

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Date Approved:</b>	4/12/2020
<b>Date Effective:</b>	1/01/2021
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	11/11/2022
<b>Policy Category:</b>	Educational
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Principal

#### 1. Purpose of this policy

SEDA College WA (the 'College') is committed to ensuring the College, students and their parents comply with their legal obligations in relation to school attendance. The College believes that high levels of school attendance are essential for learning.

The attendance policy sets out the principles and framework governing the College's behaviours and activities that enact the College's legal responsibilities and which support students in attending college. The policy, together with the related procedures and guideline documents listed in section 10, should be read and understood by all those connected to the College.

#### 2. Principles

The College places a high priority on student attendance in the belief that attendance is essential for learning. Attendance is impacted by the partnership that is formed between the family and the college, and in discharging its duty of care, the College is committed to ensuring unexplained and unexcused absences are communicated promptly and followed up with students and parent and carers. The College keeps and maintains accurate records of attendance that comply with the regulatory requirements.

#### 3. Aims of the policy

### SEDA College WA

Suite 5 East | Part Level 1  
353 Cambridge Street  
Wembley | Perth WA | 6014

w [seda.wa.edu.au](http://seda.wa.edu.au)  
e [info@seda.wa.edu.au](mailto:info@seda.wa.edu.au)  
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The College aims to encourage and set high expectations in relation to attendance, and to eliminate unexplained or unexcused absence.

By developing strong partnerships with parents and carers, the importance of attendance and punctuality is understood as a shared goal.

The College, at all times, will comply with the requirements of School Education Act 1999 (WA), to monitor attendance, to maintain an attendance register and to report on attendance data to parents and to the authorities as required. This policy has been developed to assist supporting student health within a college environment in a proactive manner and ensures full compliance with Ministerial Order 706 and the associated Guidelines published and amended by the Department of Education from time to time.

#### **4. Legal and regulatory basis for compliance**

- Duty of Care
- School Education Act 1999 (WA)
- School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)
- Department of Education Western Australia's (DOE WA) Student Attendance in Public Schools Policy
- School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA)

#### **5. Key definitions**

The *enrolment register* records information on the students enrolled with the College via their Synergetic Data Management System. The College is required to maintain an enrolment register that is accurate, up-to-date and contains the information required by the minimum standard including: name, date of birth (DOB), date enrolment commenced and ceased, medicare details and immunisation status. The College is also required to implement processes and procedures to ensure the register is up to date. The enrolment register determines those students for whom attendance must be registered and monitored.

Children of *compulsory school age* (six years and up to the age of seventeen years) residing in Western Australia are required to be in full-time attendance at school or in registered home schooling.

Under certain limited conditions, parents may apply for an *exemption from attendance*.

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The attendance register is the record of the attendance of all students. The College is required to record the attendance at least twice on each school day and to note any apparent or given reason for student absences.

In addition, the College must:

- monitor the daily attendance of each student,
- identify absences of a student from the College including classes,
- follow up any unexplained absences from the College or from classes,
- notify parents regarding a student's unsatisfactory college or class attendance, and
- record any unsatisfactory college or class attendance on the student's file.

The School Education Act 1999 states that accurate attendance records are kept for every student enrolled at the College (including attendance at every lesson/period for secondary students) that can be reproduced in a written form and the reason given (or apparent) for the absence of the student from the College must be noted. The College mark attendance across three (3) sessions in each school day.

A student is present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction.

There is no legal definition of lateness.

Principals can use their discretion to decide if the parent has a reasonable excuse for not meeting their legal obligations ('excused absence') or does not have a reasonable excuse ('unexcused absence').

A School Attendance Officer may decide to send a School Attendance Notice to a parent if the student:

- has been absent from college on at least five full days in the previous 12 months and the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences,
- if measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and been unsuccessful or are inappropriate in the circumstances.

The Annual Report to the School Community must include a report on student attendance.

The School Education Regulations 2000 (s.21) requires student enrolment and attendance records to be retained for seven years, after the end of school year, in which the last entry was made. Student

attendance records may be audited by either state or commonwealth authorities for the authorities to monitor payments made on the basis of student numbers or on the basis of particular categories of students.

Records of enrolment and attendance are required for annual data returns for the Australian Government, non-government schools and the Western Australian school census under Australian Education Regulation 2013 (s.77).

## **6. Scope**

The application of the policy is relevant to the governing board, Principal, College staff, students and parents.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

The governing board is responsible for authorising the attendance policy.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the College complies with the attendance requirements as set out by the Department of Education in the School Education Act 1999 (div. 3) which apply to all registered schools, including non-government schools.

The Principal and/or Assistant Principal is responsible for:

- a. Developing strategies that ensure the culture of the College is one in which attendance is given high priority.
- b. Developing strong partnerships with families so that the importance of college attendance is a shared commitment.
- c. Ensuring the school has clear requirements, guidelines and procedures relating to long, frequent or repeated family holidays.
- d. Ensuring college attendance data is regularly monitored and analysed to identify student absence patterns on a college, class and individual basis.
- e. Ensuring the College reports student attendance to the school community at least once a year.

The Registrar is responsible for:

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- a. Ensuring that an attendance register is maintained that accurately records student attendance across each of the three sessions per day.
- b. Defining what constitutes lateness and how that will be monitored.
- c. Implementing procedures to record the reason (if any) given by a parent for a child's absence and for determining if the excuse given was reasonable in terms of the parent meeting their legal obligations.
- d. Using their discretion whilst following the guidelines as set out in the College's attendance procedures to decide if the parent has a reasonable excuse for not meeting their legal obligations ('excused absence') or does not have a reasonable excuse ('unexcused absence').

The Teacher/ Program Coordinator (collectively) are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring procedures are implemented so that parents are promptly informed of any absence, including absence from any school-approved activity.
- b. Notifying parents if the Principal's decision is that the reason for the student's absence is an unexcused absence.
- c. Ensuring procedures are in place to follow up all unexplained absences.
- d. Ensuring accurate and comprehensive records are kept of contacts and attempted contacts between the school and parents following an unexplained absence.
- e. Responsible for developing strategies to respond to poor attendance, persistent absenteeism, and school refusal.
- f. Advising parents when an exemption from attendance may be required and supporting parents to apply for the exemption.
- g. Referring concerns about a student with persistent unexplained absence to the School Attendance Officer.
- h. Ensuring Casual Relief Teaching staff, and staff leading school-approved activities are aware of the College's attendance procedures and that they are responsible for keeping accurate and timely attendance records.
- i. Ensuring the attendance register is capable of providing evidence for any enforcement proceedings, including the issuing of an Infringement Notice (and any appeal) and court proceedings if it appears a parent may not have met their legal obligations to ensure their child attends school.

Parents are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring their child attends school.

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- b. Providing an explanation for their child's absence if their child is absent from school for all or part of a school day.

## **8. Other policies and documents referenced within this Policy**

- Duty of Care
- Enrolment Policy
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Staff Handbook

## **9. Communication of the Policy**

From time to time, the College will make public statements to demonstrate its commitment to the importance of high levels of attendance and the role that parents play in supporting the College in reaching this goal.

The College will publish guidelines for parents as to the circumstances under which the reason given for an absence from college is considered reasonable or not and in which the Principal is likely to judge the absence excused or unexcused.

## **10. Related Procedures and Guidelines**

### Appendix A: Common reasons for absences

- appendix setting out decisions as to the different types of absence and their recording

### Appendix B: SEDA College WA Attendance Reporting Procedure for teachers

- detailed procedures for recording attendance, absence, lateness and the reasons given including procedures for following up and monitoring attendance and absence

### Appendix C: SEDA College WA Attendance Reporting Process

- guidance for parents regarding attendance and absence process which is available on MySEDA.

## **11. Policy History**

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Version	Policy Owner	Approval Date	Effective Date	Summary of Changes

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**APPENDIX A: Common Reasons for Absences**

Reason	Parent approval required	School required to confirm reason is authentic	Reasonable excuse for parent	General advice for Principals	SEDA Absence Code	SIS Absence Code	Follow up required
Illness or accident	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	ILL	N	No
Medical/dental appointment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Approve if appointment cannot be scheduled outside school hours	APP	N	No, unless absences become excessive
Attending or observing a religious event or obligation	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	PAR	R	No
Bereavement such as a death of a family member, attendance at a funeral	Yes	Yes	Requires Principal to approve	Approve	PAR	R	Offer and provide support as required
Family holiday	Yes	Yes	Requires Principal to approve	Approve if parents notify in advance.	FAM	R	Student Absence Learning Plans developed in

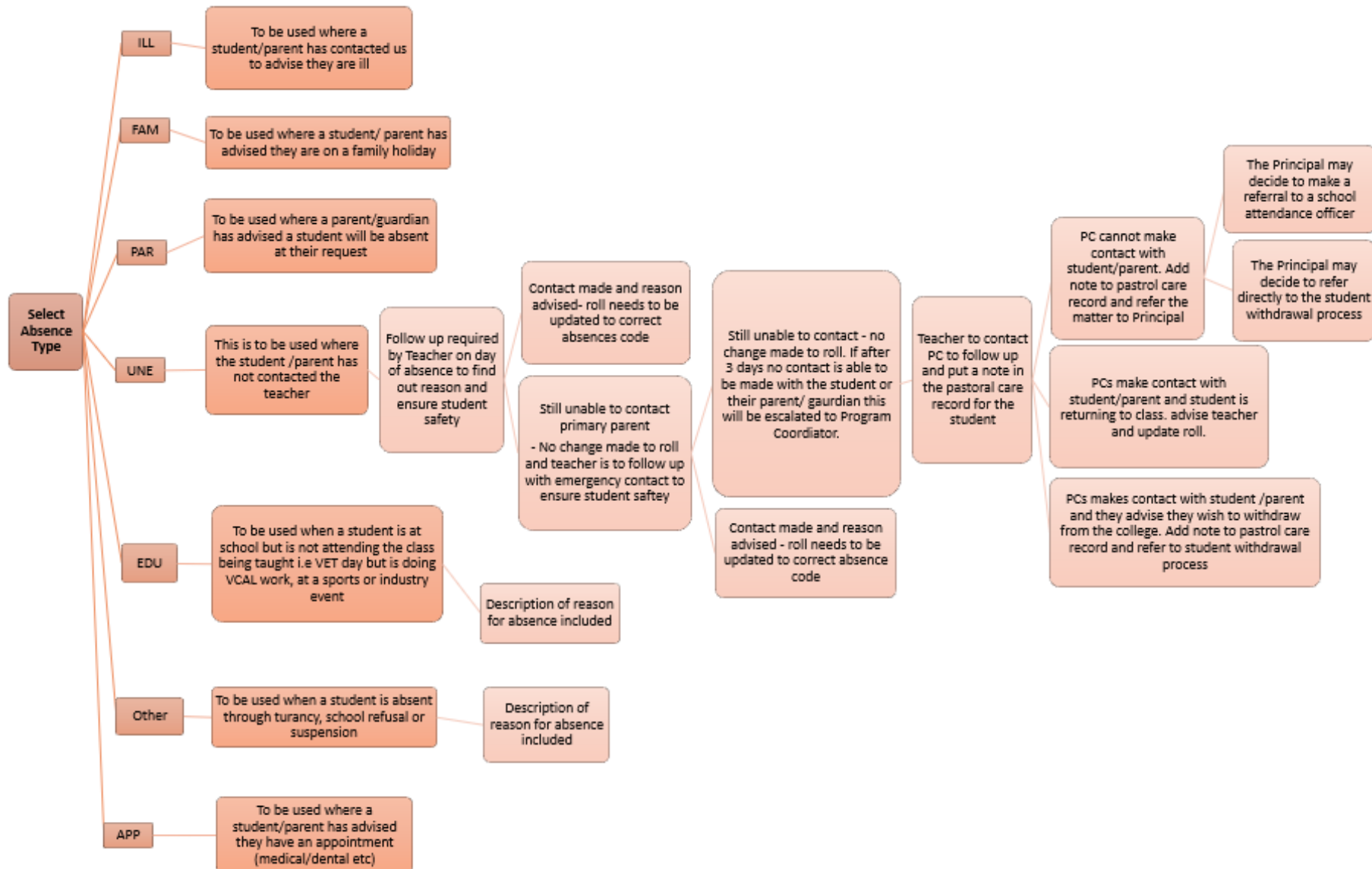


							conjunction with classroom teachers
Cultural observance	Yes	Yes	Requires Principal to approve	Approve if parent notifies in advance	PAR	R	No
Unavoidable cause	Yes	Yes	Yes	Approve if satisfied event was unforeseen and prevented attendance	PAR	R	No
Other – special event or participation in elite sporting events/training	Yes	Yes	Requires Principal to approve	Case-by-case basis	EDU	E	No
School refusal	Yes	Yes	Requires Principal to approve	Approve if parents and school are working on plan to address cause	OTH	S	Yes – meetings to identify and address the cause
Truancy	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	OTH	T	Meetings, Attendance Improvement Plan
Suspended	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	OTH	S	Yes (suspension guidelines)
Not Required – Eg. Bunbury Students	No	No	N/A	N/A	NR	Q	No

for College Open Day (held in Perth)							
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## APPENDIX B: SEDA College WA Attendance Procedure for teachers

\*To be completed across all three sessions daily



### APPENDIX C: SEDA College WA Attendance Reporting Process

