



Department of
Education

Student Attendance in Public Schools Policy

Effective date: 19 July 2021

Version: 4.3

Last update date: 4 October 2023

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1. Policy statement

Every day that a student does not attend school can have a negative impact on their learning.

The Department of Education monitors student attendance and works with other agencies and service providers to maximise student engagement with learning.

It does this in a way that builds shared responsibility for student attendance between schools, students, parents and the broader community.

2. Policy rules

Principals manage student attendance in accordance with the Student Attendance in Public Schools procedures. This includes:

- promoting the importance of school attendance to their school community;
- engaging in community-initiated approaches to strengthen student attendance;
- developing plans in partnership with students, families, communities and other agencies to improve student attendance, including documented plans where required, to address the persistent absence of individual students;
- maintaining accurate attendance records;
- responding to Department requests for reporting and disclosure of attendance data;
- managing alternative attendance arrangements where these are in the best interests of the student; and
- retaining all relevant documentation.

Guidance

It is the principal's responsibility, as site manager, to manage the implementation of this policy and the associated procedures. It does not mean the principal must personally undertake the duty. The principal is responsible for what must happen but has discretion over how it happens on the site.

Education regions and Statewide Services support schools to address and improve student attendance in accordance with the Student Attendance in Public Schools procedures.

Directors of Education:

- provide advice, guidance and support to schools to manage student attendance and to address persistent student absence in the context of their region; and
- liaise with and coordinate support from other agencies within the region that work with families and young people.

Statewide Services:

- provide resources and support to enable schools to develop local approaches to improving attendance e.g. the Student Attendance Toolkit;
- provide policy advice and support to schools and education regions; and
- develop and implement mechanisms to maintain support, engagement and shared responsibility for improving student attendance and addressing absence across government agencies.

3. Responsibility for Implementation and Compliance

Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of principals.

Compliance monitoring is the responsibility of line managers.

4. Scope

This policy applies to Directors of Education, principals in public schools and the Executive Director, Statewide Services.

5. Supporting Procedures

[Student Attendance in Public Schools Procedures](#)

6. Definitions

Attendance

A student is considered to be in attendance when present for, or participating in the school's formal instructional program. Typically, this will be on the school site but also includes off-site arrangements that respond to the student's learning needs and circumstances.

Community

Local people, groups and organisations in and around schools in remote, regional and metropolitan areas. This includes, but is not limited to, students, families, principals, teachers and other school staff, community leaders, local government agency staff and not-for-profit organisations.

Documented Plan

Documented plan is the umbrella term describing a range of ways of catering for the identified education needs of an individual student and/or a small group of students with similar education needs. 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.

7. Related documents

Relevant legislation or authority

[Children and Community Services Act 2004 \(WA\)](#)

[Public Sector Management Act 1994 \(WA\)](#)

[School Education Act 1999 \(WA\)](#)

[School Education Regulations 2000 \(WA\)](#)

Related Department policies

[Duty of Care for Students for Public Schools](#)

[Enrolment in Public Schools](#)

[Excursions Procedures](#)

[Student Behaviour in Public Schools](#)

[Student Health Care in Public Schools](#)

Other documents

[Assist with a family court order involving your students \(staff only\)](#)

[Develop a responsible parenting agreement \(staff only\)](#)

Documented Plans:

- [Support education planning for students \(staff only\)](#)
- [Schedule I of the School Education Act Employees' \(Teachers and Administrators\) General Agreement 2019 \(staff only\)](#)

[Every day matters: 10-point plan to improve attendance](#)

[Organise an attendance advisory panel \(staff only\)](#)

[Request to become a badged attendance officer \(staff only\)](#)

[Retention and Disposal Schedule for Department of Education School, College and Campus Records \(staff only\)](#)

[School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health \(Guidelines\)](#)

[Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown Flowchart](#)

[Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown Guidelines](#)

8. Contact information

Policy manager:

Director, Student Engagement and Wellbeing

T: (08) 9402 6100

Policy contact officer:

Principal Consultant, Student Engagement and Wellbeing

T: (08) 9402 6448

9. History of changes

Effective date	1 January 2015
Last update date Policy version no.	3.0
Notes	Major review undertaken, Student Attendance Policy and Procedures endorsed by Director General on 19 September 2014.
Effective date	1 January 2015
Last update date	16 July 2015
Policy version no.	3.1
Notes	Updated links as per approval D15/0265969
Effective date	1 January 2015
Last update date	11 August 2015
Policy version no.	3.2
Notes	Updated contact information D16/0522722
Effective date	1 January 2015
Last update date	31 July 2017
Policy version no.	3.3
Notes	Updated links as per approval D17/0323036
Effective date	1 January 2015
Last update date	3 October 2018
Policy version no.	3.4
Notes	Minor changes to include reference to Public Schools D18/0151652 and updated legislation links D18/0207680.

Effective date	1 January 2015
Last update date	11 March 2020
Policy version no.	3.5
Notes	Minor change to contact details. D20/0130875

Effective date	1 January 2015
Last update date	8 February 2021
Policy version no.	3.6
Notes	Minor changes to replace the Regional Executive Director position title with Director of Education D20/0647278.

Effective date	19 July 2021
Last update date Policy version no.	4.0
Notes	Major review undertaken. Endorsed by Director General on 23 November 2020 D20/0629917.

Effective date	19 July 2021
Last update date Policy version no.	4.1
Notes	Minor change to update links and definitions D20/0657410

Effective date	19 July 2021
Last update date Policy version no.	4.2
Notes	Minor changes to update links and Other Documents D21/0388622

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Notes

Minor changes to update contact details
D23/1582068

10. More information

Supporting content

Procedure

[Student Attendance in Public Schools Procedures](#)

Policy review date

19 July 2024

Policy last updated

4 October 2023
