

Attendance Policy

This policy addresses issues in relation to:

Attendance – 3.8

(See also Policies on Admission/Enrolment, Privacy, Welfare and Behaviour Management)

1. Objectives - Policy Statement

1.1

The Education Act 1990 (Section 22) states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school age (6yrs to 17yrs) (Section 21B) to cause the child:

- a) to be enrolled at, and to attend, a government or a registered non-government school,
- b) to be registered for home schooling with the Board of Studies and to receive instruction in accordance with the conditions to which the registration is subject.

1.2

All students who are enrolled at Al-Faisal College, regardless of their age, are expected to attend school whenever instruction is provided. Regular attendance is crucial in assisting students reach their maximum potential. Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of students at school.

1.3

Section 24 of the Act requires principals to maintain an attendance register (roll) in a form approved by the Minister. Attendance registers must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board inspector or by any authorised person.

2. Audience and Applicability

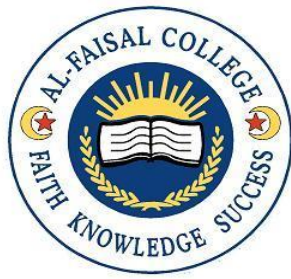
This attendance policy applies to all students enrolled at Al-Faisal College (Auburn) in New South Wales.

This policy should be read in the context of the Al-Faisal College Admission/Enrolment Policy, Privacy Policy, Behaviour Management / Welfare Policy.

3. Context

Al-Faisal College has a compulsory attendance policy in which, all students are required to attend school and any school related activity/function. The school will support parents to comply with their responsibility of ensuring that their children attend school regularly by:

- a) Monitoring daily student attendance/absence
- b) Informing parents about any attendance issues - Grade Co-ordinators (K-6), Deputy Principal (primary), Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (secondary), Head of Welfare (secondary)
- c) When necessary seek assistance from the Keep them Safe Mandatory Reporting Guide / School's Child Protection Officer / School Liaison Officer (primary) / Police Youth Liaison Officer (secondary) / Police Multicultural Liaison Officer to help resolve student's attendance.



3.1

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to reach their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for encouraging regular attendance of students.

3.2 Register of Enrolment

The register of enrolment for all Colleges is maintained and monitored by the Office Administration Staff who ensure that all the following information about students is present and updated on a regular basis via hard copy forms / online data bank *Sentral* (Learning and Management Software).

- name, age and address
- the name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- date of enrolment and, where applicable, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination
- for students older than six (6) years, previous school or pre-enrolment situation
- where the destination of a student below seventeen (17) years of age is unknown, evidence that a Department of Education and Communities officer with home school liaison responsibilities has been notified of the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents or student.

The above procedures are overseen by the Deputy Principal (Administration, Human & Physical Resources).

It is the responsibility of the School, to retain an accurate register of enrolment for a period of five (5) years before it is sent to the Office Administration Staff for archiving.

4. School Attendance Records Requirements

- NESAs (formerly BOSTES) requires the register of daily attendances to be retained by the school for a minimum of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.
- The school maintains its attendance records via hard copy class roll registers / the *Sentral** database. The electronic recording of attendance is also a risk management strategy that Al-Faisal College utilises to ensure that students' records of attendance /absences are up to date.

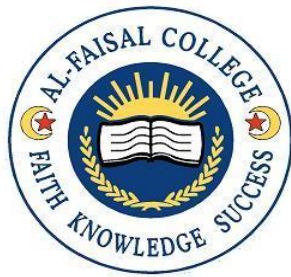
*accessible both on/ off-site and backed up at regular intervals.

4.1 Daily Attendance

Al-Faisal College maintains a register of daily attendance that includes the following information for each student:

- daily attendance, which may be recorded by noting daily absences
- partial absences
- reason for absence
- documentation to substantiate reason for absence.

Attendance of all students is checked on a daily basis by designated class (K-6) and roll call (7-12) teachers. Attendance rolls are kept as required by the law and available for inspection at any time. Attendance is marked on individual class roll registers (manually) and a central storage data bank (*Sentral*) by the class (K-6) and roll call (7-12) teachers.



- Class rolls are maintained using the updated *NSW Attendance Register Codes & Definitions (2015)* as approved by the Minister for Education. (See Appendix 1).
- Rolls must not be removed from the school premises unless removal is warranted by exceptional circumstances such as fire or flood.
- All student attendance records are kept within student files or record card.

All teachers are trained on how to use the updated NSW Attendance Register Codes (2015) and Sentral attendance marking procedures at the beginning of each calendar year or during induction meetings with new staff.

Teachers are responsible for recording daily absences, late arrivals / early departures (partial absences – on hard copy rolls), and collecting and retaining documentation to substantiate reason for absences.

The Office Administration Staff are responsible for recording partial absences (late arrivals / early departures) on Sentral and issuing late/early slips from Sentral/manual for students to pass on to the teacher.

The Grade Co-ordinators (K-6) and Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (secondary) are responsible for monitoring the accurate recording of daily attendance by regularly checking the class roll registers.

The regular checking of the class roll registers ensures that the accuracy and correct register codes are used, the attendance is marked accurately and t lateness and absences have been followed up with documentation to substantiate reason for absence.

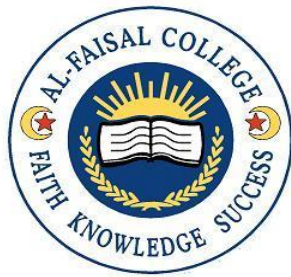
At the end of each term, the Deputy Principal (primary) and Head of Welfare (secondary) check the class roll registers to ensure that absence tallies have been counted and recorded by teachers. Teachers also update the number of student absence on student files/record cards.

At the end of the school year, the class roll registers and all documentation (absences, early/late notes) are submitted to the Office Administration Staff for archiving.

4.2 Attendance Procedures

The following procedures take place to record and monitor student attendance:

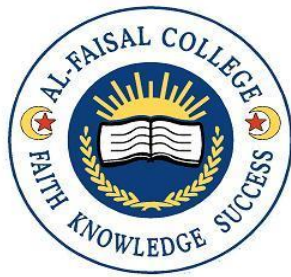
- Attendance for students is from 8:30am to 3.25pm (Primary students) and 3:35pm (High School students). Unless students participate in before or after school classes or attend excursions.
- All rolls must be returned to the Office Administration Staff by 9:30am.
- A print out of all daily student absences is issued to the Deputy Principal (primary), Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (secondary), Head of Welfare (secondary) and posted in secondary staff rooms. A master hard copy of the absences is kept in the office.
- Parents of students who are absent receive a SMS notifying them about their children's absence from school. This is an automated service provided by the school on a daily basis.
- When a student is absent for three or more consecutive days, the class (K-6) and roll call (7-12) teacher will seek an explanation of student absence.



- Students who are absent for three consecutive days or display a pattern of regular absence (10 days or more) are reported by the class/roll call teacher to the Grade Co-ordinators (K-6), Deputy Principal (primary), Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (secondary) and Head of Welfare (secondary)
- At the end of each term, total absences are tallied for that period and included on the student files by the class/roll call teachers or Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (secondary).

4.2.1 Absence Note & Explanation of Absences

- Students must provide a medical certificate or satisfactory letter of explanation for their absence signed by their parents within seven days of returning to school. (See Appendix 2 for an example of an Absence proforma that can be used to substantiate student absence).
- Accepted leave includes:
 - i. sick leave, owing to illness - Attendance Register (roll) is marked with a code “S”
 - ii. domestic leave – travel/ holiday/extended leave (Refer to Holiday/Extended Leave Section 5.1 of this document), misadventure or unforeseen event, participation in special events not related to the school, domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member, attendance at weddings, funerals, graduation days and recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions etc.- Attendance Register (roll) is marked with a code “L”
 - iii. Approved Exemption leave (authorised by the Principal) (Refer to Exemption from school Section 5.2 of this document) - Attendance Register (roll) is marked with a code “M”
 - iv. Flexible timetable - students participating in programs and assessments such as: trial or HSC exams, other assessments – not limited to senior high school students - Attendance Register (roll) is marked with a code “F”
 - v. School Business – students representing the school on official “school business- Attendance Register (roll) is marked with a code “B”
 - vi. Other leave approved by the Principal
- If no written explanation of absence is provided, unexplained absences are followed up by the class/roll call teacher to seek an explanation from parents or guardians regarding a justification for absence. If no explanation is provided by the student, the Attendance Register (roll) is marked with a code “A” denoting an unexplained/unjustified leave.
- The Principal may decline to accept an explanation for an absence. If the Principal does not believe the absence is in the student’s best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence is unjustified and will be recorded as “A”.
- The parent should be advised that the explanation has not been accepted and a reason for the decision provided.



4.3 Consequences of Unsatisfactory Attendance

- Parents are notified by the class teacher (primary) or Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (secondary), if students have incurred unsatisfactory attendance records. As a guide, unsatisfactory absence is:
 - K-12: 15 days or more per academic year (this includes both travel and sick leave)
- Unsatisfactory attendance and/or continued lateness impacts on student's ability to satisfactorily meet school and curriculum requirements. This may lead to students: repeating the same academic year/ probation / enrolment being reviewed/jeopardised at Al-Faisal College. (Refer to Admission/ Enrolment Policy).
- A meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principal (primary) or Head of Welfare (secondary) may be required to ensure that parents understand the importance of regular attendance (See Appendix 3 for Absentee Notice).
- Students may be placed on probation if their attendance record does not improve.

4.4 Lateness to School

- Students who arrive late to school (after 8.30am) are deemed late and must report to the Office Administration staff to obtain a late note, which is to be shown to the teacher on entering class.
- If students are late on 5 occasions in one term, they are issued with an after-school detention. If students incur 10 days late in a term they are issued with a suspension from school. Continued lateness (10 days or more per academic year) may hinder students' ability to continue their studies into the following academic year.

5. Request for Student Leave

- Parents requesting leave for their child(ren) during the course of the year for any reason must apply to the Principal in writing. Approval for request of leave is at the discretion of the Principal.

5.1 Holiday/Extended Leave

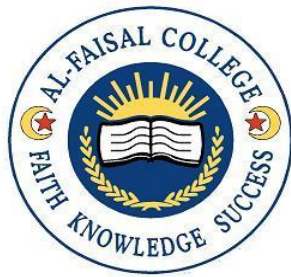
Holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods will now be included as absences. Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. If travel during school term is necessary the following considerations apply:

- If the principal accepts the reason for the absence, the absence will be marked as **L** on the attendance register
- If the principal does not believe the absence is in the student's best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence is unjustified and will be recorded as **A**

5.2 Exemption from school (Section 25)

In 2010, the Minister under section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* delegated the power to the Principal of a non-government school to grant and cancel a Certificate of Exemption if conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable.

- All applications for exemption from school must be made in writing to the School Principal (See Appendix 4).
- Supporting documentation must be attached to applications to clearly demonstrate that an exemption is in the student's best interests/ benefit in the short and long term.



- Each application is considered on an individual basis in order for an approval to be made.
- Procedural fairness must be accorded to a student for an exemption.
- Applications for exemption from school attendance must be applied for in advance.
- The Principal will consider the application in accordance with the criteria in the guidelines from the NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- Approved Exemption is marked with the code **M** on the attendance register.
- Copies of the application and Certificate of Exemption or notification are kept on the student's file (See Appendix 5).
- The Principal may grant exemptions due to:
 - i. exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate)
 - ii. student participation in an elite arts or elite sporting events
 - iii. the student being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991
- The Principal can decline/cancel an Application for Exemption if:
 - i. the student has been the subject of a Community Services (Department of Human Services) report or Child Wellbeing Unit report and for whom unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm remain
 - ii. any specific conditions set on the *Certificate of Exemption* have not met or cease to apply
- The Principal will notify parents in writing if the Application for Exemption is unsuccessful / declined (See Appendix 6 for a sample letter).
- The school will send applications for over 100 days in a year to the Minister's delegate at the Student Welfare Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- If students extend their leave and do not return to school as per the return date indicated on the Certificate of Exemption, the class (K-6) or roll call (7-12) teacher will contact the parents after 3 days and seek an explanation of absence.
- If there is no response from parents after 7 days, the class (K-6) or roll call (7-12) teacher will contact the student's parents again and notify the Deputy Principal (primary) or Head of Welfare (secondary) / Welfare Coordinator (secondary)
- The Deputy Principal (primary) or Head of Welfare (secondary) / Welfare Coordinator (secondary) will call the parents after 14 days and if there is no response, the emergency contacts listed on the student's file will be contacted.
- If parents do not notify the school of the extended leave of student absence for more than 21 days, the school Deputy Principal (primary) or Deputy Principal (secondary) will notify the Department of Education and Communities (with the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details) if the destination of a student is unknown (See Appendix 7).

Date of Policy:

January 2018

Proposed review date of policy:

January 2019

or earlier where amendments in legislation require immediate policy reviews