



ATTENDANCE POLICY

OVERVIEW

This policy provides guidelines and legislative requirements regarding improving student attendance.

PURPOSE

Under the *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* (SA) educational facilities are required to ensure that students enrolled at the school are attending the school or participating in an approved learning program and to maintain the appropriate attendance registers.

Rivergum Christian College actively implements student attendance policies and procedures in line with this framework.

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 the College.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Rivergum Christian College expects all students to attend school regularly and on time, to maximise engagement and learning.

Rivergum Christian College:

- shares the responsibility of student attendance with staff, parents/caregivers and students ensures that school staff, students and parents/caregivers are provided with information on attendance requirements and legal obligations.
- implements strategies to actively monitor and support full student attendance.
- maintains records of attendance at the College, including late arrivals, early departures, approved leave, explained and unexplained absences
- investigates occasions of unexplained absence and occasions of repeated or regular absenteeism
- will analyse attendance data to inform the review of policies and procedures.

REASONS FOR STUDENT ABSENCE

The Principal needs to be provided with a genuine reason that prevents the child attending school.

A child may be absent when they:

- are sick or infirm
- have an infectious or contagious disease or are in quarantine
- need to attend medical, dental or other appointments
- have a family bereavement
- are taking a family holiday



- are reasonably required to care for a member of the child's family.

If a parent or guardian wishes to take their child out of school temporarily, they are required to apply for an exemption from school attendance using the Form A.

Exemptions for part-time attendance are only given under exceptional circumstances and require supporting documentation. This process is completed using the Form C.

Students may be suspended from the College in accordance with the behaviour management policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff

All staff are responsible for encouraging positive attendance patterns.

Principal

The Principal is ultimately responsible for implementing the 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 the relevant Deputy Principal. The Principal ensures parents/caregivers are informed 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). The Principal is also responsible for ensuring staff are aware of, and are supported to follow, the attendance practices of the College.

Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal is responsible for the visible support of, and adherence to, this policy by promoting a culture of attendance at the College by students. The Deputy Principal will ensure record-keeping and attendance procedures are followed by staff (including the points above as outlined in the Principal section). 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.

Coordinators

Coordinators are responsible for monitoring and reviewing student attendance and for reporting to the relevant Deputy Principal.

Administration staff

Administration staff are responsible for collating daily attendance records and following up on unexplained absences. They create a weekly absentee report and report any concerns to the Deputy Principal to be followed up. Administration staff manage late arrivals and early departures of students and enter this information in the attendance system.

Teaching staff

Teachers of primary students



Teachers of primary students will monitor unusual patterns of attendance and contact the parents. After initial contact is made with parents, Primary teachers will forward any continuing concerning absenteeism to Deputy Principal for further follow up.

Care Group Teachers and Class Teachers

Care Group Teachers and Class Teachers are responsible for marking the roll and forwarding any notes or requests regarding attendance to Administration staff. They are responsible for referring parents/caregivers to the Principal for extended leave applications. Care Group Teachers / 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.

Teachers of secondary students

Teachers of secondary students are responsible for marking the roll each lesson.

To encourage attendance, all teachers:

- provide a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage each child and offer opportunities for success
- contribute to the analysis of attendance and make appropriate adjustments to encourage attendance
- initially follow up non-attendance
- will make Mandatory Notifications, as required.

Student Wellbeing Team

The Student Wellbeing Team will play a key role in social and emotional matters which influence student attendance.

Students

Students are responsible for reporting to their teacher punctually at the beginning of the school day and each lesson. Students who arrive late will report to Administration before going to their classroom. Students are responsible for ensuring they sign out at Administration should they leave College prior to the end of the school day. Year 12 students are permitted to arrive late/depart early as per their academic timetable and also during the lunch break. Students are expected to engage appropriately in the education program as negotiated.

Parents/Caregivers

Parents/caregivers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives punctually to begin school each day.

Parents/caregivers are responsible for collecting or otherwise making appropriate arrangements for their child to depart the school at the end of the school day, unless:

- students are participating in a school activity

Should a child in Reception to Year 9 need to leave the College prior to the end of the school day, parents/caregivers are responsible for signing the child out at Administration.

Students in Years 10 to 12 require parent/caregiver permission to leave the College prior to the end of the school day.



Parents/caregivers are to:

- provide information to the College that assists with their child's learning
- enable their child to attend punctually and regularly, and comply with the education program being offered
- provide an explanation when the child is absent
- apply to the Principal for any leave (eg. family holidays) prior to the event
- work with the College on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

Staff will be provided training in all aspects of this policy.

GOVERNMENT REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE (RESPONDING AND MONITORING)

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

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

- 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.
- 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 from 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 the College are investigated in an appropriate manner with the child and parent/caregiver.

The College will contact the parent/caregiver where a student has a pattern of non-attendance. Attendance issues are followed through, and any action is recorded, as appropriate. The College will



maintain ongoing communication with the parent/caregivers 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 must be sought from the School Principal. Where absences longer than three days are planned, it is appropriate to apply for an exemption from the school (Form A). Exemptions are not automatically granted and are dependent on a decision by the Principal.

DELEGATIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

The following information has been provided by AISSA.

Temporary exemptions

The Principal has the authority to approve temporary exemptions up to 12 months . 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 A must be completed.

Permanent exemptions

Students under 15 cannot be given a permanent exemption unless there are strong recommendations from the College and the Education Department.

PROCESS FOR EXTENDED STUDENT ABSENCE OF MORE THAN THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS

If a parent/caregiver is planning a student absence of more than three consecutive days for family holiday, travel or other reason, the following process is to be followed:

- parent/caregiver to notify the Principal in advance by letter or email
- the Principal may request a meeting with the parents/caregivers
- application for Exemption (Form A) is forwarded to the family to complete (parent to sign)
- parent/caregiver to return the Form A to the Principal to complete details and sign off on dates and details
- further approval may be required by the Executive Director of AISSA
- the College will advise the family of approved leave details in writing
- relevant staff are informed by the Principal, including Administration staff
- Administration staff will record details appropriately
- the Application for Exemption Form and associated correspondence will be filed in the electronic student file.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

Attendance	Response	Responsibility	Documentation
Three consecutive days unexplained absence or irregular attendance pattern	Roll taken	Care Group / Class teacher	TASS
	Attendance monitored weekly	Care Group / Class teacher	TASS
	Student Wellbeing Team notified	Care Group / Class teacher	
	Telephone call, note or home visit	Care Group / Class teacher	Contact with parent noted on TASS
Further 3 days unexplained absence	Roll taken	Care Group / Class teacher	Note in TASS
	Head of School informed	Care Group / Class teacher	
	Telephone call, formal letter or home visit. Attendance Improvement plan with parents and student	Coordinator Relevant Deputy Student Wellbeing Team	Attendance improvement plan
	Student identified as 'at risk'	Student Wellbeing Team contacted meet with student	SWT records
	If truancy suspected contact relevant authority	Deputy Principal	TASS
Unexplained absences/unsatisfactory attendance continues	Roll taken	Care Group / Class teacher	TASS
	Review attendance improvement plan with parents and student	Deputy Principal Principal	TASS
	Engagement and attendance officer contacted	Deputy Principal Principal	
	Police referral	Deputy Principal Principal	

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Related Policies	Behaviour Improvement Policy Child Protection Policy Duty of Care Policy	
Responsibility	Principal	
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