ATTENDANCE POLICY

Document Approval

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Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Changes	Author	Next Review Date
1.0	01/01/2021	New Policy	Sowilo Community High School	03/2022
	12/08/2021	Addition of time frame for reporting SWU student	Sowilo Council	03/2022
	28/04/2022	Changed hours of school on page 8.	Sowilo Council	03/2023
	9/03/2023	Reviewed – spelling errors	Sowilo Council	03/2024

Note

Policies are reviewed and updated annually unless urgent updates are required due to process, legislation or related policy changes.

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Related Legislation and Policies

1. Legislation

This policy is linked to the following legislation.

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Children and Community Services Amendment Act 2008
- Teachers Registration Act 2012
- School Education Act 1999
- School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)
- AS/NZS ISO 31000: 2018 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines.
- Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4360:2004 – Risk Management.
- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA)
- Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 (WA).
- Public Health Act 2016 (WA)

2. Related Policies/Guidelines/Supporting Documents

This policy is linked to the following school policies and guidelines.

- Enrolment Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Reporting Policy
- Privacy and Compliance Policy
- Record Keeping and Retention Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Welfare Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Emergency Management Policy
- Inclusion Policy

Overview

1. Policy Statement

Under the School Education Act 1999 it is a requirement that school-aged children attend school and it is the duty of the parents/guardians to make sure that a student who is at compulsory school age goes to school.

This policy provides information on and outlines:

- The school's attendance expectations.
- The processes used to record and monitor attendance and absences.
- The support provided to students to assist them in achieving positive attendance rates.

This policy has been reviewed and approved by Sowilo Community High School – School Council.

2. Attendance Expectations

As a school, we work to create a positive educational environment so that our students feel supported enough to attend school safely. We believe that regular attendance at school is essential for students to be able to achieve academically and remain eligible for relevant funding.

In lieu of this, our focus is to:

- Work with parents/guardians if safe and appropriate to make sure the student attends school.
- Create a positive and safe educational environment to encourage out students to attend each day.
- Monitor daily attendance and provide support to students to achieve regular attendance rates.
- Where safe, communicate with parents/guardians regarding unexplained student absences from school.

3. Legislation

School Education Act (1999)

Part 2, Division 3 of the WA School Education Act 1999 sets out attendance requirements that all Western Australian schools must satisfy.

4. Policy Communication

This policy is:

- Available for download on our school website.
- Available to Parents/Guardians upon request.
- Provided to new staff at the start of their employment.
- Stored in soft copy on our school drive.
- Stored as hard copy with our administration team.

All Sowilo Community High School all staff and members of the School Council are expected to be understand the requirements of the policy and their responsibilities.

Definitions

The following definitions are relevant to this policy.

Term	Definition
Parent	For the purpose of this policy, the term parents refer to parent, guardian, carer.
Care school	A school established and registered solely for the education of students at educational risk.
Education Risk	A student is at educational risk if he/she is of compulsory school age but unable to participate in mainstream schooling due to one or more of the following reasons: • Is disengaged as evidenced by persistent non-attendance or a failure or refusal to enrol. • Experiences learning difficulties or disadvantages that cannot be effectively catered for by mainstream school. • Is affected by life risk factors including domestic violence, abuse, homelessness, transience, addiction, chronic ill-health or pregnancy. • Is subject to a Children's Court Order. • Is a persistent or serious juvenile offender.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are referenced in this document.

1. School Council

The School Council must:

- Support the school to implement the Attendance Policy.
- Assist in policy review and provide subject matter expertise as required.
- Understand their responsibilities as outlined in Attendance Policy.

2. School Coordinator/Principal

The School Coordinator/Principal must:

- Always prioritise the safety of students when implementing the Attendance Policy.
- Make sure student attendances and absences are recorded daily by the Administration Team.
- Investigate when a student's attendance level regularly falls below 40%. Work with the student and their parents/guardians to develop a plan to improve a student's attendance.
- Make sure all school staff understand their responsibilities as part of the policy including the reporting or accurate attendance information and managing privacy and confidentiality.

3. Welfare Team

The Welfare Team must:

- Always prioritise the safety of the student.
- Understand their responsibilities as listed in the policy and work with students in their care to achieve regular attendance.
- Monitor, manage and negotiate attendance challenges with students and their parents/guardians.

4. Staff

All staff must:

- Always prioritise the safety of the students.
- Understand their responsibilities as listed in the policy.
- Inform the administration team of student absences in their classes.

5. Parents/Guardians

Parents should:

- Understand the requirements of the policy.
- Notify the school if their child is going to be absent from school.

Attendance Procedures

We will always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our students. By providing a caring, safe and supportive environment we can reinforce the importance of attending school to achieve academic progression to our student body. Our aim is to have our students attend school during normal hours of operation (8.30am – 4pm) as often as possible and only be absent from school with permission from the parents/guardians and/or the School Coordinator/Principal.

Attendance is taken at the start of the day by a member of the Administration Team. Class teachers take attendance during each of their classes. Absences are reported to and followed up by the Administration Team with information recorded in SEQTA, the school's Learning Management Portal which records attendance and academic progress.

1. Students absent from school.

If a student is to be absent from school/classes we request that parents/guardians contact the school via phone, SMS or email before classes commence to confirm the student's absence. Parents should clearly state the student's full name, the date(s) and reason for the absence. The school will attempt to contact parents/guardians via SMS message/phone call if a student has been marked absent during the morning and no absentee information has been received from a parent.

If a student has an appointment during class times, we request that parents/guardians provide the school with advance notice of the appointment and when the student will be leaving and returning. Where possible, to minimise academic disruption, we ask that appointments are scheduled before or after classes.

2. Students late to school.

If a student is going to be late to school, we request that parents/guardians contact the school to inform them of the lateness and provide an approximate time the student will be expected at school.

3. Students absent from school for a long period.

If a student is absent for a long period of time due to illness or injury, then the school will make sure the appropriate support is provided to the student.

If the student is going to be absent for less than a week, staff will be notified. If the student is going to be absent for longer than a week, we request that parents/guardians contact the school to provide updates as appropriate. We ask that the student works with their class teachers to catch up on any work they may have missed.

If the reasons for the absence are more complex in nature (mental health, psychological, emotional etc.) then the Welfare Team will work closely with the student and their parents/guardians (where safe and appropriate) to make the student is safe and has the relevant support structures in place to improve attendance rates.

4. Students leaving school during the day.

If a student must leave school during the day for an appointment they must have permission from their parents/guardians and/or the School Coordinator/Principal. We request that the parents/guardians communicate with the school in advance. Students must inform the administration office when they leave and return to school.

Students must not leave the school grounds at any time during the day without permission from their parents/guardians and/or the School Coordinator/Principal.

5. Illness or Injury at school.

If a student is unwell or injured and cannot remain at school, then the Administration Team will contact the parents/guardians to arrange for the student to be collected from school.

If it is an illness or injury that requires medical assistance or treatment then the Administration Team will contact the parents/guardians to collect the students and take them to the doctors. If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, a member of staff will take the student for medical assistance or treatment while the school continues to try and contact the parents/guardians.

In the event of a medical emergency at school, an ambulance will be called by the school and the student will be taken to hospital. The school will liaise with the parents/guardians as to the location of the student.

If a situation arises where the student is continuously experiencing illness/injury at school, then the Welfare Team will work with the student and where appropriate their parents/guardians to formulate a plan to manage the situation.

6. Permission to be out of class.

While we focus on students aligning with and sticking to their class schedules, we also understand that certain circumstances or events may prevent students from remaining in the class. This can include counselling sessions, illness, time outs or quiet times.

The Welfare Team and School Coordinator/Principal will work together with staff to support students in their movements and class attendance throughout each day.

7. Removal of student by their parent/guardian during school term.

On the occasion that parents/guardians want to remove a student during school term (holidays, cultural events etc.) they must notify the school as early as possible regarding the absence. The school will respond in writing that it has received the notification and acknowledges the absence. If a student is given permission to be away from school during school term (holidays, cultural events etc.) we ask them to work closely with their class teachers to catch up on any work that is missed when they return.

8. Extracurricular activities, excursions, tours and camps.

Attendance is taken for school excursions, camps, tours and any extracurricular activities students take part in. Students must be given permission to attend any of these by their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are provided with information on pick up, drop off and finishing times and staff contact details. Staff will take attendance rolls throughout the extracurricular activity, excursion, camp or tour and immediately follow up on any absences with the Administration Team.

9. Suspension or Withdrawal.

If a student is suspended from school and wants to continue to work on their academic program, then the staff will organise work for them to complete. On their return to school, we request that they work with the academic staff to catch up on any missed work or assessments. If a student is withdrawn from the school, the Administration Team will confirm this information in SEQTA.

10. Year 11 and 12 students leaving school early.

A Notice of Arrangement (NOA) is specifically used for young people in the final years of compulsory education (typically Year 11 and 12).

An NOA is used for an alternative to full time school in one or more activities such as approved forms of education, training or employment. A combination of activities is permissible provided they equate in total to full-time participation. NOAs are only applicable for young people in Year 11 and 12.

If the student is absent for a long period of time and does not have an NOA then the school with notify the Participation Officers as per the Department of Education Guidelines.

11. Missing Student.

We will always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of a student in the first instance. If a student cannot be located at school or in any of their classes and the school has not been notified of their absence by the parents/guardians then the Administration Team or Welfare Team will:

- Attempt to contact the parents/guardians to establish the student's whereabouts and safety.
- If the school is unsuccessful at establishing contact with the parents/guardians then they will try and contact the Emergency Contact listed on the student's personal records.
- The school will also check in with friends and siblings if appropriate and safe.
- If appropriate, a Welfare Team member may try and locate the student at their place of residence.

If the school is still unable to locate the student, then they will follow the Missing Person Process (refer to the Emergency Management Plan) and contact the WA Police. The student will be added to the 'Students whose whereabouts are unknown' list when the student has been absent for 15 days with unsuccessful parent contact as per the Education Department Guidelines.

When the student is located a member of the Welfare Team will work with the parents/guardians and student to manage any challenges around attendance.

Note

The same process will be followed if a student cannot be located during extracurricular activities, excursions, tours or camps.

Refer to the Unexplained absence follow up flow chart for more information.

Unexplained absence follow up flow chart

Record students' attendance as required

Notify administration / cross-check known student absence information and only identify students with an unexplained absence for parent/guardian notification. A search of the school or site should also be conducted.

Contact parents/guardians (e.g. via school automated SMS, phone call to mobile, home, work numbers) asap. The contact message should include a request for a response by a specific time (i.e. if contacted at 9:00am, request a response asap, or within what is as short a time as possible).

If no response/SMS failure/phone number(s) disconnected or out of service, work place non-responsive or unable to reach the parent/guardian in their workplace then, without delay, move to making contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the child's file held by the school.

If the student's whereabouts cannot be established the next steps would include each of the following until the student's whereabouts are identified:

1. Make enquiries with the student's relatives and/or peers at the school.
2. Conduct a more thorough search (if relevant).
3. Visit the student's home (if safe and appropriate).
4. Contact support agencies (e.g. DCPFS, if already involved).

If the student's whereabouts have not been established through any of the above-mentioned methods the next step would be to contact the WA Police and add student to the 'Students whose whereabouts are unknown when student is absent for 15 days with unsuccessful parent contact as per the Education Department Guidelines.