Attendance, Illness and Truancy Policy 2016

Aims

A. To keep accurate attendance records.

B. To be aware of the reason for absences and to monitor long term attendance of students.

C. To minimise the impact of frequent or extended absences on a student's wellbeing and educational outcomes.

Definitions

A. **Authorised Absence -** An absence where the reason provided by the parent is considered to be legitimate and deemed acceptable by the principal.

B. **Non-Attending Students -** A non-attending student includes one whose**:**

- location is known but they are not actively engaged in an education program;

- contact is still possible with themselves or their parent/s but they are not engaged in an education program.

C. **Student Whereabouts Unknown [SWU] -** children who are missing from schools and educational programs in Western Australia.

D. **Unauthorised Vacation –** in term family holiday that is not deemed as necessary by the coordinator

Principles

A. Establishment and maintenance of a positive attendance career will be encouraged for all students

B. Accurate attendance records will be kept for each student

C. Attendance documentation will be retained

D. Persistent student absence will be addressed

E. Assistance will be sought from outside agencies to improve attendance

Responsibilities

A. **Council**

1. Monitoring and revising this policy as needed

B. **Coordinator**

1. Monitor trends in attendance records

2. Oversee records to ensure that accurate and current records of enrolment and attendance on EasySchool are kept.

3. To follow up truancy cases and/or refer them to relevant agencies as specified in this policy.

4. Meet with parents and develop attendance plans in the event that absence or late arrivals impact on student wellbeing

5. Review Students Whereabouts Unknown [SWU] lists supplied by AISWA

6. Initiate and Submit SWU request forms in all instances of absence that exceed 15 days

7. Oversee attendance Census

8. Record whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised

9. Send Unauthorised Vacation letters

10. 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.

11. Follow up on all cases of attendance that is under 90%

12. Retain attendance records and Intervention Records in line with School Education Regulations

C. Administration Staff

1. Update the hard copy enrolment register

2. Keep EasySchool enrolment records up to date

3. Record attendance daily and follow up on absences and late attendance via sending SMS to parent/guardian

4. Enter SMS responses in corresponding student record

5. Inform the Coordinator of 'Unauthorised Vacation' notification from parents

6. Send transfer Notes for new students

7. Respond to transfer notes from a students' new school

8. Provide a record of unexplained absences to parents for explanation and sign off at the end of each term, in the event that a response is not received via SMS.

9. Record absences and instances of late arrival on semester reports for each student

D. Teaching Staff

1. Keep half day attendance records and monitor attendance of students in their class.

2. Record students as present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction

3. Record arrival times in the event of persistent late attendance

4. Initiate parent meetings with parents of Non-Attending students or where absences are affecting a students' achievement of outcomes or social wellbeing.

5. Develop Documented Plans [Individual Education Plan or Collaborative Action Plan] for students who are at Educational Risk due to absence. *See Behaviour Guidance Policy*

6. Liaise with Allied Health professionals, parents to develop documented plans

E. Parents

1. To keep teachers/ administration informed of reasons for absences.

2. To work cooperatively with the school if their child is absent chronically or for an extended period.

Related Legislation

A. School Education Act 1999

B. Education Regulations, 2000

C. Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008 (WA)

Related Kerry Street Documentation

A. Attendance record (Class Rolls)

B. EasySchool attendance Record

C. Record of phone messages
D. Enrolment Register

E. Students at Educational Risk Policy

F. Behaviour Guidance Policy

Further Reading

A. Improving Attendance: A resource package for students, Government of Western Australia

B. Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

Contact Person

Enquires relating to this policy should be directed to the School Coordinator or the Council President.

Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Attachments

A. Procedure

B. Operation Redirect – Daytime Safe Place Truancy Reduction Initiative with WA Police

C. SWU request form

D. In-Term Vacation Letter

Authorisation and Review

A. This policy was authorised by the Kerry Street Council on 14/3/05

B. Reviewed by meeting of staff and council on 13/1/06

C. This policy was reviewed September 2012

D. Reviewed 09/2013

E. Reviewed 19/09/2016

Helen Sugars Duff

F. To be reviewed Feb 2018

Attendance, Illness and Truancy Policy - Attachment A
Procedure

Attendance Records

1. Attendance records are kept according to the School Education Act 1999.

2. Parents are asked to inform the school when a student is, or is expected to be absent from school, the reason for the absence and the expected return date to school. This may be done verbally or in writing, to the class teacher, the Coordinator or the administrator. This information is passed on to the class teacher. In the case of a phone message, the absence will be recorded in the 'absences record' in office and on EasySchool.

3. If a student is absent without explanation the administrator will send an SMS via EasySchool software to parent/guardians on the day of the absence.

4. When new students enrol, a transfer note will be sent to the student's previous school within 5 days of enrolment.

5. An enrolment register will be collated with the enrolment date and leaving date of all students.

Truancy

1. In the rare case of truancy, the matter would be handled according to our Behaviour Guidance Policy. This would include a meeting with the student and their parent and a Collaborative Action Plan or Individual Education Plan developed.

2. If a student regularly truanted, the matter may be referred to an agency outside the school and the Non-Government School Psychology service engaged.

3. If a student is absent for a prolonged period, the following methods of contact are recommended:

    - telephone parent/s;

    - written communication to parent/s (social Media is not an appropriate medium);

    - conduct a home visit;

    - telephone emergency contacts;

    - check previous school;

    - query relatives and peers attending the school;

    - contact relevant agencies (if involved) e.g. Department of Child Protection;

    - consultation with staff at the Regional Education Office; consultation with STS officer.

4. Under the Student Tracking System (STS), if a student discontinues attending school and a notice of transfer (or letter of withdrawal from parent/s) is not received, the school will take all reasonable steps to locate the student and restore attendance. The department of

Education (DOE) Attendance Officer will be consulted along with interagency resources such as Juvenile Justice, Department for Child Protection or the Western Australia Police.

5. The *School Education Act (1999)* requires that non-attending students remain on the current roll of the school's enrolment register and have their non-attendance recorded. These students will not be moved to the former roll until advised by the School Tracking Coordinator (STC) to move the student to the former roll or a transfer note is received.

6. The Coordinator will consult with the Regional Education Office staff to confirm if they are aware of the whereabouts of any students thought to be missing

7. 'Missing students' will be reported to the Student Tracking Coordinator (STC) by lodging a "Student Whereabouts Unknown" (STU) form (Attachment C)

Chronic Illness or Health Issues

1. Chronic illness and health related absences are more commonly encountered at our school. Cases will be dealt with on an individual basis and all effort made to minimise the impact of repeated absences from school. A part time schooling arrangement may be entered into, work may be sent home by the class teacher, or a liaison with hospital education facilities may occur.

2. Class teachers will monitor absences of this sort and initiate an arrangement with parents (see Students at Educational Risk Policy).

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Attendance, Illness and Truancy Policy - Attachment B

Operation Redirect

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OPERATION REDIRECT– DAYTIME SAFE PLACE

TRUANCY REDUCTION INITIATIVE WITH WA POLICE

The WA Police have developed a Truancy Reduction Initiative and have had discussions with the Department of Education, Catholic Education Office and AISWA regarding its implementation. T purpose of the initiative is to reduce truancy rates in schools in the metropolitan area.

The initiative will involve police collecting students who are truanting, confirming their enrolment information with AISWA [AISWA will contact the student's nominated school to confirm enrolment] and returning the students to school.

If a student enrolled in your school is collected by police, a Coordinator Regional Operations or Coordinator Regional Services from either the South Metropolitan or North Metropolitan Regional Office will call the school and arrange for a nominated staff member at the school to meet the police officer and student at the school office. The police officer will be required to complete a parental information slip outlining the incident.

It is expected that the school will contact the student's parents (or caregiver) to notify them of the incident and to explain that the parental information slip will be sent home [a sample parental information slip is attached]. The schools should keep a copy of the parental information slip, record the student's absence and enter a code representing the truancy and enter notes in the relevant attendance records.

This is an interagency initiative between all education sectors and the Police, however collection of students is initiated by the police, not the school. It is important for parents to be aware of the initiative prior to commencement. Included with this letter is sample information for inclusion in the school newsletter to inform parents and the community. Also is included is a list of points to explain to students at assembly or through another avenue of communication of this process. These are generic statements written to suit students of all ages and principals may wish to modify them to suit the particular school environment. The police are keen that parents and students are informed of this initiative and know schools will use the most appropriate means to do this.

In summary, should a suspected truant be picked up by the police the following will happen:

- The student will be requested to provide evidence that they have permission to be out of school (e.g. have a pass noting an appointment; evidence of attending work placement etc.) and if they cannot produce this they will be requested to identify the school they attend.
- If the student advises that they attend an independent school, the police will contact AISWA. AISWA will then contact the nominated school to confirm the enrolment. If the student is not enrolled at the school, there will be no further contact. If the student is enrolled, and is in fact truanting, AISWA will confirm this with the police.
- The police will bring the student to the school and the nominated school contact person will meet the officer and the student and complete the parental information slip.

- It is expected the school will contact the parent or caregiver to inform them of the event and will send the parental information slip to the parent or caregiver.
- Once the student has been returned to the school, the school can proceed to implement their own absentee processes.

The director of AISWA asks that schools cooperate with the agencies involved in this initiative and that each school has a contact person available should we need to call the school to advise that the police have picked up a potential truant from your school. Ensuring your reception staff are aware of who to put the call through to will be important so that student enrolment details are confirmed in a timely manner and that students are detained by police for a minimum period of time.

There will be some public announcements made by the Police Media Unit about the Truancy Reduction Initiative in the near future.

Department
Education

REQUEST TO PLACE A STUDENT ONTO THE STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU) LIST

- Please complete all required information.
- It is recommended that schools consult with relevant Regional Education Office staff or the Student Tracking Coordinator.
- This template is available electronically at http://bswb.det.wa.edu.au
- For additional enquiries please telephone the Student Tracking Coordinator on (08) 9264 4988.
- Please email this completed form to the Student Tracking Coordinator at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au or fax to (08) 9238 2285.

Student Information

School name and code:	

Student surname:		First name:	

Date of Birth:	/ /	Gender:	Male ☐ Female ☐	School Curriculum and Standards Authority ID: (Secondary Students)		Indigenous:	Yes ☐ No ☐

Year level:		Date of enrolment:	/ /	Last date of attendance: (Mandatory)	/ /

Parent/s name:	

Parent/s address and contact number/s:	

Attempts made to locate student (please complete all boxes)

Written communication	☐	Emergency telephone numbers contacted	☐	Relatives or peer group queried	☐
Phone calls home	☐	Transfer documentation checked	☐	Relevant agencies (if involved) contacted	☐
Home visit	☐	Previous school information checked	☐	Other	

Consulted with Regional Education Office: Yes ☐   No ☐

Region: _____

Name of Regional Educational Officer authorising this request.

_____

Consulted with Student Tracking Coordinator:

Yes ☐   No ☐

Actions taken to locate student
Please record enquiries already made and any anecdotal information which may aid in locating this student.

School Information

Referred by (person entering request):	

Principal's approval:	Yes ☐ No ☐	Principal's name:	

School email address: (this is the address the email confirmation will be sent to)	

Date of request:	/ /

Kerry Street Community School

20 Forrest Road,
(Corner Kerry Street)
Hamilton Hill WA 6163

Phone: (08) 9335 1471
Email:
kerrystreet@kerrystreet.wa.edu.au
Web: www.kerrystreet.wa.edu.au

(Date)

(Parent/Carer Name)

(Parent/Carer Address)

Dear (Parent/carer)

Thank you for notifying the school that you plan to take (Student Name) out of class for an in-term family vacation.

Research recently undertaken by the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, *Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts*, has found a clear link between student absence and achievement in school. Each day a child is absent from school has a direct impact on their educational outcomes.

Establishing and maintaining a positive attendance career for all students ensures success in their future study and career pathways. When a student misses one school day per fortnight they will, by Year 9, have missed one entire year of school.

Consequently, your request to take (Student Name) out of school for an in-term family holiday will not be approved and the absence will be recorded as an Unauthorised Vacation.

Yours Sincerely,

Karen Kennedy

Coordinator