



IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE

Through Mary to Jesus: "The Way, the Truth and the Life"

John 14:6

Student Attendance Procedure

PROCEDURE	Student Attendance Procedure
Revision No:	0.1
Date for Review:	March 2023
Document No	PR-SM-06



1. Objective

The purpose of this document is to ensure that staff are aware of the attendance requirements associated with student absences to comply with Part 2 of the *School Education Act 1999* and Part 2 of the *School Education Regulations 2000*.

This procedure supports the *Student Attendance Policy*.

2. Scope

This policy applies to administration staff, all primary class teachers, secondary pastoral care group (PCG) teachers, and relief staff.

3. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of **all primary class teachers** and **Secondary PCG teachers** to record student attendance daily by 9.20am at the latest.

It is the responsibility of all **secondary teachers** to record attendance for every student, every timetabled period.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend the College regularly and are absent only in the event of illness or medical appointment. A written explanatory communication is to be provided to the College prior to commencement of the school day.

It is the responsibility of the **Principal** to ensure that a:

- regular review of student attendance is performed; and
- processes for managing student absences are in place and are reviewed routinely.

If it impacts their teaching timetable, **all staff** are responsible for recording in SEQTA, a student's departure from the College or late arrival.

4. Procedure

A student may be absent from the College due to temporary ill health or "any other reasonable cause" such as family commitments (bereavement/religious). It is not acceptable to be absent due to birthdays. Swimming Carnivals & Athletics Carnivals and other College events are considered normal attendance school days.

Student attendance record

Notification of absenteeism

If a student is sick or must attend a medical appoint (or similar), parents/carers are to contact administration. This may be via:

- A written and signed note provided to administration, the primary class or secondary PCG teacher.
- A direct message absentee via SEQTA.



- An email sent to absentee@ihc.wa.edu.au

If a parent attends reception in person to advise of an absence, reception staff will record the communication in SEQTA as a STQTA pastoral care note, however, staff are to inform the parent that the procedure is to notify the College, in writing, via the SEQTA direct message notification or email to absentee@ihc.wa.edu.au.

Recording student attendance each College day

The **primary class teacher** or **secondary PCG teacher**, shall record student absences, noted as a ✓ or ✗ in the SEQTA platform, next to the student's name for the applicable day. The relevant teacher is to complete the SEQTA attendance record within the **first 15 minutes** of the College day during pastoral care time.

Primary class teachers are to record attendance in both the morning PCT and after the lunch break. Secondary teachers are to record student attendance every timetabled period. Some exceptions comprise:

- Students who are on an excursion, participating in an off campus program or in some other school-approved activity or are not to be counted as absent.
- Students on suspension are to be recorded using the code for suspension on SEQTA.

Attendance records are to be kept for a period of seven years, while absentee notes on file are required to be kept for 25 years from date of birth. Unsatisfactory attendance reports on students must be retained in a student's records for 25 years from date of birth.

Late arrival

Students arriving after 8.55 am and before 9.10 am must report directly to their primary classroom or secondary pastoral care class. Where a student arrives late to class, the teacher must record the following symbol.



If a student arrives after 9.10 am the student must sign in at the administration office. The parent/carer must either phone or email using absentees@ihc.wa.edu.au to explain the reason for the student being late.

In addition to recording attendance, the primary class teacher and secondary pastoral care teachers are to

- check the weekly the attendance of the year group
- address unexplained absences by phoning parents/carers
- record the 'pastoral care' discussions with parent/carers in SEQTA and request a satisfactory written explanation for SEQTA files. If this written explanation is a letter, then it must be scanned and added to the pastoral care SEQTA files associated with the student.



Multiple Absences and concerning patterns must be followed up and recorded in SEQTA, then referred to the Head of Learning Area (PK-Yr 2, Yr3-6, Yr 7-9 or Yr 10-12) as appropriate for further pastoral care investigation.

Unexplained absences

By the end of the third unexplained absence day, and an explanation has not been received by the College:

- The **primary class or secondary PCG teacher** is to contact parent/carer. Record discussions in SEQTA under 'pastoral care notes'.
- In the case a written explanation has still not been received, then the primary class or secondary PCG teacher is to refer the matter to the **Head of Learning Area** (PK-Yr 2, Yr3-6, Yr 7-9 or Yr 10-12).
- The Head of Learning Area is to contact the parent/carer by phone and record discussions in SEQTA under 'pastoral care notes'.
- If there has still been no written response or reply to phone calls made by the College, formal follow-up for ongoing absenteeism shall be invoked.

Administration of absentees

The College utilises SEQTA to generate student absenteeism on each week day.

1. The **Reception staff** will check student absentee's at 9.30am each day, by clicking 'absentee sms's'. In the event reception staff are unavailable to perform this task, as a back-up, the **Administration Officer** is to carry out this procedure.
2. Reception staff will then click the 'send messages' button in SEQTA to notify parents/carers via contact numbers held on the SEQTA filing system, informing parents/carers, via text message, that their child has been absent from the College on that day. The parents/carer is required to contact to the College to provide an explanation.
3. In the event parents do not reply to this automated message, it is recorded as an unexplained absence by reception staff.

Formal follow-up for ongoing low levels of absenteeism.

Primary class or PCG Teacher (Letter One, Appendix A)

- Monitors student attendance and contacts parents of students with recurring patterns of absenteeism and records details in SEQTA.
- When attendance **falls below 93%**, Letter One is to be sent to parent/carer, and a three-way face-to-face meeting with parents/carers and student is arranged. Meeting details are to be recorded on meeting minutes and filed in SEQTA.



Primary class or PCG teacher /Head of Learning Area (Letter Two, Appendix B)

- Reviews attendance data, including parent contacts made by Primary Class/PCG Teachers, mid-term and end of term.
- When attendance **falls below 90%**, Letter Two is to be sent to parent/carer and a three-way face-to-face meeting with parents/carers and the student is arranged. Meeting details are to be recorded on meeting minutes and filed in SEQTA.
- Strategies to encourage improved student attendance are to be discussed and implemented. This documentation is required in accordance with the *Education Regulations 1999*.

Deputy Principal /Head of Learning Area (Letter Three, Appendix C)

- Head of Learning Area consults with Deputy Principal for serious instances of absenteeism.
- When attendance **falls below 80%**, Letter Three is to be sent to parent/carer, and a three-way face-to-face meeting with parents/carers and the student is arranged. Meeting details are to be recorded on meeting minutes and filed in SEQTA.
- Strategies to encourage improved student attendance are to be discussed and implemented. This documentation is required in accordance with the *Education Regulations 1999* (Appendix D).

The principal shall notify the chief executive officer immediately a serious case of default in attendance occurs, or if a child without a reasonable excuse as defined in section 14 of the Act or in this regulation, fails or neglects to attend school.

Leaving the College early or arriving late

In the event that a student arrives to the College after timetabled classes have commenced, the student is to attend reception to complete the sign in register found at the College reception.

Students who miss less than 2 hours of tuition, will receive a half days absence.

Students who miss more than 2 hours of tuition, will receive a whole day recorded absence.

Students who leave before the end of the College day, must sign out prior to leaving the College premises.



Strategies to influence improved student attendance

Whole-school strategies

- Clear expectations of full-time attendance for all students
- Strong monitoring procedures to enable early identification of attendance concerns
- Considered and thorough planning for cohorts transitioning from and to other schools or campuses
- Create a positive school culture that is educationally engaging, culturally responsive and prevents bullying
- Promote and utilise school-family partnerships

Personalised strategies

Personalised strategies should assist the student to learn skills for managing anxiety with the aim to return to College activities as soon as possible.

- Work with parents to build trust and confidence
- Encourage parents to take a consistent approach
- The student's distress is likely to increase at the beginning of any intervention and needs to be managed calmly, with recognition given when the student makes any progress
- Provide a quiet space for the student to go to when they're feeling anxious, particularly before class or during lunch break times
- Nominate at least one contact person for the student to go to when feeling anxious
- Social skills training (eg assertiveness, dealing with bullying, joining in with a group, inviting a friend to join them in an activity)
- Reduced homework load
- Teacher to avoid trigger points or touchy subjects in class
- Avoid ultimatums and give choice/options
- Document background, student strategies and staff strategies and share this with relevant staff

It is important for all parties to apply consistency and persistence in all strategies, for increased levels of attendance to become sustainable.

Documenting the strategies

In all cases, the student is to be involved in the development strategies to facilitate ownership and self-motivation towards achieving the goal of increased attendance. Record agreed strategies in SEQTA.

Key considerations include strategies for:



- the arrival and separation from the parent
- dealing with the student's complaints and running away
- educational and classroom planning

Arrival and separation from parent:

- Determine a 'drop-off' or 'hand-over' location
- Have a nominated staff member greet the student (where possible the same staff member every day)
- Parent says goodbye and leaves immediately (parent may need support for this)
- Provide a reassuring phone call to the parent once the day has started

Educational and classroom planning

- Provide routine and certainty
- Smile, be welcoming and make no reference to the student's absences on arrival
- Adjustment of the curriculum if the student's fears are related to not doing well or feeling pressure at not being able to complete assigned tasks
- Ensure the student has someone to sit and work with
- To begin with, avoid selecting the student to participate in activities that would draw class attention, such as completing tasks at the front of the class and public speaking
- Praise (ensure this is quiet and understated for older students)
- If the student complains of feeling sick and wishes to be sent home, avoid discussing or arguing, be patient and ignore the behaviour. The student can be sent to the nominated quiet area if this continues, not to the sick bay.
- Monitor and review
- Avoid increasing expectations too early
- Reset the 'goal posts' when needed
- Ensure all strategies support the promotion of a coping approach
- Keep the 'big picture' in perspective and keep trying
- Foster collaboration with parents – neither the school or parent can improve the situation alone



- If physical problems have been ruled out and the behaviour continues over a long period of time, an evaluation by a mental health specialist may be required.

Students at risk and early intervention

Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial so that these patterns may be reversed. Indicators of students at risk include the following:

- frequent lateness
- leaving school early
- missing lessons
- being the victims of bullying and harassment
- learning difficulties
- many days absent, either through illness, unexplained reasons or family commitments
- unresolved issues with school personnel (staff or students)
- social or emotional issues
- difficulties at times of transition; and
- health issues experience by the student and/or family members

Intervention strategies are to be followed up by the Head of Learning Area and the College nurse and/or psychologist as appropriate.

Students regarded as missing

A student is regarded as 'missing,' when:

- he/she no longer attends the College
- a Transfer Note has not been received by the College after a period of one month
- the student, parents/carers cannot be located.

If a student is considered 'missing', the Principal shall visit the student's home (if convenient), and contact known relatives and peers.

If the student cannot be located despite reasonable attempts, the College will inform The Principal will contact the Department of Education and apply for guidance for 'missing students'.

All steps taken by the College to locate the student will be documented in SEQTA.



Truancy and lateness to class

Unauthorised absences from the College or leaving the College without signing out and authorization from a parent/carer is truancy.

A student who is absent from class without permission is said to be truanting. Any student who truant will be required to make up for the missed class with an after school restorative time, to make up for missed work. Parents and guardians will be provided a phone call requesting a face to face meeting and given 24 hours' notice of the restorative time.

A student who is late for class will be required to make up the missed work during lunch, recess or after school.

Holidays

Any Student requiring holidays during in-term schooling will require Principal approval. Parents/guardians must indicate in writing the dates/duration/reason for leave and have it accepted prior to leave.

All students should attain at least 90% attendance for the whole year.

Alternative attendance arrangements

The College Principal may agree for a student to temporarily attend at another school or off-site educational program in accordance with Section 24 of the *School Education Act 1999*.

A 'Section 24' alternative attendance arrangement is an arrangement between the Principal and the parent/carer, or the student where documented arrangement(s) are made for the student to attend an educational program away from the school site, whilst maintaining their enrolment. This arrangement can be used in instances where the student is attending elsewhere for a particular period of the school year or during a particular period each week.

Approving Section 24 Arrangements Guidelines are found on the Department of Education and Training website.

Notice of arrangements and exemptions (alternative enrolment options)

Parents may seek approval for arrangements for students seeking to participate in an alternative to full-time enrolment at school including Notice of Arrangements and Exemptions.

Guidelines for applying for Notice of Arrangements and Exemptions (alternative enrolment options) are available on the Department of Education and Training website.

Exemption from full time schooling

As of 1 January 2008, students can now leave at 17 years of age. While all students are encouraged to remain in school until completion of year 12, students can leave school to take up approved further education, training or employment pathway options.

For early school leavers this means they will be required to participate in education, training and employment or combinations of these options until the end of the year in which they turn 17 years and 6 months old, or have satisfied the minimum requirements for graduation, or they have reached the age of 18 years, whichever happens first.



An exemption is only available for students in (or about to begin) Year 10 or above or who will reach the age of 15 years 6 months or more in the year for which an exemption is sought.

An exemption permits a child to pursue an alternative option to full-time schooling - usually a combination of education, training or employment such as an apprenticeship. The child's parent / legal guardian must apply for the exemption (DoE, 2021).

Alternatives to full-time schooling may include:

- Full-time enrolment in a State Training Institution (formerly TAFE) or Private Registered Training Organisation
- An apprenticeship or traineeship
- An approved course with a community based provider
- A combination program involving part-time school/training and part-time work
- Full-time employment

To apply for one of the above alternatives, schools must complete the form on the Department of Education and Training's Participation website.

Cessation of College enrolment

When a student leaves the College and enrolls at another secondary school:

- A transfer note will be sent to the College from the school in which the student has enrolled.
- When a Year 11 or 12 aged student leaves for full time employment or training, a Notice of Arrangement is sent by the College to the parent/carer for them to complete. Once completed the parent/carer return this form to the Department of Education. The College is notified by the Department of Education when the Notice of Arrangement has been approved.
- The College will follow up if notification isn't received after one month.

5. Definitions

Truancy - the action of staying away from school without good reason; absenteeism

6. Supporting Information

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/alternatives-to-full-time-schooling>

7. Related Documents



Type	Document	Doc #
	Student attendance policy	
Form	Staff Induction Record	

8. Review

This procedure will be evaluated and reviewed every two (2) years.

Year of Review	Authored by:	Reviewed by:	Reason for amendments or review
September 2020		Doris. A.	Updated 2015 document
23 March 2021	K.Knight	T. Carpenter	Altered document to align with new formatting, updated content.
7 May 2021	S.Shaw		Deputy Principal endorsement.



Appendix A

Notification of low attendance Letter

Letter One: Meeting with primary class or secondary pastoral care teacher

Date

Dear {salutation}

Re: Student Attendance

I am writing to advise you that {name}'s school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to {percentage_attendance}% and, as a result, we are becoming concerned that {name} is missing a significant part of {his/her} learning.

Regular attendance is extremely important, as missing school can have a detrimental impact on learning and, as I am sure you are aware, it is a legal requirement. A sound attendance record enables students to keep up with the work required in order to progress their learning.

Please contact the College reception on (08) 9571 8135 to make an appointment to meet with me to clarify any issues and plan a way forward. Meanwhile, I will continue to monitor {name}'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an immediate improvement.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of that is having an influence on {name}'s capacity to attend school regularly, please advise me as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

{teacher_name}

Primary class teacher/Pastoral care teacher



Appendix B

Continued high level of absenteeism

LETTER TWO – Meeting with Head of learning area and class teacher/pastoral care teacher

Date

Dear {salutation},

Re: Continued high level of absenteeism

I am writing to inform you that {name}'s attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting {name}'s progress and we need to meet with you urgently.

You are required to attend a meeting with me to discuss this matter further at the date and time listed below.

Date:

Time:

Should {name}'s attendance continue to fall below acceptable levels the College will be required to notify the Department of Education. This could result in sanctions under the *School Education Act (1999)*.

Your obligations under the act include:

- To ensure regular student attendance;
- To ensure all absences are explained and correctly recorded within three days of the absence occurring; and
- To liaise with College staff to support attendance improvement.

Medical evidence is now required for any future absences.

I look forward to meeting you to discuss strategies that may promote increased attendance rates and any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in their schooling. The College will do what we can to support you and your child to increase attendance and, therefore, avoid the need to escalate the situation to higher authorities.

Yours sincerely,

{Head of Learning Area/ pastoral care teacher}



Appendix C

Attendance level is in breach of the *School Education Act, 1999*

Date

Dear {salutation}

Re: Attendance level is in breach of the School Education Act (1999)

I am writing to inform you that {name}'s attendance level is in breach of the *School Education Act (1999)* and your immediate action is necessary. You are required to attend a meeting with me to discuss this matter further at the date and time listed below.

Date:

Time:

Should {name}'s attendance not improve to an acceptable level within the next four (4) weeks the College will notify the Department of Education as this is our obligation to do so. This could result in sanctions under the *School Education Act (1999)*.

At this meeting we will aim to prepare a mutually agreed plan to assist {name} to meet the required attendance rate. Additionally, we will examine any avenues of support to assist {name} to re-engage with their learning and, possibly, consider alternative education pathways.

I look forward to meeting with you to ensure {name}'s regular attendance and that {he/she} achieves results commensurate with {his/her} ability to enable a bright and prosperous future.

Yours sincerely,

{name}

Deputy Principal



Appendix D

Attendance Improvement Plan

Date: _____

Student: _____ Year group _____

Expected attendance (90% regular) Actual attendance (YTD): _____

Parent/Guardian expectations:

Under Western Australian law (School Education Act 1999), parents must send their children to school.

Student Expectations:

College Expectations:

Review Date: _____ by: _____

Improvements to attendance will be recognised by the College and celebrated.

Student: _____ Parent: _____

College Staff: _____ Date: _____