



Attendance Policy

This policy addresses issues in relation to:

Attendance – 3.8

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

Policy

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, or
- b) to be registered for home schooling under Part 7 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

In accordance with Section 24 of the Education Act, the Executive Principal will maintain an attendance register, in a form approved by the Minister, of the enrolments and daily attendances of all children at the school, which includes information for each student as required by Section 3.8 of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual. Attendance registers will be available for inspection during school hours by a NESA inspector or by any authorised person.

2. Audience and Applicability

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

This policy should be read in the context of the Al-Faisal College 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 - Stage Co-ordinators (K-6), Welfare Co-ordinator (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) / AIS Division Head, Education Regulations and Program Implementation Team to help resolve a 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 ensuring regular attendance of all 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 the Department of Education (attendance@det.nsw.edu.au) 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 Coordinators (Primary & Secondary).

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 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 attendance registers on the *Sentral** database. The electronic recording of attendance is also a risk management strategy that Al-Faisal College utilises to ensure that the students' records of attendance/absences are up to date. Hard copy attendance registers may be printed based on request.
*accessible both on/off-site and backed up at regular intervals.
- In the event of any unforeseen circumstance and inability to access *Sentral* online, hard copy roll lists will be printed and distributed to staff to mark attendance and sent back to the Office Administration Staff.
- The Office Administration Staff will update the online attendance register by transferring absences from the hard copy roll lists to the online database, once *Sentral* is up and running.
- Staff will receive Attendance training on a regular basis to ensure they are aware of the NSW Attendance Register Codes & Definitions.
- A refresher session will be conducted for any staff member who has missed out on the initial training or joined the college recently.



Procedures

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. (All documentation is archived at the end of the year by the Office Administration Staff)

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 on a central storage data bank (*Sentral*) as required by the law and available for inspection at any time. Attendance is marked on individual class roll 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).
- The Office Administration Staff will print a copy of students' attendance records at the end of the year.
- All student attendance records are kept within student files or record cards.

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.

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 Stage Co-ordinators (K-6) and Welfare Co-ordinator (secondary) are responsible for monitoring the accurate recording of daily attendance by regularly checking the class attendance register.

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

At the end of the school year, 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.
- A print out of all daily student absences is issued to the Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (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), Co-ordinator (primary), Welfare Co-ordinator(s) (secondary) and Welfare Co-ordinator (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. Students from K-1 will use the Absence Note provided in the Communication Book and students from Years 2-12 will use the Absence Note slip at the back of their diaries for justification for all absences. (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 is marked with a code “S”. If students are absent owing to suffering from a vaccine preventable disease as prescribed in section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991 (eg chicken pox, whooping cough, mumps etc), an incubation period will be observed and a medical certificate will be requested declaring the student “fit” to resume school. The Head of College/ Co-ordinator (primary) / Welfare Co-ordinator (secondary) must be informed once the staff/ Office Administration staff / School Assistant that a child enrolled at the school is suffering from a vaccine preventable disease. The School Assistant will then inform the South Western Sydney Local Health Unit (Liverpool) on (02 8738 6000) that the child is suffering from the disease.
 - 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 is marked with a code “L”.
 - iii. Approved Exemption leave (authorised by the Executive Principal) (Refer to Exemption from school Section 5.2 of this document) - Attendance Register 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 is marked with a code “F”.
 - v. School Business – students representing the school on official “school business- Attendance Register is marked with a code “B”.
 - vi. Other leave approved by the Executive Principal/Head of College.



- 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 roll is marked with a code “A” denoting an unexplained/unjustified leave.
- The Executive Principal/Head of College may decline to accept an explanation for an absence. If the Executive Principal/Head of College 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

- Students and/or parents may be notified by the class teacher or coordinators (primary) or Welfare Coordinator (secondary), if they have concerns regarding attendance.
- A meeting with the Co-ordinator (primary) / Welfare Co-ordinator (secondary) may be required to ensure that parents understand the importance of regular attendance (See Appendix 3 for Absentee Notice).
- **As a guide, unsatisfactory absence is: K-12: 15 days or more per academic year** (This includes both approved travel and sick leave).
- If a student’s attendance record does not improve and reaches an unsatisfactory level he/she may be placed on attendance probation.
- Students may also be placed on an Attendance Improvement Plan where agreed actions are noted and goals are set to improve student attendance, this includes whole day absence or partial absence.
- 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 / enrolment being reviewed at Al-Faisal College. (Refer to Admission/ Enrolment Policy).

4.4 Lateness to School

4.1 Lateness – Arrival to school

- Students are expected to be in at school and in class by 8:30am each school day. Their attendance will then be formally recorded on the attendance register by the class / roll call teacher.
- If late after 8:40am, students must report to the front office and be signed in by the office staff. They will be issued with a late note which they present to their teacher on entering class.
- This facility will operate for the remainder of the day.



4.2 Continued Lateness

- If a student is late on 5 occasions in a term (K-6) the Class teacher is to counsel the student and/or parents and reinforce the importance of punctuality at school. Students, who are continuously late, in excess of 10 days/term (K-6), may be issued with After School Detention.
- If a student is late on 5 occasions in a year (7-12) the Class teacher /Welfare Coordinator is to counsel the student and/or parents and reinforce the importance of punctuality at school. Students, who are continuously late, in excess of 10 days/year (7-12), may be issued with After School Detention.
- Should a student incur 15 or more days late in a year he/she will be placed on attendance probation. A meeting with the parents and coordinator (primary) / Welfare Coordinator (secondary) is to be organised to discuss the matter and develop strategies to improve the student's punctuality
- If there is no improvement, the student is to be referred to Head of College. The student may be placed on an Attendance Improvement Plan where agreed actions are noted and goals are set to improve student arrival at school on time.
- Continued lateness impacts on student's ability to satisfactorily meet school and curriculum requirements. This may lead to students: receiving a Probation / Breach of Probation Notice / repeating the same academic year / enrolment being reviewed at Al-Faisal College. (Refer to Admission/ Enrolment Policy).

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 Executive Principal in writing using the Application for Extended Leave – Vacation / Travel Form (See Appendix 5 for Application for Leave – Vacation / Travel Form). Approval for request of leave is at the discretion of the Executive Principal/Head of College.

Approved leave accrues towards the total of absences for any given year.

5.1 Holiday/Extended Leave

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

- If the Executive Principal/Head of College accepts the reason for the absence, the absence will be marked as **L** on the attendance register. A Certificate of Extended Leave – Vacation / Travel will be issued. (See Appendix 6 for Application for Extended Leave – Vacation / Travel Form)
- If the Executive Principal/Head of College 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**. Students may be placed on probation or conditional enrolment. Parents will be issued with a letter Declining an Application for Extended leave/holiday. (See Appendix 7 for letter Declining an Application for Extended leave /holiday)



5.2 Exemption from school (Section 25)

In 2010, the Minister under section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* delegated the power to the Executive 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 Executive Principal (See Appendix 8).
- 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.
- Applications for exemption from school attendance must be applied for in advance.
- The Executive Principal will consider the application in accordance with the criteria in the guidelines from the NSW Department of Education and Communities (Learning and Engagement Directorate) 2015 publication, "Exemption from School – Procedures".
- 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 until the student reaches the age of 25, or for 7 years (See Appendix 9).
- The Executive 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 (i.e. national/international sports events, elite programs run by national and international organisations)
 - iii. the student being prevented from attending school because of a direction under section 42D of the Public Health Act 2010. (Note that in the case of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the school is required to advise an unvaccinated student not to attend until advised to do so. The parent is not required to complete an application for exemption) The parent will need to provide a medical certificate with the vaccine preventable disease clearly stated and the incubation period required.
- The Executive Principal can decline/cancel an Application for Exemption if:
 - i. the student has been the subject of contact with a child protection report to Family and Community Services and/or there are unresolved issues concerning a risk of harm. Prior to granting a Certificate of Exemption a risk assessment should be completed to identify and manage risks.
 - ii. any specific conditions set on the *Certificate of Exemption* have not met or cease to apply
- The Executive Principal will notify parents in writing if the Application for Exemption is unsuccessful / declined (See Appendix 10 for a sample letter).
- Procedural fairness must be accorded to a student for an exemption. If the Executive Principal is considering refusing granting an exemption, the parent should be given an opportunity to respond. If a parent wishes to appeal against a decision made by the Executive Principal, the school's Grievance policy and procedures would apply.
- A Certificate of Exemption may be given subject to conditions and limited to a period specified in the certificate.



- 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 relevant Co-ordinator (primary) or Welfare Co-ordinator (secondary)
- The Co-ordinator (primary) or Welfare Co-ordinator (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 Co-ordinator (primary) or Welfare Co-ordinator (secondary) will use the form Student Enrolment Destination Unknown Notification to notify the Department of Education (with the student’s full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents’ names and contact details) if the enrolment destination/whereabouts of a student is unknown (See Appendix 11).
- A copy of the Student Enrolment Destination Unknown Notification form will be printed and kept in the student’s file.

5.3 Exemption from Enrolment

The Executive Principal may grant exemptions to students from the requirement to be enrolled in school provided approval has been given by the Commissioner for Vocational Education, State Training Services, to their entering a full time apprenticeship or traineeship. (See Enrolment Policy, Section 5)

Date of Policy:

January 2023

Proposed review date of
policy:

January 2024

*or earlier where amendments in
legislation require immediate
policy reviews*