



Sheoak Grove Primary School

2023 ATTENDANCE STRATEGY



Community Version

Expected Attendance

We understand that children sometimes need to be somewhere other than school. There could be many reasons for that. However, it is important that all our students maintain a regular attendance rate.

Attendance Categories

For public school students in Western Australia, there are four attendance categories:

- Regular Attendance
- Indicated At Risk
- Moderate Attendance
- Severe Attendance

Regular Attendance

Students maintain regular attendance if they have an attendance rate of 90% or above. Research clearly shows that this is the minimum attendance rate that students need to maintain if appropriate academic and social progress is to be achieved.

Maintaining a regular attendance still allows enough space for illness, family, or cultural absences to be factored into each student's school year.

Indicated At Risk

Students are identified as having an indicated at risk attendance rate when it falls into the 80% to 90% range across the course of the school year. At this category, **students are missing between 1 to 2 days of school per fortnight.**

At this rate, student engagement in learning becomes disjointed and inconsistent, posing difficulties for them to achieve to their potential. It also becomes difficult for students to stay engaged with their friendship groups.

Moderate Attendance

Students are identified as having a moderate attendance rate when it falls into the 60% to 80% range. **Within this category, students are missing between 1 to 2 days of school per week.**

At this rate, a student is not accessing their learning program consistently. It causes severe continuity challenges for a child and impacts their right to learning, assessment and feedback. It becomes very difficult for children to stay connected with their peers.

Severe Attendance

A student is severely at risk when their attendance rate falls below 60% at any part of the school year. **When at this attendance category, they are attending less than 3 days per week.**

With severe attendance issues, children cannot access learning effectively. It becomes impossible for students to maintain their learning to the necessary levels, and as a result they cannot reach their academic potential. The risk of social isolation is high, as children cannot maintain a consistent connection with their friends and peers.

At **Sheoak Grove Primary School**, we have a strategy to support students and families within every attendance category.

Regular Attendance

>90%

COVID hasn't been helpful in the formative years of our School. Every year our school has been open has been affected by COVID restrictions. Now that those restrictions are long gone, our focus is to establish sustainable regular attendance patterns.

Maintaining a regular attendance pattern is difficult if a large portion of time is missed for any reason. For example, if a student goes on a four-week holiday across the year, then a level of 90% attendance can't be maintained.

Did you know?

Our School had an average attendance rate of 88% in 2022.

Less than 60% of students maintained regular attendance in 2022.

Mondays and Fridays have lower attendance rates than the rest of the week.



So what are we doing?

We discuss the importance of maintaining a regular attendance pattern at assemblies, in newsletters, on Connect and in our social media posts.

We focus on strong transition programs at key stages of schooling, like through our Early Childhood programs and from primary to secondary school.

Our teachers engage with our attendance data each fortnight to monitor student progress and engage with our families about regular attendance.

Our SMS system maintains simple communication for parents and gives them the opportunity to explain student absences easily.

We run programs to build the community aspect of being at school. Before school play, Running Club, Breakfast Club, and other interest groups run through our school and support students to remain engaged at school.

A focus on student attendance is reflected through our Positive Behaviour Matrix and reinforced through our Darly token reward system.

Indicated at Risk

80% - 90%

The Indicated category has been the largest of the three at risk categories at Sheoak Grove. This is largely to do with the impact of COVID restrictions across our initial three years, however we believe it should be the easiest to reduce in 2023.

The impact of long weekend camping trips, Bali holidays and other non-approved absences within school time on this data category is strong.

Did you know?

Over 30% of our students were indicated in 2022.

We aim to reduce this category to under 15% in 2023.



How do we achieve our goals?

We use our data to identify classes and year levels where the attendance rate drops below 90% and implement specific strategies to meet their needs.

Our staff use our data to monitor attendance. When students have an indicated at risk attendance over the course of five weeks without reasonable cause, students are identified for support.

We incorporate the Attendance Identification Matrix to work with families to gather information and put short term plans into place that include strategies that have immediate positive impacts.

We celebrate the success of those plans with our families and introduce sustainable strategies to maintain it.

Moderate Attendance

60% - 80%

There has been a steady improvement in our attendance data in this category. When our unexplained absence rates are low, so is our moderate attendance category.

Did you know?

12% of our students were identified in this category in 2022.

This rate was greatly improved from 2021.

We aim to reduce this to less than 5% in 2023.



How do we keep improving this?

Our teachers monitor our school data and identify any student who has an attendance rate that falls beneath 80%

When identified, those students are referred to our Student Services Team who assess the situation and if appropriate implement a case-management approach.

The Student Services Team form a group including the student's parents and teacher and look at all the data and issues that might be preventing an improved attendance rate for the student.

If improvement is noted over time, the group will introduce long-term sustainable actions to support the student to maintain a positive data trend.

If there is no improvement, the group may alter the approach taken, which may include the introduction of a Responsible Parenting Agreement (RPA) and a referral to a Badged Attendance Officer.

Severe Attendance

< 60%

Our school has made significant improvements in the proportion of students who are identified in this attendance categories over the past two years. In 2022, less than 4% of students were identified as severely at risk at any time in the school year.

Our case-management approach conducted by our Student Services Team will continue to be implemented to support students identified as severely at risk along with their families.

Did you know?



We work with other agencies to support families with severe attendance issues.

Our case-management approach is having great success.

We'd like to reduce the number of students identified in this category to 0%!

How do we address severe attendance issues?

If a student arrives to Sheoak Grove with severe attendance issues, or something changes for a family that affects attendance to this extent, our case-management approach is extended.

The student's situation will be referred to an Attendance Advisory Panel if:

- The attendance rate remains below 60% for one month and we cannot establish family engagement in the process, including a Responsible Parenting Agreement (RPA).
- The attendance rate remains below 60% for 6 weeks after we have established active family engagement in the process.

If a student has not been present at school for a period of three weeks, and all reasonable efforts to contact the family have been made and all appropriate actions have been taken, the student will be referred for placement on the **Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown** register.

Student Absences

Student absences are recorded twice daily in our data base. This information gives us our attendance data.

Student absences are basically categorised in two initial ways:

- Explained, or
- Unexplained

An **explained absence** is simply one that is accompanied by a note, a verbal explanation from a parent, an email to the teacher or the school, or a phone call to the teacher or the school.

An **unexplained absence** is one where the student's parents or caregiver have not provided any explanation. Parents and caregivers are obliged to provide an explanation for a student's absence.

Two sub-categories exist for explained absences, those that are **authorised**, and those that are **unauthorised**.

Authorised absences are for instances that meet the requirements of the Department of Education's Attendance Policy. They may be where students are sick, mourning a bereavement, observing a cultural or religious requirement, or in response to an emergency. Educational activities are approved absences.

An unauthorised absence includes anything that is non-urgent or required. Holidays, family visits, airport pick-ups and rainy days are amongst the most common unapproved absences. **All unexplained** absences are unauthorised.

In semester 2 of 2022, only 60% of all student absences were explained by parents or caregivers. In the same semester, 32% of absences were unauthorised.

Did you know?

In 2023 we want to reduce the proportion of unexplained absences to less than 10%

We also want to reduce the proportion of unauthorised absences to under 20%

Please help achieve this for your children by providing reasons for any absences, and restricting unauthorised absences

