



Department of
Education

STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICY

STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROCEDURES

This PDF contains the following documents:

Document 1:

Student Attendance in Public Schools Policy v3.5

Effective: 1 January 2015

Last updated: 11 March 2020

Document 2:

Student Attendance in Public Schools Procedures v3.6

Effective: 1 January 2015

Last updated: 11 March 2020



**Department of
Education**

STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICY

EFFECTIVE: 1 JANUARY 2015

VERSION: 3.5 FINAL

Last update date: 11 March 2020

1 POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Education monitors and manages student attendance in order to maximise the opportunities of all students to learn.

2 POLICY RULES

Principals will manage student attendance in accordance with the *Student Attendance in Public Schools Procedures*. This includes:

- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- responding to Department requests for reporting and disclosure of attendance data;
- managing alternative attendance arrangements where these are appropriate;
- addressing student absence;
- developing plans for students with persistent absence; and
- retaining all relevant documentation.

Regional Executive Directors will assist in the management of cases of persistent student absence in accordance with the *Student Attendance in Public Schools Procedures*.

3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of principals.

Compliance monitoring is the responsibility of line managers.

4 SCOPE

This policy applies to Regional Executive Directors and principals in public schools.

5 SUPPORTING PROCEDURES

Student Attendance in Public Schools Procedures

6 DEFINITIONS

ATTENDANCE PANEL

Is appointed under the *School Education Act 1999* (the Act) to address the persistent non attendance of a student. The function of the panel is to provide advice and assistance to students and parents in order to secure attendance and, in the event of non compliance by a student or parent, to issue a certificate required prior to the commencement of a prosecution of a parent under the Act.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence where the reason provided by the parent is considered to be legitimate and deemed acceptable by the principal.

DOCUMENTED PLAN

An umbrella term used to describe a range of ways of catering for the educational needs of individual or smaller groups of students with identified needs. It is primarily a teaching and learning planning document, and it identifies short to medium term educational outcomes. Documented plans may take a variety of forms, including:

- Individual Education Plans (IEP);
- Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP);
- Individual Transition Plans (ITP); and
- Risk Management Plans (RMP).

PARENT

In relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child.

STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU) LIST

A list, usually referred to as the SWU List, containing the names of children who are missing from schools and educational programs in Western Australia. This list is distributed by the Department to administrators in non-government schools and some other agencies by agreement.

7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

School Education Act 1999 (WA)

School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)

Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)

Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008 (WA)

RELATED DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy and Procedures

Duty of Care for Students for Public Schools

Enrolment in Public Schools Policy and Procedures

Excursions in Public Schools Policy and Procedures

Family Court Orders in Public Schools

Student Health Care in Public Schools

OTHER DOCUMENTS

A Guide to the Management of Educational Programs other than Full Time Attendance Flowchart

Attendance Intervention flowcharts

Badged Attendance Officers

Documented Plans - Guidelines for implementing Documented Plans in Public Schools and Schedule I: Framework for Documented Plans: p72 General Agreement 2011

Guidelines for Attendance Panels

Guidelines for Section 24, Alternative Attendance Arrangements

Guidelines for the use of education-related Responsible Parenting Agreements

Guidelines for the use of Prosecution

Restoring Attendance

Retention and Disposal Schedule for Department of Education School, College and Campus Records

School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health (Guidelines)

Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown Flowchart

Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown Guidelines

8 CONTACT INFORMATION

Policy manager: Director
Student Support Services

Policy contact officer: Principal Consultant
Student Wellbeing
T: (08) 9402 6133

9 REVIEW DATE

1 January 2018

10 HISTORY OF CHANGES

Effective date	Last update date	Policy version no	TRIM no	Notes
1 January 2015		3.0	D14/0508125	Major review undertaken, Student Attendance Policy and Procedures endorsed by Director General on 19 September 2014.

1 January 2015	16 July 2015	3.1	D15/0277590	Updated links as per approval D15/0265969
1 January 2015	11 August 2016	3.2	D16/0524136	Updated contact information D16/0522722
1 January 2015	31 July 2017	3.3	D17/0322985	Updated links as per approval D17/0323036
1 January 2015	3 October 2018	3.4	D18/0437749	Minor changes to include reference to Public Schools D18/0151652 and updated legislation links D18/0207680.
1 January 2015	11 March 2020	3.5	D20/0131432	Minor change to contact details. D20/0130875



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1 POLICY SUPPORTED

Student Attendance in Public Schools Policy

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to Regional Executive Directors and principals in public schools.

3 PROCEDURES

3.1 ATTENDANCE RECORDS

The principal will:

- keep accurate attendance records for every student enrolled at the school (including attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions for Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Primary students, and every lesson/period for Secondary students) that are able to be reproduced in a written form;
- record whether a student's absence was authorised or unauthorised;
- issue a leave pass to a student under the age of 18 who has been granted permission to leave the school unaccompanied by a responsible adult; and
- record a student as:
 - present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction; and
 - present if they are on a school-approved activity or attending off-site under a section 24 arrangement.

Guidance

- *A full description of the SIS Lesson Attendance codes used to record student attendance is provided [online](#).*
- *For information about the use of leave passes refer to [Standardised Leave Passes](#).*

3.1.1 RETENTION OF RECORDS

The principal will:

- retain attendance records in accordance with the [School Education Regulations 2000](#) and the [Retention and Disposal Schedule for Department of Education School, College and Campus Records](#); and
- retain documentation of [all contact and intervention strategies](#) implemented in addressing a student's absence.

3.1.2 REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE OF ATTENDANCE DATA

The principal will:

- comply with requests from their education regional office and Central Office to provide information on student attendance; and
- include the attendance data of every student enrolled in response to requests for school attendance data (for example, participation in the Attendance Data Collection).

Guidance

Principals should seek advice from an appropriate education regional officer regarding requests for individual or group attendance data from an external agency.

3.2 ALTERNATIVE ATTENDANCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER SECTION 24 OF THE SCHOOL EDUCATION ACT

Where it is deemed to be in the best interests of an enrolled student to undertake an alternative course or program, the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled will:

- only enter into a section 24 arrangement where a student will undertake a program provided by another school or training organisation, and where the combination of arrangements equates to full-time attendance;
- formalise an alternative attendance arrangement for the student in accordance with section 24 of the School Education Act 1999;
- approve the section 24 arrangement and end date the arrangement;
- issue a Certificate of Approval: Alternative Attendance Arrangement (Section 24 Arrangement) outlining the details of the alternative attendance arrangements;
- appoint a school-based case manager to monitor the arrangement and to work in consultation with the student, the parents of students under the age of 18 and the alternative school or provider;
- confirm that the duty of care provision for the student meets Department requirements; and
- record the student's attendance using the E code and provide the student with a Leave Pass.

Guidance

- *A section 24 arrangement is used for students who are temporarily attending another school or who wish to undertake an alternative attendance arrangement for short term programs provided by another school or training organisation away from the student's current school. The formal arrangement in writing between a principal and parent of a student under the age of 18, or student who has turned 18, allows the student to participate in an educational program delivered by a third party. This is not required for VET in School programs.*
- *Section 24 arrangements may include courses provided by a State Training Provider, a private Registered Training Provider (RTO), a Community Based Course, the At-Risk-School-Aged Students programs, engagement with School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory and Medical/Mental Health or temporary attendance at another school.*
- *The principal should review the alternative attendance arrangement in cases of persistent student absence. A formal meeting will normally be required. Refer to Restoring Attendance.*
- *Vocational Education and Training Courses including VET in Schools (VETiS), School Based Apprenticeships (SBA), School Based Traineeships (SBT), Aboriginal School Based Training (ASBT), Pre-Apprenticeships in Schools (PAiS) or Workplace Learning (WPL) which are part of the educational program of the school and contribute to a student's Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE), do not require a section 24 arrangement.*
- *Students in Years 11 or 12 are able to participate in an approved full-time option other than school under a Notice of Arrangements. Refer to the Participation website.*
- *Refer to Guidelines for Section 24, Alternative Attendance Arrangements for further information on alternative attendance arrangements.*

3.2.1 ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS WITH ILLNESS AND/OR HEALTH CONDITIONS

Where a student has a mental or physical illness and/or health care needs which may impact on their ability to attend the usual school site, the principal will:

- inform the parent of a student under the age of 18 and the student of the student's right to an educational program and actively engage the parent and the student in negotiating access to a relevant program;
- arrange access to an educational program for a student who has a physical and/or mental health condition and/or health care needs and who cannot attend the regular site; and
- follow the procedures described in School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health (SSEN:M&MH).

Guidance

- *SSEN:M&MH teachers provide in-home educational support to school students in the metropolitan area who cannot attend school for medical reasons. The program targets students likely to be absent from school for more than 10 days who have a medical certificate.*
- *For further details refer to School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health.*

3.3 STUDENT ABSENCE

The principal will:

- request a reason for a student's absence be provided to the principal's satisfaction;
- where a student is participating in a section 24 arrangement, manage the student's attendance in conjunction with the alternative school or provider; and
- where a student's attendance is below 90% or is identified as a concern:
 - investigate the reasons for the student's absence;
 - organise a parent/teacher meeting and/or case conference at the earliest opportunity to identify issues concerning the student's absence; plan improvement strategies; and
 - include identified attendance improvement strategies in a documented plan.

Guidance

- *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.*
- *For procedures which apply for students who cannot be contacted or located refer to Section 3.4.1 Missing Students - Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown.*
- *Badged Attendance Officers assist in the management of student absence. For information about the authorisation and designation of Badged Attendance Officers refer to Badged Attendance Officers.*
- *For further information on developing attendance improvement plans refer to Restoring Attendance, Consultation Phase Support.*
- *Principals should request a medical certificate for prolonged absences that are due to sickness or injury.*
- *The Attendance Intervention 1 Flowchart describes steps in the process of managing student absence.*

3.4 PERSISTENT STUDENT ABSENCE

The principal will develop and implement an attendance improvement plan consisting of:

- a consultation phase;
- a formal meeting phase if attendance is not successfully restored through actions taken as a result of consultation; and
- a process to monitor and review engagement with any plan or agreement developed in the formal meeting.

The principal will document all intervention strategies used to address a student's absence, so that, should it become necessary to proceed to prosecution, it can be clearly established that all reasonably practicable steps to restore attendance have been taken.

Where absence persists, the principal will offer the option of an attendance panel to the parent, the purpose of which is to provide advice and assistance to restore regular attendance (refer to [Guidelines for Attendance Panels](#)).

Guidance

- *The principal should consider whether the persistent absence places the child or young person at suspected risk of harm and/or what other elements of risk to the student's wellbeing may be indicated by persistent absence from school.*
- *In the formal meeting phase, the principal offers the parent the opportunity to:*
 - *enter into a Responsible Parenting Agreement; or*
 - *avail themselves of the advice and assistance which an attendance panel may provide.*
- *The Regional Executive Director or Independent Public School principal should also refer the student's case to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support in circumstances where:*
 - *the offer to convene an attendance panel is not accepted by the parent; or*
 - *an attendance panel is convened but the advice and assistance it provides is not successful in restoring attendance.*
- *For further information about consultation and formal meeting phases, refer to [Restoring Attendance](#).*
- *The [Attendance Intervention 1 and Attendance Intervention 2 flowcharts](#) describe steps in the process of addressing persistent absence.*
- *Before prosecution can be considered, parents must at least have been offered the option of an attendance panel. For further information about the prosecution of parents refer to [Guidelines for Prosecution](#).*

3.4.1 MISSING STUDENTS - STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU)

If a student cannot be located within 15 days of the start of an absence, and their parent/s cannot be contacted, the principal will:

- complete an [SWU Request form](#) and email it to the Student Tracking Coordinator at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au; and
- retain the student on the school's current enrolment register until email notification is received from the Student Tracking Coordinator that the student has been placed on the SWU list.

Guidance

- *A student can be regarded as 'missing' when, within 15 days of the start of an absence, they cannot be located, their parent/s cannot be contacted, and the school has not received advice that the student is being educated elsewhere.*

- *The Student Tracking Coordinator processes the request and informs the school by email within 15 school days of receiving the request.*
- *For further information refer to the Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown Guidelines.*
- *The Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown Flowchart describes steps in this process.*

4 DEFINITIONS

ATTENDANCE PANEL

Is formed pursuant to the School Education Act 1999 (the Act) to address the persistent absence of a student. The function of the panel is to provide advice and assistance to students and parents in order to restore regular attendance.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

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Designating Badged Attendance Officers Flowchart

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Guidelines for attendance panels

Guidelines for Section 24, Alternative Attendance Arrangements

Guidelines for the use of education-related Responsible Parenting Agreements

Guidelines for the use of prosecution

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