



Waddington Primary School

An Independent Public School

SMART SCHOOL – SMART KIDS

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Attendance Policy and Procedures

The Department of Education aims to improve attendance of students in public schools by providing direct support to those students in greatest need. The Department's approach is based on the mutual obligation of schools, parents and communities to develop strategies that link directly to the local causes of student absence.

[Recent research](#) clearly shows the need to engage students and establish positive attendance behaviours in the early years of schooling; to support student attendance at transition points and to raise parent and community awareness of the fact that, where academic achievement is concerned, every day counts.

Attendance concerns are best managed by whole school planning for student engagement, early identification and intervention.

Principals will manage student attendance in accordance with the *Student Attendance Procedures*. This includes:

- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- responding to Department requests for reporting and disclosure of attendance data;
- managing alternative attendance arrangements where these are appropriate;
- addressing student absence;
- developing plans for students with persistent absence; and
- retaining all relevant documentation.

Regional Executive Directors will assist in the management of cases of persistent student absence in accordance with the *Student Attendance Procedures*.

Attendance Data and Recording:

Schools must record daily attendance for all enrolled students in accordance with the School Education Act (1999) (Section 28).

Accurate record-keeping of attendance is vital in satisfying **duty of care requirements** and in generating useful attendance data.

SMART SCHOOL - SMART KIDS

The staff of Waddington Primary School will:

- keep accurate attendance records for every student enrolled at the school (including attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions for Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Primary students);
- record whether a student's absence was authorised or unauthorised according to the following list of codes;
- record a student as: **present** for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction; and
- **present** if they are on a school-approved activity or attending off-site under a section 24 arrangement;
- only release a student from class upon the receipt of a red card demonstrating sign out has taken place in the front office.

Daily attendance records are maintained in Student Information System (SIS) administration using codes in the lesson attendance module. These codes enable data to be generated to inform local-level planning and monitoring of whole-school and individual student attendance strategies.

Codes for students attending on or off site

/ - Present code, this is the default setting in Lesson Attendance.

E - Educational Activity

This code should be used when the student is participating in an approved educational program such as an excursion, work placement, an off site program (PEAC), or temporary attendance at another school through a Section 24 arrangement. This code is not classified as an absence.

M - Medical or Sick Bay

The M code should be applied to students when they are on school grounds in the medical or sick bay. This code is not classified as an absence. Sick students that are not at school should be marked with an N – Notified as Sick.

W – Withdrawn Where a student is withdrawn from classroom activities but is still present at school. For example, when a student is sent to the office or a buddy class but is still at school. This code is not classified as an absence.

Codes for students who are late

L – Late

To be used when a student is late to school but is not late enough to be recorded as a half day absence. This code is not classified as an absence. NB: A student is absent if they have attended less than two full hours of continuous instruction.

Codes for Authorised Absences

There are four codes which may be applied when a student's absence has been authorised by the principal.

C - Cultural Absence

Absences authorised for cultural or religious significance to the family such as funerals, sorry time and religious observances. The principal should negotiate the duration of this absence prior to it being taken. If the absence extends beyond the number of agreed days, and no acceptable reason is provided, the additional absences should be recorded with an X (Unacceptable Reason).

N - Notified as Sick

Applied to a student whose reason for absence is due to illness. The principal may request a medical certificate.

R -Reasonable Cause

This code should be used when the principal has deemed the reason provided as acceptable other than an absence due to suspension, cultural absence, illness or family holiday (See code options below).

V – Vacation

This code may be used when the absence has been negotiated in advance and the principal is satisfied that reasonable grounds for authorising the absence apply. If the absence extends beyond the negotiated number of days, and no acceptable reason is provided, the additional absences should be recorded with an X (Unacceptable reason).

Codes for Unauthorised Absences

There are four codes which may be used when a student is absent from school and the principal does not authorise the absence.

K - Unauthorised Vacation

This code identifies students whose parents have taken them on an in-term holiday and the principal has not authorised the absence. A template letter, to notify parents of a decision not to approve an in-term vacation, is available online in both Microsoft Word or in SIS KST format on the STIMS website.

T – Truant

This is to be used for a student that is absent from school and investigation has revealed that the student has truanted. This will usually require a teacher or parent witnessing the student leaving the school grounds or educational program without permission.

U – Unexplained Absence – cause not yet established

To be used when a student is absent and no explanation has yet been provided. This is an unresolved code. Further follow up is required to establish a reason for the absence, and once obtained, the code should be changed accordingly.

X - Unacceptable Reason

This code is to be used when the principal has not approved the reason provided for an absence.

Codes for students not required to attend

Q - Not required to attend

Students in Year 11 and 12 only who are on study or exam leave, and are not on the school site, are to be recorded with this code. This will not be counted as an absence. This code is not to be used for students on the Participation List or students in Year K to Year 10.

Y – School Closure

This code indicates that students are not required to attend on the selected day and effectively reduces the number of half days available for that student. The Y code can be applied to the whole school or a cohort of students. Schools can use this code for critical events, natural disasters, infectious diseases or amending programs. It can be applied to AM, PM or the whole day for a selected date.

Note: This code is applied through the school diary and Lesson Attendance > Parameters > Enforced School Closure.

Z – Suspended

This code is automatically recorded in Lesson Attendance by the Behaviour Module when a student is formally suspended. Schools do not have to record attendance for students when they are on suspension. This code is classified as an authorised absence.

Supporting Procedures

STUDENT ABSENCE

The Staff of Waddington Primary will:

- complete electronic roll daily;
- contact the parent to verify the reason for the absence if a student is absent without a reported reason after three days and/or there are regular repeated unexplained absences;
- inform the principal or student services coordinator if the parent is not contactable or the student has not returned after a reasonable time;
- adjust entries in SIS when parents or responsible people respond to letters sent and provide an explanation for absences;
- continue to remind students to bring in an explanation for their absence;
- refer the matter to the principal or student services coordinator where the explanation for the absence is considered unreasonable;
- refer the matter to the principal or student services coordinator where there are reasonable explanations but regular none attendance.

The Principal or nominee will:

- run attendance reports each five week cycle;
- send letters to parents requesting an explanation for unexplained absences;
- make contact with parents when a student's attendance drops below 90% to investigate the reasons for the student's absence, and record the response on an Attendance Follow Up Sheet (Appendix 1);
- plan improvement strategies; and
- continue to monitor student attendance.

PERSISTENT STUDENT ABSENCE

If attendance does not improve, the principal or nominee will;

- request the parent attends a formal meeting to discuss concerns and plan for improvement;
- develop and implement an attendance improvement plan; (Appendix 2) Case Conference Record and Individual Attendance Plan

At the formal meeting, the principal or nominee will;

- a) reinforce unacceptability of poor attendance;
- b) outline obligatory requirement of school to address absences;

- c) inform parent of their legal responsibilities to ensure attendance and make them aware of the latest research into the adverse effect of poor attendance;
- d) seek to clarify any issues within the school or home that might be contributing to the student's non-attendance;
- e) inform parent of support options available at the school and in the wider community and arrange a referral if necessary;
- f) develop a plan for improvement in consultation with the parent.

If attendance is not successfully restored through actions taken as a result of consultation; the principal or nominee will;

- maintain a process to monitor and review engagement with any plan or agreement developed in the formal meeting.
- document all intervention strategies used to address a student's absence, so that, should it become necessary to proceed to prosecution, it can be clearly established that all reasonably practicable steps to restore attendance have been taken.

Where absence persists, the principal will offer the option of an attendance panel to the parent, the purpose of which is to provide advice and assistance to restore regular attendance (refer to *Guidelines for Attendance Panels*).

MISSING STUDENTS – STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU)

If a student cannot be located within 15 days of the start of an absence, and their parent/s cannot be contacted, the principal or nominee will:

- complete an SWU Request form and email it to the Student Tracking Coordinator at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au; and

retain the student on the school's current enrolment register until email notification is received from the Student Tracking Coordinator that the student has been placed on the SWU list

ALTERNATIVE ATTENDANCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER SECTION 24 OF THE SCHOOL EDUCATION ACT

Where it is deemed to be in the best interests of an enrolled student to undertake an alternative course or program, the principal or nominee of the school in which the student is enrolled will:

- only enter into a section 24 arrangement where a student will undertake a program provided by another school or training organisation, and where the combination of arrangements equates to full-time attendance;
- formalise an alternative attendance arrangement for the student in accordance with section 24 of the *School Education Act 1999*;
- approve the section 24 arrangement and end date the arrangement;

- issue a Certificate of Approval: Alternative Attendance Arrangement (Section 24 Arrangement) outlining the details of the alternative attendance arrangements;

DEFINITIONS

ATTENDANCE PANEL

Is appointed under the *School Education Act 1999* (the Act) to address the persistent non-attendance of a student. The function of the panel is to provide advice and assistance to students and parents in order to secure attendance and, in the event of non-compliance by a student or parent, to issue a certificate required prior to the commencement of a prosecution of a parent under the Act. 2015

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence where the reason provided by the parent is considered to be legitimate and deemed acceptable by the principal.

DOCUMENTED PLAN

An umbrella term used to describe a range of ways of catering for the educational needs of individual or smaller groups of students with identified needs. It is primarily a teaching and learning planning document, and it identifies short to medium term educational outcomes. Documented plans may take a variety of forms, including:

Individual Education Plans (IEP); Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP); Individual Transition Plans (ITP); and Risk Management Plans (RMP).

PARENT

In relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child.

STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU) LIST

A list, usually referred to as the SWU List, containing the names of children who are missing from schools and educational programs in Western Australia. This list is distributed by the Department to administrators in non-government schools and some other agencies by agreement.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

School Education Act 1999 (WA)

School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)

Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)

Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008 (WA)

RELATED DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Behaviour Management in Schools

Duty of Care for Students

Enrolment Policy and Procedures

Excursions Policy and Procedures

Family Court Orders in Schools

Student Health Care

Student Attendance Policy All policy and procedural statements contained within this document are lawful orders for the purposes of section 80(a) of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA) and are therefore to be observed by all Department of Education employees