved educational program off school site, such as an excursion, work placement or programs such as PEAC. This code is not classified as an absence.
M – Medical or Sick Bay	Office staff	This code should be applied to students when they are **on school grounds** in the medical or sick bay. This code is not classified as an absence. **Sick students that are not at school should be marked with an N – Notified as Sick**
W - Withdrawn	Office staff Teachers Admin	Where a student is withdrawn from school activities as a planned response to a breach of school discipline but is present at school. For example, when a student is sent to the office or a buddy class but is still at school. This code is not classified as an absence.
Codes for students who are late		
L - Late	Office staff	To be used when a student is late to school but is not late enough to be recorded as a half day absence. This code is not classified as an absence. NB: A student is absent if they have attended less than two full hours of continuous instruction.
Codes for Authorised Absences		
R – Reasonable Cause	Office staff Teachers	This code should be used when the principal has deemed the reason provided as acceptable other than an absence due to suspension, cultural absence, illness or family holiday (See code options below).
C – Cultural Absence	Office staff Teachers	Absences authorised for cultural or religious significance to the family such as funerals, sorry time and religious observances. The principal should negotiate the duration of this absence prior to it being taken. If the absence extends beyond the number of agreed days, and no acceptable reason is provided, the additional absences should be recorded with an X (Unacceptable Reason).
N – Notified as Sick	Office staff Teachers	Applied to a student whose reason for absence is due to illness. The principal may request a medical certificate.
V – Vacation	Office staff	This code may be used when the absence has been negotiated in advance and the principal is satisfied that reasonable grounds for authorising the absence apply. Completion of a work package during the period of absence may be requested by the principal.
Z – Suspended	Admin	This code is automatically recorded in Lesson Attendance by the Behaviour Module when a student is formally suspended. Schools do not have to record attendance for students when they are on suspension. This code is classified as an authorised absence.
Codes for Unauthorised Absences		
U – Absence – cause not yet established	Teachers	To be used when a student is initially absent from school and no explanation has yet been provided. Further follow up is required to establish a reason for the absence and once obtained, the code should be changed accordingly.
K – Unauthorised Vacation	Office staff Admin	This code identifies students whose parents have taken them on an in term holiday and the principal has not authorised the absence.
X – Unacceptable Reason	Admin	This code is used when the school has sought an explanation but the response from the parent is not considered reasonable, and the principal does not believe it satisfies the requirements of Section 25 of the School Education Act 1999.