



# **IRFAN COLLEGE**

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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## **Student Attendance Policy**

### **Rationale**

Attendance at school is compulsory, five days a week. Apart from the legal requirements for attendance, it is important that students gain continuity in their education in order to move ahead as they should. Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Irfan College, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitors part or whole day absences. The teachers ensure that lateness and absence both are being recorded and communicated to parents to improve the education of all students.

### **Aim**

The Principal and teaching staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- Providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- Recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- Maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.
- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents are required to abide by the law as it pertains to school attendance in accordance with the *Education Act 1990*. As such parents are expected to:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Explain the absences of their children promptly to the school by sending a letter or contacting the office.
- Provide medical certificate where applicable.
- Take effective measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.
- The parents who use the College bus service are advised to contact the bus driver the night before, or before the morning run if their child will not be using the service that day and the reason for their absence.

#### **Student**

- Attend school regularly and arrive at school on time.
- Provide a note for an unexplained absence.
- All students are to provide notes/letters written by parents to explain absence within seven school days.

#### **Office Administration Staff**

- Place information about student absence on student file.

- Email Class/Roll Call teacher when advised by parent/guardian about a student's absence.
- Enter late students into Sentral and provide students with a late slip which the student must give to their Class/Roll Call teacher on entering the classroom.
- Verbal and telephone messages relating to absences are to be noted, dated in phone log and entered on sentral.
- Ensure that information about students signing out early from school is accurately recorded in Sentral.
- Enter information about long term absences and advise the Class/Roll Call teacher via (email).
- Monitor the Sentral attendance and advise the Principal or his delegate when letters remain unanswered.
- Generate an Absence Report and provide to the Principal or his delegate on a daily basis.
- If a student is late to school for more than 3 times in a fortnightly cycle (without notes), the Principal or his delegate will be informed by the Office Admin and will then arrange for the parents to be contacted.
- The school bus driver will update the Office Admin assistant every morning any SMS messages received on the College mobile. The Office Admin staff will then record in the Irfan College Absence Action Sheet, and the Sentral record must be updated with the required code.
- If a student is absent for 3 consecutive days without the parents contacting the school, the Principal or his delegate will be alerted and arrange for the parents to be contacted.
- In the case of minor injury, the injury will be addressed promptly and the student will return to class. Sickbay is for short term assistance and acts as a first-aid station only.

#### **Classroom teacher /Roll Call teacher**

- Enter the names of the students who are absent accurately in Sentral, using the correct codes (a copy of the AIS school attendance codes is attached as separate document).
- Teachers are required to mark attendance of students on Sentral by 9.10am.
- Monitor student attendance and frequently remind students of the need to bring a note when returning from absence or when leaving school to attend an appointment.
- Keep absence notes in the folder provided separately for each student.
- Teachers must retain records of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents.
- If teachers receive verbal explanations from parents, they should update the Sentral records using the approved codes.
- The Sentral roll will be adjusted by the Roll Call/Class Teachers to include the reason once a note/letter from parent is provided by the student.
- Contact parent/guardian after 3 days of unexplained/unauthorised absence and follow up regularly if absence continues.
- Inform Principal or his delegate of ongoing absences for a student.

- Be alert to any other patterns of non-attendance (e.g absent every Monday and coming late or leaving early too often). Follow up with the parents and notify the Admin.
- If the child's rate of attendance has fallen below 90% overall in any half term then a letter generated from Sentral is sent to parents by the Roll Call/Class teacher listing all absences. If the absences are unexplained then the reasons for unexplained absences need to be provided by the parents.
- Send a written request and absentee slips to the parents/guardians of students who have not provided explanations for absences.

### **Coordinator**

- Ensure that Class/Roll Call teachers mark rolls.
- Monitor student attendance when notified that it is an issue.
- Attend meetings scheduled to discuss student attendance issues.
- Train teachers about the policy and procedure for roll marking and attend to any difficulties they may overcome.
- Students with unexplained/unacceptable patterns of attendance will be referred to the Principal.

### **Principal**

- Attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students. The information must include the following:
  - Students name, age and address.
  - Name and contact telephone of parent/guardian.
  - Collecting background information.
  - Information of previous school/pre-enrolment for a student older than 6 years.
  - Destination of student leaving the school and notifying the Home School Liaison Officer at DET if the destination of the student of mandatory school age is unknown.
  - Data on absence where a student is absent for 30 days, the Principal should access the mandatory reporters section of the Keep Them Safe website <http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/> to determine if whether a report is required.
- Must ensure College staff is trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised.
- Teachers must know the procedures in this document before marking the attendance and following up absences.
- Teachers also must understand how an absence should be marked on Sentral using the approved codes.
- All new teaching staff must be trained and provided with student attendance policy.
- At the end of the week the Principal or his delegate will follow up any unexplained attendance.

If, following contact via letter or email, the parents/guardians explanation is deemed satisfactory, the accurate cause of absence must be recorded and entered on Sentral. If there has been no response or satisfactory explanation provided within 10 school days of the initial absence, the absence should be recorded as an unexplained absence on Sentral and must also be noted in the student's file. (Manual 3.8)

The Principal must ensure that attendance register is copied to the College server and also to an external device. This device is to be kept off -site and in a secured place.

### **Unsatisfactory Attendance**

It is possible that due to an unsatisfactory record of attendance or frequent lateness, the student will not meet the course outcomes. This could affect a student's eligibility to complete the year successfully and be promoted to the following year level. It is, therefore, important that students cultivate habits of good attendance from the start of the year.

The school recognizes, however, that for a variety of sound reasons – such as illness, dental appointments, family emergencies etc – that students may be late or not attend school every day. In such cases, the student must bring a letter to excuse their lateness or the next day explaining the absence. The letter must be from the student's parent/guardian and signed. All lateness and absences are recorded in the school rolls and are documented in student reports.

Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial in order for these patterns to be reversed.

Indicators of students at risk of developing these patterns include the following:

- Frequent lateness
- Leaving school early
- Missing lessons
- Being the victim 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
- Health issues experienced by the student and/or family members

**Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school based strategies including:**

- Student and parent interviews.
- Reviewing the appropriateness of the student's educational program.
- Development of a school-based attendance improvement plan.
- Referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies.
- Support from school based personnel.
- Documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.

Attendance meetings with parents/guardians and students should be convened following initial contact with the parents/guardians, when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the school. The purpose of these meetings is to review strategies initiated to support the student's attendance. The meeting should establish a shared understanding of accountability and strategies for improving the attendance of the student. Ideally, the student should be involved in the process of problem identification and improvement goal setting.

For ongoing intensive support of students, a student support group should be convened by the Principal and attended by relevant teachers, parents/guardians and the student. Professionals from other agencies may also attend as appropriate with the permission of the parents/guardians. The purposes of this meeting are to ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of the absences and fully appreciate the educational implications for the student, identify the reasons for the student's absences and develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan and/or an Individual Learning Plan.

When the College feels that they have exhausted all strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, the regional office should be contacted to provide additional advice and support. It is important to realize that parents/guardians may be prosecuted if children have recurring unjustified absences from school.

### **Student Extended Absence Request**

The duration of a student extended absence comprises of four weeks in total, two weeks from the school term and two weeks from the term break. If a long-term student absence is anticipated, then a 'Student Extended Absence Request Form' should be filled out **before** the absence and presented to the office admin staff, which is then passed onto the relevant Primary/Secondary Curriculum Coordinator, and Well-being Coordinator for approval. The relevant coordinator will then contact the parents/guardians and inform them of the consequences surrounding the risks of not satisfying the educational requirements of their child. Once the relevant coordinators have reviewed the extended absence request, the forms will be presented to the Principal for his approval. Student extended absence forms can be obtained from college office.

Student Extended absence **will not be approved** if the timeframe exceeds four weeks (two weeks from the school term and two weeks from the term break). If the parents proceed with the non-approved extended absence, it may result in the termination of enrolment or repeating the same grade the following year for satisfactory completion of the course.

If a child is absent through illness or any other unforeseen reason, then a note should be produced on the **first day back to school** and presented to the Classroom/Roll Call teacher. In cases when parents know that an illness or injury will prevent attendance for two or more days, it is advisable to phone the school office and inform the office admin staff. All parents must update their home and emergency details, as advised in the school newsletter.

### **Fractional Truancy**

It is essential that students attend every class in a day. Classroom/Subject teachers mark rolls every period (Secondary) and will inform Wellbeing coordinator if a student is absent

from class without approval. The Wellbeing coordinator will follow up with students who truant.

Unauthorized absence is treated as a discipline issue and will result in sanctions such as detention. Parents are informed of such breaches.

### **Lateness to school**

Students arriving late to school must:

- Report to the office immediately on arrival at school and receive a late slip.
- The late slip is to be signed by the office staff.
- The student will then report to the class with a late slip for that period. The student will give the late slip to the class/subject teacher. The class/roll call teacher will follow up with parents where a student has been late more than three days per fortnight.

### **Early leave**

If a student needs to leave school early, the following procedure applies:

- Parents must sign out at the front office and receive an early leave pass.
- The office staff will record the time of the early leave pass on Sentral.
- To avoid disruptions of class parents are advised not to pick up their child between 3.00pm to 3.30pm.

### **Strategies to promote 100% attendance**

- Developing a positive school culture
- Recording and following up student absences
- Monitoring student non attendance
- Providing intervention and support

### **Record Keeping**

The Principal is responsible for maintaining records. All absentee notes, medical certificates, letters sent to parents and student attendance improvement plan must be kept in student folder. A copy of the weekly attendance register of each class must be stored on the College server and backed up each week on to an external device and kept in a safe and secure place offsite. The school maintains its attendance records through the Sentral database.

The register for enrolments must be retained for a minimum of 5 years before archiving. The register for daily attendances must be retained for a period 7 years after the last entry.

### **Attached Documents:**

Attachment 1: Irfan College absence action information record on sentral

Attachment 2: Verbal /phone message recording form

Attachment 3: Exemption from Attending School under s25

Attachment 4: Student Extended Absence Request Form



**Attachment 2**



**OFFICE PHONE LOG**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Message from: \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal

Phone

Reason for Absence:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Message taken by: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please maintain confidentiality of information provided by parents)*



### **Attachment 3: Exemption from Attending School under s25**

Section 25 of the Education Act 1990 delegated the power to grant and cancel Certificates of exemption from being enrolled in and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances to the Principal of a non-government school.

Exemptions during the year can be granted for exceptional domestic circumstances exceptional circumstances such as health, employment in the entertainment industry and participation in elite sporting events.

Parents must apply for a certificate of exemption using the leave from the College Office and submit this to the Principal for approval. All copies of certificates of exemption are kept with school/student files.

Only the School Principal can grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12-month period. A Certificate of Exemption cannot be granted for holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods.

The school will send applications for over 100 days in a year to the Minister's delegate at the Student Welfare Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Communities.

If the student does not return to school as per the return date indicated on the Exemption Certificate, the Administration Staff will contact the parents after 3 days and seek an explanation of absence. If there is no response from parents, the Administration Staff will call the emergency contact listed on the student's file. If the parents do not notify the school of the extended leave of student absence for more than 30 days, the school Principal or his delegate will notify the Department of Education and Communities (with the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details).

#### **Procedures**

1. The Parent should approach the Administration Office at least 5 weeks before the requested leave and obtain an "Student Long Term Absence Request" form. This form needs to be completed by a parent/guardian and returned to the Administration office for approval by the Principal. Supporting documentation must be attached to the application to demonstrate that an exemption is in the best interests of the student.
2. The Principal will approve or deny the leave. If approved, the Principal will issue a "Certificate for Exemption from Attendance at School". The Principal may grant exemptions due to exceptional domestic circumstances, other exceptional circumstances such as health of the student, the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991, or participation in elite sporting or entertainment events.
3. If denied, the Principal will communicate to the parent/guardian. Reasons for denial may include if the student has been the subject of a Community Services (Department of Human Services) report or Child Wellbeing Unit report and for whom unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm remain or if the requested number of days for leave is unsatisfactory.
4. The Principal will request the coordinator's to organise work to be completed by the Student while on leave and this will be communicated by the coordinators to the Parents.

#### **Parents requesting for leave not covered under s25**

Parents requesting leave for their child (ren) during the course of the year for reasons where an exemption is not possible, must apply to the Principal in writing. Approval for request of leave is at the discretion of the Principal. A Certificate of Exemption cannot be granted for holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods.

