



Atlantis Beach Baptist College

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted By: Principal

Date: 1.06.2021

Scheduled Review Date: 1.06.2021

POLICY CONTROL HISTORY:

Date	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Reviews:
01/06/2021	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Addition of Child Safety Principles

INTRODUCTION

The Student Attendance Policy acknowledges the College's obligations under law and societal expectations to ensure that all students are punctual and attend college on the days on which the college is open for instruction unless their absence is due to a valid family or medical reason or has prior approval.

The College Education Act 1999 requires compulsory aged students, as defined in the Act, to attend college.

Objects of Act

The objects of this Act include the following:

- to recognize the right of every child in the State to receive a college education during the child's compulsory education period; and
- to allow that education to be given in a government college, a non-government college or at home; and
- to provide for government colleges that meet the educational needs of all children; and
- to provide for education, training, and employment alternatives at the senior secondary level; and
- to acknowledge the importance of the involvement and participation of a child's parents in the child's education; and
- to provide for student residential colleges that offer residential accommodation for students to attend, and participate in an educational programme of, a college

Students must be enrolled at college or TAFE or have employment in a workplace which provides training (apprenticeship) until the end of the year in which they turn 17.

The Policy applies to all parents, guardians, students, and staff from Kindergarten to Year 10 and recognises each person's responsibility to meet their obligations according to the Act.

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

The College the Principal

The Principal is responsible for the accurate recording and rigorous monitoring of the attendance of all students and for implementing appropriate strategies, policies, and procedures to restore attendance if there are attendance issues.

1. Attendance Marking

Teachers are required to accurately mark attendance for all students in their care during scheduled lessons using the College Attendance Marking Procedures as applicable from time to time as appropriate for each section of the College. In addition, teachers are to regularly monitor attendance on excursions, camps, and all other College approved activities at regular intervals.

2. Attendance Monitoring

The College is responsible for implementing an attendance monitoring system that includes the follow up of students with attendance issues.

3. Attendance Improvement

Positive attendance patterns will be fostered with all students using strategies that promote a positive learning environment.

Attendance problems are best managed by early identification and intervention.

As a general guide, if a student's attendance rate falls below 90% over a ten-week period, the matter should be investigated and the reason/s for the student's non-attendance be ascertained.

The College will use a case management approach for attendance issues. The case manager will be the College Principal. The Principal will be mindful of consulting all key stakeholders and accessing support from the Education Department and community services if required. The College will keep records of all contact with the student's family, external agencies, students and will record the intervention strategies.

4. Attendance records and archives

Attendance records may be kept in electronic form but must be capable of being reproduced in written form (that can be printed upon request). Attendance records must be kept for a minimum period of 7 years. Absentee notes that are separate from the student's records are to be kept for 2 years from the date of receipt and then destroyed. If the note is included in the student's file it is to be kept until the child is 25 years old from the date of birth. Unsatisfactory attendance records must be kept in a student's records until the child is 25 years from the date of birth.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

1. Their child's attendance

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child of compulsory college age is engaged in at least one full-time approved education option. Students are required to be punctual and should be present at all lessons unless injured or ill or have approved leave. Parents/guardians have legal obligation under Section 23 of the College Education Act 1999 that requires them to ensure that their child attends college. Under Western Australian law (College Education Act 1999), parents/guardians must send their children to college unless:

- they are too unwell
- they have an infectious disease
- the Principal, or the Principal's delegate, is provided with a genuine and acceptable reason.

2. Absence notification

A parent/guardian is responsible for providing the College with a reason for their child's absence within 3 working days of the absence period. There is no requirement for the reason to be provided in writing.

Parents/guardians are to phone **9544 3000** or to email admin@abbc.wa.edu.au before 8.30am to notify the College if their child will be absent or late on that day.

If notification is not received, an SMS will be sent to the parent/guardian's nominated mobile phone requesting a reason to explain the absence or late arrival. Written notes remain an acceptable mode of communication.

If a student has a medical appointment during college time, the parent/guardian is required to sign the student out or in at College Reception.

3. Leave of absence

Parents/guardians wishing to request a leave of absence for their child must correspond with the principal three weeks in advance to request permission for their child to be absent from college for any reason other than injury, illness, a scheduled medical appointment, or if she/he is representing the State or Nation in a sporting event. This includes family holidays or absence due to extenuating family circumstances.

STUDENTS

1. Attendance

Students are responsible for being on time to college and to class. They must report to the College Reception desk when arriving late or leaving early. No student should leave the College or a College approved activity without the permission of a college approved staff member.

2. Inter House and Inter College Carnivals

Inter House and Inter College Carnivals are an important part of the life of the College and attendance at these events are compulsory. Parents of students who are injured or ill on these dates are required to contact the Principal. Under certain circumstances, the College may request a medical certificate. Students who are absent on the day of an Inter House Carnival without approval from or without a medical certificate, may lose other College privileges.

ATTENDANCE MARKING PROCEDURES

Student attendance records are to be recorded on *SEQTA*. A key aspect of ensuring that the College discharges its duty of care obligations to students is for teachers to ensure that they maintain accurate and timely records.

1. Staff will encourage parents to advise of absences: Phone 9544 3000 or email to admin@abbc.wa.edu.au before 8.30am.
2. All attendance notifications from parents will be forwarded as soon as possible on the day they are received to the Attendance Officer.
3. Secondary teachers are to mark the class roll on *SEQTA* within fifteen minutes of the siren at the start of each lesson (Secondary)
4. Primary teachers are to mark the class roll on *SEQTA* at the beginning of the day and straight after lunch break.
5. Students arriving to class late are required to report to the Office where they will record their attendance and then the Attendance Officer responsible for Attendance will update the student's attendance records on *SEQTA*.
6. The student will then be issued with a Late Authority Form and proceed to class. It is important that teachers do not allow late students into class without the correct Late Authority form.
7. Teachers who recognise a pattern of absences or lateness from their class should contact the student's parent/guardian and liaise with the Principal.

HOW THE COLLEGE MANAGES PERSISTENT AND/OR HABITUAL ABSENCES

Missing a significant number of college hours has many serious outcomes and the college, as a last resort and within the college's capacity missing significant numbers of hours of college and the potential for the most serious outcome/last resort of the college's capacity to report the situation to an *Attendance Panel, which may eventuate as a legal matter.

Policy and procedure information for staff should be far more comprehensive so that staff have a very clear idea of the different types of circumstances that can be involved and the ways these situations can be managed. Emphasis should be given to the importance of documenting the, very often, many communications that take place with parents/guardians and the college's actions. The college should maintain a separate policy on managing these types of situations with the specific aim of re-engaging the student back to college. As described above in Section 2 Legislation, before during or after a renewal of registration college visit the regulator may request a college to provide: Documentation of the re-engagement strategies implemented when a student's unapproved absences are having a significant impact on the student's progress with the learning programme. (Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Colleges, January 2020, p.47)

When a student's absence is identified as a concern, college staff should work collaboratively with students, parents, and the community to develop and implement strategies to restore satisfactory attendance. A pattern of persistent absence places a student at educational risk and may itself be an indicator of other risks to the student's wellbeing.

There can be many different reasons for absences of this nature, some that can be addressed in a straightforward way (e.g., regular half-day absence because a grandparent visits, e.g., every second Tuesday, regular days of non-attendance to spend with a FIFO parent when they are at home etc.). However, there also can be other more complex reasons that require extra sensitivity, such as mental health concerns, college refusal because of a college-based issue, e.g., bullying or the student may be caring for a parent or younger siblings, or because of family violence/disadvantage etc. Reasons for failure to comply with attendance requirements should be explored, including any social, cultural, lingual, economic, geographic, or learning difficulties involved. A college should consider whether a student's absences may place the student at suspected risk of harm and draw to the attention of other agencies where it is appropriate to do so.

Parents (and students as appropriate) should be fully supported to attend and participate in any formal meeting(s). There may be a need for psychological counselling/intervention to assist the student. Colleges are encouraged to contact their AISWA allocated Inclusive Education Consultant and/or Psychologist for advice in this regard.

Ideally the college and parent work together to try and manage the student back to regular attendance. For students with an existing documented plan concerning other areas of educational risk, including (but not limited to) an Individual Education Plan or an Individual Behaviour Plan, it is expected that goals and strategies devised for attendance improvement will be built into the existing document. Strategies should be measurable and reviewed and revised regularly. Strategies may involve the student returning to college for less than five days a week, the college providing work for the student to do at home with a view to getting the student back to regular attendance. If and as different improvement strategies are exhausted without success, during any

subsequent meeting(s), the college should give the parent the opportunity to explain why the strategies previously attempted have not been successful.

Every occurrence of the college's contact (personal, phone, email, SMS, letter, social media) with the parent/guardian should be recorded as well as the strategies employed and/or agreements entered as part of managing problematic absences with a view to managing a student back to regular attendance.

While circumstances around these type of absences can be very complex, situations where the college believes that it is more a case of truancy and it is not being supported by the parent/guardian in its endeavours to re-engage the student, the college can contact the Department of Education's attendance team for assistance, possible referral to an attendance advisory panel. The attendance teams are based in more than one location, so the college would contact the team closest to its location while there is provision in the Act for assistance with attendance issues for Government and Non-Government students, there can be variation in the degree of assistance that may be provided. However, the college should contact the relevant team, by email, so that there is at least a record of an effort to seek assistance.

ATTENDANCE FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURE

On the day of the absence

At approximately 9.00am each day the Attendance Officer will send an SMS to the registered mobile phone number of the parent or guardian of all students marked absent. The Attendance Officer will process the replies to each SMS.

At approximately 10am, the Attendance Officer will begin telephoning the parents/guardians of students who are absent and who have not provided the College with an explanation for the absence.

The Attendance Officer will ensure that all rolls are marked at the required times and that any discrepancies in student attendance are investigated in a timely manner.

If a student cannot be located, the Attendance Officer will act as outlined in the College Missing Student Procedures.

After the day of the absence

Once per week the Attendance Officer will check a *Student Attendance Report* from SEQTA and email or telephone the parents of students who have been recorded as absent from a half day or full day of college and have not provided the College with a reason for the absence.

Children whose whereabouts are unknown

If all attempts to locate a student have failed after 15 college days and the college has not received advice that the student has enrolled at another college, the Principal or their delegate is to refer the student to the Children Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown list through the Enrolments Office.

Relevant legislation

College Education Act, 1999

Sections 21 (1) (f) 22 – 26, 28, 30 – 33, 40

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)

Related College Policies

Duty of Care

Excursions, Incursions and Camps Policy

Tours Policy

Child Protection Policy

Secondary Assessment Policy – Student Organiser

Attendance Marking and Follow-up Procedures