

NOVEMBER 2023

Attendance Policy

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1 Purpose

- This Policy and the [Attendance Procedure](#) outline the Department for Education, Children and Young People's (DECYP) approach to supporting consistent attendance at Tasmanian Government schools, which is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes and keeping students engaged in their learning.
- This Policy applies to Tasmanian Government school students enrolled in school from Kinder to Year 10, as well as students in Years 11 and 12 (or approved Year 13 enrolment) as part of an Approved Learning Program.
- This Policy supports DECYP's [Approach to Student Engagement](#) and the [Student Engagement Policy](#), and [Our Approach to School Improvement](#) expectations through promoting school attendance, which supports children and young people to engage in learning more every day.

2 Policy statement

- Regular attendance at school is essential for students to achieve quality life outcomes. Every day a student does not attend school can have a negative impact on their learning. Schools, in partnership with parents (which includes carers and guardians – see definition), are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.
- All students who are enrolled at a school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend during all supervised duty hours (as set by their school) or during timetabled classes for students in Years 11 and 12.
- Parents have a legal obligation to ensure a child (aged 5 to 18 years old) is enrolled in and attending school, is registered for home education, or is undertaking education and training through an Approved Learning Program (Section 16 [Education Act 2016](#)).
- DECYP IT and data systems support schools to record student attendance, informing strategies to support parents and students to promote consistent student engagement and attendance.
- Schools must make this Policy available on their school website. Schools may develop school-specific guidelines to support implementation of this Policy in their school context.

2.1 Policy objectives

- Schools support parents by monitoring student attendance and helping address attendance issues when they emerge.
- Strong partnerships between schools, parents and the community are encouraged to ensure challenges relating to school attendance can be addressed in a collaborative manner.
- Schools meet their duty of care to all students who are enrolled at their school or who are attending their school site for educational purposes.
- Schools monitor student attendance and address any barriers to attendance through the use of multi-tiered system of support frameworks.
- The [Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line](#) is contacted on 1800 000 123, where a significant decline in a student's attendance or repeated failure to attend school raises any concerns a student may be experiencing abuse, neglect or other risks to their safety and wellbeing.

- Principals keep a register recording the attendance or absence of each student, to ensure that the school can identify those students who are attending and those who are not.
- Accurate attendance records are important to ensure schools can use suitable strategies to promote regular attendance. As a system, attendance records provide useful data to put in place school and system-wide strategies, understand barriers, and to meet our goal to ensure that every child and young person is known, heard and included, safe in all environments, well and thriving, and learning more every day.

3 Roles and responsibilities (high-level)

3.1 Parents

- Parents of a child or a young person from Kindergarten to Year 12 must ensure their child attends school every day. Sometimes a child may need to be absent from school. Authorised reasons for student absences may include:
 - being sick or having an infectious disease
 - having an unavoidable medical appointment
 - being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
 - exceptional or urgent family circumstances (for example, attending a funeral).
- Independent students must attend school every day, unless they meet the authorised reasons for student absences as outlined above.
- A list of absence reasons can be accessed in [*Ministerial Instruction No 4 Students Excused from Daily Attendance at School*](#).
- Parents and independent students are required to explain the absences of their children from school within five days for K- 12.
- Where it may be in the best interests of a student to participate in school or an approved learning program part-time a parent may discuss this with the school principal.

3.2 Principals (see Attendance Procedure)

- Ensure their school is accurately recording attendance.
- Ensure the school, through the School Support and Wellbeing Team, is using strategies to monitor student absence trends and to re-engage students experiencing barriers to school attendance, including using the multi-tiered frameworks.
- Develop strategies to follow-up absences and regularly communicate expectations to parents and students.
- Develop strategies for re-engaging students with complex needs who have barriers to school attendance and refer to other support as required.
- In order to develop strong partnerships with parents and families, schools should use the [*Together with Families Approach*](#).
- For Years 11 and 12 students, ensure attendance records for all scheduled classes for each [*Subject Master List \(SML\)*](#) course.

- Understand that repeated failure to attend school can be an indication that a student is experiencing abuse, neglect or other safety and wellbeing concerns, and act accordingly to support students.

4 Related policies

- [Approved Learning Programs: Requirements and Guidance for Youth Engagement in Post-Year 10 Education and Training.](#)
- Duty of Care Policy (Under Development)
- International Student Attendance Policy (Under Development)
- [Student Engagement Policy](#)
- [VET in Schools Policy](#)
- [Work-based Learning Policy](#)
- [Youth Participation Database Policy](#)

5 Related procedures

- [Attendance Procedure](#)
- [Duty of Care for Students on Departmental Educational Sites Procedure](#) [Staff Only]
- [Enrolment Procedure](#) [Staff Only]
- International Student Attendance Procedure (Under Development)
- [Mandatory Reporting Procedure](#)
- [Youth Participation Database Procedure](#) [Staff Only]

6 Supporting information/tools

- [Approach to Student Engagement](#)
- [Attendance - EduPoint Resources Intranet Page](#) [Staff Only]
- [Authorised Persons Parent Fact Sheet](#)
- [Department for Education, Children and Young People Strategic Plan 2024-2030](#)
- [Every School Day Matters: Developing an Attendance Inquiry](#)
- [Every School Day Matters: A Framework for Improving Attendance and Reducing Absence](#)
- [Government Education and Training International](#)
- [Office of the Education Registrar – Compulsory conciliation conferences Information for Schools](#)
- [Our Approach to School Improvement](#)
- [Parent Fact Sheet – Attendance](#)
- [Part-time Attendance Form](#)

- [Safe. Secure. Supported. Our Safeguarding Framework](#)
- [Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Website](#)
- [Together with Families Approach](#)

7 Definitions

Authorised person

Refers to a person appointed by the Secretary, with functions and powers to investigate unauthorised absences, as set out in Section 40 of the *Education Act 2016*.

Government school

Means a State school, as defined in the *Education Act 2016*.

Independent student

A school-aged child or youth who is living independently from their parents.

International student

An international student is someone who pays international student tuition fees, holds a primary visa (subclass 500), and must adhere to the visa compliance conditions under the ESOS Act. They are participants in the GETI international student program. Their enrolment is exclusive to CRICOS-accredited schools and they are governed by this policy.

Multi-tiered system of supports framework for attendance

A multi-tiered system of supports framework may include analysis of behaviour, suspension, wellbeing and engagement data, and identification and implementation of data and evidence-informed interventions, in order to improve attendance and reduce absence.

Non-government school

A school, other than a State school, that provides educational instruction at any level up to and including the final year of secondary education.

Parent

As defined in Section 5 of the *Education Act 2016*, a parent includes:

- a legal guardian of a child
- another person who has the care, control or custody of a child
- another person who generally acts in the place of a parent of a child and has done so for a significant length of time (including an independent student).

School-aged child

A child aged 5-18 years, who has not been issued with a transition statement during Year 10, other than an overseas student, who –

- (a) is required under section 11(1) *Education Act 2016* to be enrolled at a school (or provided with home education
- (b) would be required under section 11(1) *Education Act 2016* to be enrolled at a school or provided with home education, if not exempted under Part 3.

Supervised duty

The locations and times, as determined by the principal, at which staff have a duty of care for students.

Temporary Resident Program students

These are students named as dependents on their parents' visas. Typically, their parents are in Tasmania for study or work, or they might be refugees with a humanitarian or protection visa. In some cases, these students might have a subclass 600 tourist visa, which permits short-term study of less than three months. Although they might be informally referred to as 'international students', they are not governed by the ESOS Act. They can attend any school in Tasmania, provided they meet the same local area qualifications as local students.

Years 11 and 12

Includes students who are enrolled in Years 11, 12 or Year 13 in a Government school.

8 Legislation

- [Education Act 2016](#)
- [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Ministerial Instruction No 3 for Part-Time Attendance at School](#)
- [Ministerial Instruction No 4 Students Excused from Daily Attendance at School](#)
- [Ministerial Instruction No 5 for Authorising a Person to Act as an Authorised Person for the Purposes of sections 40\(2\) and 40\(3\)](#)
- [Ministerial Instruction No 6 Relating to School Student Absences](#)
- [Ministerial Instruction No 7 for Elimination or Amelioration of Risks to Health and Safety of Persons at School](#)
- [Ministerial Instruction No 10 Application Exemption Participation in Approved Learning Program](#)
- [Ministerial Instruction No 11 for Application for Part Time Attendance at an Approved Learning Program](#)
- [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)
- [Secretary's Instruction No 5 for Managing Absences in a State school that are not Authorised by the Education Act \(2016\)](#)
- [Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Act 2003](#)

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