



**St Peter's
Woodlands**

Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

Schools are required under the Education Act 1972 (SA) and the Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Act 2007 to ensure that students enrolled are attending school or participating in an approved learning program and to maintain the appropriate attendance registers.

Children of compulsory school age residing in South Australia are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or non-government school unless exempted by the Minister.

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between parents/caregivers, the student and school.

Early identification of absenteeism or poor attendance and intervention is known to improve student learning outcomes. Children who have patterns of poor attendance are at risk as they may not achieve their potential in education and social development.

Positive attendance patterns should be fostered with all students by all educators.

This policy is supported by complementary procedures and additional guidelines which are located on the SPW network.

2. Definitions

Authorised Absence:	an absence where the reason provided by the parent/caregiver is considered to be legitimate and is deemed appropriate by the Principal
Compulsory school age:	six years and up to the age of sixteen years. Students aged sixteen are to be in an approved education plan until they turn seventeen years of age.

3. Scope

This policy applies to SPW staff, students, and parents/caregivers.

4. Objectives

- To encourage all students and families to attend school regularly and on time, in order to maximise engagement and learning.
- To provide guidance for staff, students and parents/caregivers on the expectations at SPW and the processes to be followed.
- To meet legislative requirements.
- To maintain records of attendance at school, including late arrivals, early departures, explained and unexplained absences, approved leave.
- To investigate occasions of unexplained absence, and occasions of repeated or regular absenteeism.

5. The School Day

Text

The school day at SPW runs for 8.30am-3.15pm. Students arriving late or leaving early are to register at Front Office in order to keep accurate records and to ensure student safety.

More details on supervision of children outside these hours, and routines for students, staff, and parents/caregivers regarding absences are provided in other documents (see later in this document).



6. Roles and Responsibilities

All employees

All staff are responsible for the safety of children at SPW, and proper recording of attendance forms part of this philosophy.

Principal

The Principal is ultimately responsible for the management of attendance policy and government reporting. The Principal promotes compliance with this policy, delegates' responsibility for the operational planning, maintenance, monitoring, analysis and running of attendance and absentee management to an Executive Leadership Team member in the organisation, and ensures the School's attendance program is adequately resourced. This includes intervention that is put into place when required and is documented, ie attendance improvement plans are developed and notification about suspicions of neglect and/or abuse are made. The Principal ensures parents/caregivers are advised of the importance of attendance at school, and the processes for advising of absences. The Principal is delegated responsibility by the Minister to approve leave in certain circumstances (See Delegations).

Executive Leadership Team

Executive Leadership Team (ELT) members are responsible for the visible support of, and adherence to, this policy by promoting a culture of attendance at school by students, and the importance of record-keeping and adherence to attendance procedures by staff (including the points above as outlined in the Principal section).

The Executive Leadership Team are also responsible for ensuring staff, including contract staff, are aware of, and are supported to follow, the attendance practices of the school.

Front Office Staff

Front Office staff are responsible for collating daily attendance records and following up on unexplained absences. Front Office staff create a daily absentee report and distribute this to all staff. Front Office staff manage late arrivals and early departures of students, and enter this information in the attendance system.

Teaching Staff

Class teachers, including relief staff, are responsible for taking daily attendance records and submitting them in accordance with procedures. Class teachers are responsible for forwarding any notes or requests regarding attendance to the Front Office staff. Class teachers are responsible for understanding when parents/caregivers are to be referred to the Principal for extended leave applications. Class teachers are responsible for educating and encouraging students and parents/caregivers to follow correct protocols when arriving late, leaving early, or notifying of an absence. Staff are to provide a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage all children and offers opportunity for success, contribute to the analysis of attendance, initial follow up of non-attendance, and make Mandatory Notifications as appropriate.

Students

Students are responsible for reporting to their classrooms by 8.30am each day, or to Front Office before going to their classroom if they arrive at school after 8.30am. Students are responsible for ensuring they sign out at Front Office should they leave school prior to 3.15pm, and then only in the presence of a parent/caregiver. Students are expected to be punctual and engage appropriately in the education programme as negotiated.

Parents/Caregivers

Parents/caregivers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives at school in time to begin their school day at 8.30am each day. In the event a child arrives at school after this time, parents/caregivers are responsible for ensuring the child signs in at Front Office prior to going to their classroom. Parents/caregivers are

responsible for collecting or otherwise making appropriate arrangements for their child to depart the SPW grounds by 3.45pm daily, or at a later time as determined by a school activity they are participating in. Should the child need to leave school prior to 3.15pm, parents/caregivers are responsible for signing the child out at Front Office before proceeding to the classroom to collect the child.

Parents/caregivers are to

- Provide information to the school that assists with the child's learning
- Enable the child to attend punctually and regularly, and comply with the education program being offered
- Provide an explanation when the child is absent and apply for an exemption through the Application for Exemption Form (Attendance), based on ED175, when the child is removed from school
- Work with SPW on intervention strategies to improve attendance. This may include contacting and completing a form for the Engagement & Wellbeing Office (through DECD).

Parents/caregivers are responsible for applying to the Principal for any leave (eg family holidays) prior to the event. See *"Exemptions"*

7. Communication and Training

Staff will be provided training in all aspects of this Policy. Administration staff will also be trained in the attendance system, and will provide advice and assistance to other staff as required.

8. Government Reporting & Compliance (Responding and Monitoring)

SPW will maintain attendance records and enrolment registers or computerised records of the same, with reasons for absence and dates of cessation of enrolment recorded. Reporting to parents / caregivers regarding all children being late or absent is recorded in the formal reports, twice per year.

The following information has been provided by AISSA (Association of Independent Schools of South Australian)

Electronic or hard-copy records may be required for inspection by the Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board when it visits the school as part of the review of registration process. The material should demonstrate that a comprehensive record of absences and attendances is being maintained, both for the current year and to meet legislative requirements for information retention.

Children of compulsory school age (6 years to 16 years) residing in South Australia are required to be in fulltime attendance at a government or registered school unless exempted by the Minister. If a parent or guardian wishes to take their child out of school temporarily or permanently they are required to apply for exemption from school attendance (Form ED175).

The average student attendance rate is one of the student outcomes that schools must publish as part of the School Performance Information reporting requirements stipulated by the Australian Government. Schools are also required under the Australian Education Act 2013 to report student attendance data to the Australian Government through the Schools Service Point.

Schools have obligations to follow up the extended absence for school of students under the age of compulsion. There are specific procedures in place for the granting of exemptions (See Delegations, and Exemptions, below)

Unexplained absences from school are followed up in an appropriate manner with the child and parent/caregiver.

SPW has access to the DECD Attendance and Engagement Officer regarding student attendance issues.

SPW will notify the parent/caregiver in an appropriate manner where a student has a poor record of attendance. Attendance issues are followed through and any action is recorded, as appropriate, and placed

on the student file. SPW will maintain ongoing communication with the parent/caregivers regarding curriculum, activities etc where a child is unable to attend for an extended period due to injury or illness.

Where parents/caregivers wish to remove their child from class for the purpose of leisure or non-school related activities, permission should be sought from the school. Where absences longer than five days are planned, it is appropriate to apply for an exemption from the school (Application for Exemption from School Attendance ED175). Exemptions are not automatically granted and are dependent on a decision by the Principal.

9. Delegations and Exemptions

The following information has been provided by AISSA

9.1. Temporary Exemptions

The Principal has the authority to approve temporary exemptions up to 12 months for the reason of family travel/holiday. If for more than one month and for reasons other than travel/family holiday, the application requires approval by Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (Independent Schools). Form ED175 must be completed.

9.2. Permanent Exemptions

Students under 15 cannot be given a permanent exemption unless there are strong recommendations from the school and the education department.

10. Absences process and recording

The policy is to be read in conjunction with the following Standard Operating Procedures

- Attendance Codes in iWise
- Roll and Absentees Process overview F-7 and ELC

10.1. Process for absentee for short term, up to and including 5 days

Parent informs the school via SkoolBag, the absentee line, or by contacting the Front Office

10.2. Process for extended absence of more than 5 consecutive days

1. Parent/caregiver to notify the Principal in advance by letter or email (administration@spw.sa.edu.au)
2. The Principal may request a meeting with the parents/caregivers
3. Form ED175 A Application for Exemption is forwarded to the family to complete (parent to sign)
4. Parent/caregiver to return the Application for Exemption Form to the Principal to complete details and sign off on dates and details
5. The School will advise the family of approved leave details in writing
6. Relevant staff are informed by the Principal's EA, including Front Office staff
7. Front Office staff enter details of approved leave on iWise
8. Principal's EA will file the Application for Exemption Form and associated correspondence in the student file

10.3. Process for extended absence of more than 1 month and up to 12 months, for reason of family holiday/travel

1. Parent/caregiver to notify the Principal in advance by letter or email (administration@spw.sa.edu.au)
2. The Principal may request a meeting with the parents/caregivers
3. Form ED175 A Application for Exemption is forwarded to the family to complete (parent to sign)



4. Parent/caregiver to return the Application for Exemption Form to the Principal to complete details and sign off on dates and details
5. The School will advise the family of approved leave details in writing
6. Relevant staff are informed by the Principal's EA, including Front Office staff
7. Front Office staff enter details of approved leave on iWise
8. Principal's EA will file the Application for Exemption Form and associated correspondence in the student file

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be updated as needed if there are any changes in the legislation, software, or recommended practices for school attendance. It will be reviewed at least every five years.

12. Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy will be investigated by the Human Resources (HR) Manager and may lead to disciplinary action.

13. Further Information

Further information regarding this policy is available from any member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Relevant Legislation

- Education Act 1972 (SA)
- Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Act 2007
- Australian Education Act 2013

Related Policies

PRIN-04	Child Protection
PRIN-18	Children on Grounds Outside School Hours

Related Procedures & Standard Operating Procedures

PRIN-04-01	Child Protection – Child is Reported Missing
PRIN-09-01	Attendance – Teachers
PRIN-09-02	Attendance – Front Office Staff
PRIN-09-03	Attendance – Early Learning Centre
PRIN-SOP09-01	Rolls & Absentee Process Overview
PRIN-SOP09-02	Attendance Codes in iWise

Related Forms & Checklists

FORM	AISSA ED175 Form A Application for Temporary Exemption from school enrolment/attendance Principal Approval
FORM	AISSA ED175 Form B Application for Exemption from school enrolment/attendance Overseas Exchange/Long-Term Family Travel/Elite Sports/Full-time Employment/Full-time non- School education
FORM	AISSA ED175 Form C Application for Exemption from school enrolment/attendance Disability/Behaviour/Health/Medical – Part-Time School Attendance

Related Safe Work Practices & Guidance Notes

None

Related Other Documentation

INFORMATION SHEET Attendance and Absences

BOOKLET Staff Procedure Manual

BOOKLET TRT Induction Manual

Student Diary

Other

DECD Attendance and Engagement Office

Association of Independent Schools (SA)