



# **IRFAN COLLEGE**

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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## **Student Attendance Policy**

### **Rationale**

Attendance at school is compulsory, five days a week. Apart from the legal requirements for attendance, it is important that students gain continuity in their education in order to move ahead as they should. Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Irfan College, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitors part or whole day absences. The teachers ensure that lateness and absence both are being recorded and communicated to parents to improve the education of all students.

### **Aim**

The Principal and teaching staff are responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by:

- Providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- Recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- Maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- Implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.
- Providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents are required to abide by the law as it pertains to school attendance in accordance with the *Education Act 1990*. As such parents are expected to:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Explain the absences of their children promptly to the school by sending a letter, contacting the office or message the roll call/class teacher through the Sentral Parent Portal app.
- Provide medical certificate where applicable.
- Take effective measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.
- The parents who use the College bus service are advised to contact the bus driver the night before, or before the morning run if their child will not be using the service that day and the reason for their absence.
- All parents must update their home and emergency details if there is a change.

#### **Student**

- Attend school regularly and arrive at school on time.
- Provide a note for an unexplained absence.
- All students are to provide notes/letters written by parents to explain absence within seven school days.

### Office Administration Staff

- Place information about student absence on student file.
- Email Class/Roll Call teacher when advised by parent/guardian about a student's absence.
- Enter late students into Sentral and provide students with a late slip which the student must give to their Class/Roll Call teacher on entering the classroom.
- Verbal and telephone messages relating to absences are to be noted, dated in phone log and sent to the relevant roll teacher.
- Each day a student is away, a SMS will be sent automatically at 9:30am to the parent.
- Any responses provided by parents through SMS regarding their child's absence. The information will then be sent to the relevant roll teacher. The roll teacher will update their absence records on Sentral.
- Ensure that information about students signing out early from school is accurately recorded in Sentral.
- Enter information about long term absences and advise the Class/Roll Call teacher via (email).
- Monitor the Sentral attendance and advise the Principal or his delegate when letters remain unanswered.
- Generate an Absence Report and provide to the Principal or his delegate on a fortnightly basis.
- If a student is **late to school** for more than 3 times in a fortnightly cycle (without notes), the Principal or his delegate will be informed by the Office Admin and will then arrange for the parents to be contacted. Office Admin Staff will provide Primary and Secondary Coordinators with a summary report that demonstrates the late arrivals of students. This will take place every Friday on a fortnightly basis.
- The Admin staff will contact the parents to confirm the reason behind **continued absences**. The response will be communicated to the respective coordinator via an email.
- In the case of minor injury, the injury will be addressed promptly and the student will return to class. Sickbay is for short term assistance and acts as a first-aid station only.
- To check the account balance and ensure that it does not go below \$25. The office admin will top up the account balance to \$200 once it reaches below \$25.

### Classroom teacher /Roll Call teacher

- Enter the names of the students who are absent accurately in Sentral, using the correct codes.
- Teachers are required to mark attendance of students on Sentral by 9.10am.
- Roll/class teachers will need to check their Parent Portal messages (blue pop up) on Sentral to gather responses for student absences from parents. Roll teachers then will need to update their absence record on Sentral.
- At times roll/class teachers may receive an email from the office admin stating the parent's response to the SMS to their child being away. Roll/class teachers then will need to update their absence record on Sentral.
- Roll teachers will need to generate a letter for each parent that has not responded to their child's absence weekly on Monday. Roll teacher will use the Parent Portal

messaging feature to send directly to parents by attaching a letter and also provide a copy to the student. Follow the steps below for this:

- Go to Sentral dashboard
  - Click on unread portal messages on the top RHS corner of the dashboard
  - Click on new message parent/student
  - Enter student name
  - Click on choose a file. Attach the pdf copy of the absence letter of the child generated from Sentral.
  - Click save
- Monitor student attendance and frequently remind students of the need to bring a note when returning from absence or when leaving school to attend an appointment.
  - Keep absence notes in the folder provided separately for each student.
  - Teachers must retain records of written, electronic and verbal explanations from parents.
  - If teachers receive verbal explanations from parents, they should update the Sentral records using the approved codes.
  - The Sentral roll will be adjusted by the Roll Call/Class Teachers to include the reason once a note/letter from parent is provided by the student.
  - Contact parent/guardian after 3 days of unexplained/unauthorised absence and follow up regularly if absence continues.
  - Inform Principal or his delegate of ongoing absences for a student.
  - Be alert to any other patterns of non-attendance (e.g absent every Monday and coming late or leaving early too often). Follow up with the parents and notify the Admin.
  - If the child's rate of attendance has fallen below 90% overall in any half term then a letter generated from Sentral is sent to parents by the Roll Call/Class teacher listing all absences. If the absences are unexplained then the reasons for unexplained absences need to be provided by the parents within seven days. After seven days the absence will be recorded as unjustified. If the explanation is provided after the seven days have passed, the absence will be recorded absent "A".
  - Send a written request and absentee slips to the parents/guardians of students who have not provided explanations for absences.

#### **Head of Policy & Compliance / Deputy Principal**

- Ensure that Class/Roll Call teachers mark rolls.
- Monitor student attendance when notified that it is an issue.
- Attend meetings scheduled to discuss student attendance issues.
- Train teachers about the policy and procedure for roll marking and attend to any difficulties they may overcome.
- Students with unexplained/unacceptable patterns of attendance will be referred to the principal.
- Contact parents of late arriving students on a fortnightly basis upon receiving a summary report from the office Admin staff. This procedure takes place on a fortnightly basis every term.
- Monitor attendance and to send an email to all Class/Roll Call teachers in Week five of the Term reminding them to generate letters for student's attendance rate that has dropped below 90% and send it to the parent/guardian.

- For at risk students, letter is sent home outlining the Attendance Percentage.
- Once attendance drops below **70%** for a semester, students will be unable to satisfy the requirements of the subjects/courses even if the absences are generally approved. They will therefore receive an ‘N’.

### **Principal**

- Attendance records are maintained in an approved format and are an accurate record of the attendance of students. The information must include the following:
  - Students name, age and address.
  - Name and contact telephone of parent/guardian.
  - Collecting background information.
  - Information of previous school/pre-enrolment for a student older than 6 years.
  - Destination of student leaving the school and notifying the Home School Liaison Officer at DET if the destination of the student of mandatory school age is unknown.
  - Data on absence where a student is absent for 30 days, the Principal should access the mandatory reporters section of the Keep Them Safe website <http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/> to determine if whether a report is required.
- Must ensure College staff is trained to implement school attendance policies and procedures and that personnel with delegated responsibility for maintaining attendance records are supervised.
- Teachers must know the procedures in this document before marking the attendance and following up absences.
- Teachers also must understand how an absence should be marked on Sentral using the approved codes.
- All new teaching staff must be trained and provided with student attendance policy.
- At the end of the week the Principal or his delegate will follow up any unexplained attendance.

If, following contact via letter or email, the parents/guardians explanation is deemed satisfactory, the accurate cause of absence must be recorded and entered on Sentral. If there has been no response or satisfactory explanation provided within 10 school days of the initial absence, the absence should be recorded as an unexplained absence on Sentral and must also be noted in the student’s file. (Manual 3.8)

The Principal must ensure that attendance register is copied to the College server and also to an external device. This device is to be kept off -site and in a secured place.

### **Unsatisfactory Attendance**

It is possible that due to an unsatisfactory record of attendance or frequent lateness, the student will not meet the course outcomes. This could affect a student’s eligibility to complete the year successfully and be promoted to the following year level. It is, therefore, important that students cultivate habits of good attendance from the start of the year.

The school recognizes, however, that for a variety of sound reasons – such as illness, dental appointments, family emergencies etc – that students may be late or not attend school every day. In such cases, the student must bring a letter to excuse their lateness or the next day

explaining the absence. The letter must be from the student's parent/guardian and signed. All lateness and absences are recorded in the school rolls and are documented in student reports.

Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial for these patterns to be reversed.

Indicators of students at risk of developing these patterns include the following:

- Frequent lateness
- Leaving school early
- Missing lessons
- Being the victim of bullying and harassment
- Learning difficulties
- Many days absent, either through illness, unexplained reasons, or family commitments
- Unresolved issues with school personnel (staff or students)
- Social or emotional issues
- Difficulties at times of transition
- Health issues experienced by the student and/or family members

**Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school-based strategies including:**

- Student and parent interviews.
- Reviewing the appropriateness of the student's educational program.
- Development of a school-based attendance improvement plan.
- Referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies.
- Support from school-based personnel.
- Documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.

Attendance meetings with parents/guardians and students should be convened following initial contact with the parents/guardians when a student's attendance pattern is of concern to the school. The purpose of these meetings is to review strategies initiated to support the student's attendance. The meeting should establish a shared understanding of accountability and strategies for improving the attendance of the student. Ideally, the student should be involved in the process of problem identification and improvement goal setting.

For ongoing intensive support of students, a student support group should be convened by the principal and attended by relevant teachers, parents/guardians, and the student. Professionals from other agencies may also attend as appropriate with the permission of the parents/guardians. The purposes of this meeting are to ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of the absences and fully appreciate the educational implications for the student, identify the reasons for the student's absences and develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan and/or an Individual Learning Plan.

When the College feels that they have exhausted all strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, the regional office should be contacted to provide additional

advice and support. It is important to realize that parents/guardians may be prosecuted if children have recurring unjustified absences from school.

### **Student Extended Absence**

- The extended absences can be approved for a maximum of two school weeks. The two school weeks must be taken from the beginning of a school term. It is strongly recommended that families use the school breaks to increase the number of days needed for their travel. If a long-term student absence is anticipated, then a 'Student Extended Absence Request Form' should be filled out and submitted to the admin office at least **four** weeks before the absence. This form is then passed onto the relevant Primary/Secondary Curriculum Coordinator, and Principal for approval. Parents should check their child's assessment schedule that there are no assessment or examinations at this time. Examinations will not be rescheduled for any reason other than illness and bereavement.
- The relevant coordinator will then contact the parents/guardians and inform them of the consequences surrounding the risks of not satisfying the educational requirements of their child. Once the relevant coordinators have reviewed the extended absence request, the forms will be presented to the principal for his approval.
- Student extended absence forms can be obtained from the admin office.
- Student extended absence **will not be approved** if the timeframe exceeds four weeks (two weeks from the school term and two weeks from the term break). If the parents proceed with the non-approved extended absence, it may result in the termination of enrolment or repeating the same grade the following year for satisfactory completion of the course. Teachers are not obliged to provide work to students on an unapproved leave.
- If the absence is for two weeks or more, a letter outlining the purpose for the absence / copy of the travel documents must accompany the Application for Extended Leave form.
- It is recommended that families plan holidays during school holiday periods wherever possible. Please be aware if students miss assessment tasks while absent for family holidays, their academic results may be affected. This may impact on their re-enrolment for the following year.
- **More than 40 school days of absence within a year may result in the enrolment of the child being terminated by the school.**

### **Implications of Not Meeting the Requirements of this Policy**

- If, due to excessive absences, a student does not comply with this policy, an interview will be held with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the strategies to improve future attendance and/or pathway options available to the student for the following year.
- Students who do not achieve an 80% attendance rate will be deemed not to have satisfactorily completed the year level or subject/unit of work.
- At Kindy to Year 10 this may result in the student not being promoted to the next year level.
- At Years 11 and 12, this policy will impact upon the ability of students to pass units and ultimately on their ability to gain their HSC certificate.



### **Fractional Truancy**

It is essential that students attend every class in a day. Class/Subject teachers mark rolls every period (Secondary) and will inform Wellbeing coordinator if a student is absent from class without approval. The Wellbeing coordinator will follow up with students who truant.

If a child is absent through illness or any other unforeseen reason, then a note should be produced on the **first day back to school** and presented to the Class/Roll Call teacher. In cases when parents know that an illness or injury will prevent attendance for two or more days, it is advisable to phone the school office and inform the office admin staff.

Unauthorized absence is treated as a discipline issue and will result in sanctions such as detention. Parents are informed of such breaches.

### **Lateness to school**

Students arriving late to school must:

- Report to the office immediately on arrival at school and receive a late slip.
- The late slip is to be signed by the office staff.
- The student will then report to the class with a late slip for that period. The student will give the late slip to the class/subject teacher. The class/roll call teacher will follow up with parents where a student has been late more than three days per fortnight.
- Office Admin Staff will provide Primary and Secondary Coordinators with a summary report that demonstrates the late arrivals of students. This will take place every term on a fortnightly basis on Fridays.

### **Early leave**

If a student needs to leave school early, the following procedure applies:

- Parents must sign out at the front office and receive an early leave pass.
- The office staff will record the time of the early leave pass on Sentral.
- To avoid disruptions of class parents are advised not to pick up their child between 3.00pm to 3.30pm.

### **Strategies to promote 100% attendance**

- Developing a positive school culture
- Recording and following up student absences
- Monitoring student non-attendance
- Providing intervention and support

### **Record Keeping**

The principal is responsible for maintaining records. All absentee notes, medical certificates, letters sent to parents and student attendance improvement plan must be kept in student folder. A copy of the weekly attendance register of each class must be stored on the College server and backed up each week on to an external device and kept in a safe and secure place offsite. The school maintains its attendance records through the Sentral database.

The register for enrolments must be retained for a minimum of 5 years before archiving. The register for daily attendances must be retained for a period 7 years after the last entry.

**Attached Documents:**

Attachment 1: Irfan College absence action information record on Sentral

Attachment 2: Verbal /phone message recording form

Attachment 3: Exemption from Attending School under s25

Attachment 4: Student Extended Absence Request Form

Attachment 5: School Attendance Register Codes



**Attachment 2**



**OFFICE PHONE LOG**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Message from: \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal

Phone

Reason for Absence:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Message taken by: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please maintain confidentiality of information provided by parents)*



### **Attachment 3: Exemption from Attending School under s25**

Section 25 of the Education Act 1990 delegated the power to grant and cancel Certificates of exemption from being enrolled in and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances to the principal of a non-government school.

Exemptions during the year can be granted for exceptional domestic circumstances exceptional circumstances such as health, employment in the entertainment industry and participation in elite sporting events.

Parents must apply for a certificate of exemption using the leave from the College Office and submit this to the principal for approval. All copies of certificates of exemption are kept with school/student files.

Only the School Principal can grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12-month period. A Certificate of Exemption cannot be granted for holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods.

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 the student does not return to school as per the return date indicated on the Exemption Certificate, the Administration Staff will contact the parents after 3 days and seek an explanation of absence. If there is no response from parents, the Administration Staff will call the emergency contact listed on the student's file. If the parents do not notify the school of the extended leave of student absence for more than 30 days, the school Principal or his delegate 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).

#### **Procedures**

1. The Parent should approach the Administration Office at least 5 weeks before the requested leave and obtain an "Student Long Term Absence Request" form. This form needs to be completed by a parent/guardian and returned to the Administration office for approval by the principal. Supporting documentation must be attached to the application to demonstrate that an exemption is in the best interests of the student.
2. The Principal will approve or deny the leave. If approved, the principal will issue a "Certificate for Exemption from Attendance at School". The principal may grant exemptions due to exceptional domestic circumstances, other exceptional circumstances such as health of the student, the child being prevented from attending school because of a direction

under section 42D of the Public Health Act 1991, or participation in elite sporting or entertainment events.

3. If denied, the principal will communicate with the parent/guardian. Reasons for denial may include if 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 or if the requested number of days for leave is unsatisfactory.

4. The Principal will request the coordinators to organise work to be completed by the Student while on leave and this will be communicated by the coordinators to the Parents.

#### **Parents requesting for leave not covered under s25**

Parents requesting leave for their child (ren) during the year for reasons where an exemption is not possible, must apply to the principal in writing. Approval for request of leave is at the discretion of the principal. A Certificate of Exemption cannot be granted for holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods.

## Attachment 4: Student Extended Absence Request Form



### Important Information for Parent/Guardian

- As part of the College's Attendance Policy, the extended absences can only be approved for a maximum of two school weeks. The two school weeks must be taken from the beginning of a school term. It is strongly recommended that families use the school breaks to increase the number of days needed for their travel.
- The Extended Request Form must be filled out should the student be absent from the College for any reason for three consecutive days or more.
- The Extended Request Form must be handed in to the admin office at least four weeks prior to the leave request.
- Copies of all relevant travel documentation must be attached to this application.
- The school fees are continued to be paid during the students' extended absence.
- I understand that the period of extended leave will count towards my child's absences from school.
- All extended absence requests are subject to the principal's approval.
- Failure to follow the procedures outlined above may result in the termination of enrolment

1. Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for long term absence:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Total number of school days requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last day at school: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of first day back at school: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Overseas Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit this form to the admin office to finalise the request

2. Coordinator's Approval: Primary/ Secondary Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved dates:

Non-Approved dates:

Reason for Non-Approved dates:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Principal's Approval: Approved Not Approved

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Use Only

Date form received by the office: \_\_\_\_\_

After completion of approvals, the office needs to: Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- provide a copy of this form to the parent/guardian.
- inform relevant staff members





## Attachment 5: School Attendance Register Codes

### School Attendance Register Codes

Schools are required to have policy and procedures to monitor regular attendance and to ensure that records are current, accurate and accessible. The procedures should reflect how attendance is marked, followed up and records maintained at that school.

The tables on the following pages indicate:

- Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence
- Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

The symbol 'X' is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

Schools must use the following symbols to record an absence or variation in attendance, *in addition to* the appropriate attendance register code shown on the following pages.

Symbol	Meaning
a	The student was absent for the whole day
Pa	The students was late or was absent for part of the day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

NESA requires that the register of enrolments must be retained for a minimum of five (5) years before archiving.

The register of daily attendance must be retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.

#### Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of student absence

The following attendance register codes are to be used to record the explanation of student absence and **are counted** for statistical purposes.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
A	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.	To be also used if the principal <b>does not</b> accept that an absence (e.g. for extended leave/travel during school term) is in the student's best interests and that the reason is unjustified.
S	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a medical certificate is provided or</li> <li>- the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.</li> </ul>	
L	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- misadventure or unforeseen event</li> <li>- participation in special events not related to the school</li> <li>- domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member</li> <li>- attendance at funerals</li> <li>- travel in Australia and overseas</li> <li>- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.</li> </ul>	Note that this code is to be used if the reason for the absence (e.g. extended leave/travel) <b>is accepted</b> by the principal.  The principal may consider an Application for Extended Leave/Travel from parents, and provide a Certificate for Extended Leave/Travel, if approved.
E	The student was suspended from school	

### Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

Only the following attendance register codes must be used to record a variation in attendance – they are **not** counted as an absence for statistical purposes. In addition to recording the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the variation must be recorded.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
<b>M</b>	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.	
<b>F</b>	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HSC Pathways Program</li> <li>- Best Start Assessments</li> <li>- Trial or HSC examinations</li> <li>- VET courses</li> </ul>	The “F” code is no longer only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable. The code should also be used in independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and other programs that are school authorised.
<b>B</b>	The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work experience</li> <li>- school sport (representative events)</li> <li>- school excursions</li> <li>- student exchange</li> </ul>	The ‘B’ code is used for sport when the student has been selected to represent the school at an event.  If the student is participating at an elite level (state or national squads), consideration may be given to an Exemption from Attendance (Elite Sports/Arts)

<p><b>H</b></p>	<p>The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis.</p> <p>The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tutorial centre and programs</li> <li>- behaviour schools</li> <li>- juvenile justice</li> <li>- hospital schools</li> <li>- distance education</li> </ul>	<p>In most cases this code will only be used by government schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools.</p> <p>The “F” code, not the “H” code is to be used by independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.</p>
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