



Policy Name	Attendance Policy
Related Policies and Legislation	Enrolment Policy Parent Handbook <i>WA School Education Act 1999</i> <i>WA School Education Regulations 2000</i> <i>WA Public Health Act 2016</i> <i>WA Public Health Regulations 2017</i> <i>Australian Education Regulations 2013</i>
Policy Category	Student Wellbeing & Safety
Relevant Audience	All Treetops Community
Date of Issue / Last Revision	20 May 2010 21 February 2013 23 July 2015 15 June 2017 24 February 2022
Date Set for Review	February 2025
Person/s Responsible for Review	Treetops Administration

Attendance Policy

Purpose:

This policy has been developed to manage the school's legal obligations to monitor and manage student attendance, and to outline expectations related to attendance and management of issues relating to non-attendance.

Attendance:

A student must attend school for everyday that the school is open for instruction, in line with the expectations of the *WA School Education Act 1999, Section 23*. All students must participate in full-time education, training, or employment, or a combination of these until:

- The end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months; or
- The child reaches the age of 18, whichever happens first.

Regular and consistent school attendance and participation are essential for a student's social and academic learning. Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full potential to actively participate and engage in their learning.

Non-attendance affects students both academically and socially. Absenteeism can increase social isolation, including alienation and lack of engagement with the school community and peers, leading to emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Attendance is also an important contributor to a student's academic achievement – all school days matter. The correlation between absence and achievement is consistently negative, and declines in achievement are evident with any level of absence.

When a student's attendance falls below 90% (an average of 1 day per fortnight), this is the equivalent of 20 days or 4 weeks per year of missed schooling. If a student were to attend school at 90% from Years 1 to 10, they would miss out on approximately one full year of schooling.

The effects of non-attendance on academic achievement accumulate over time, and can affect academic achievement in future years of schooling.

Students are deemed to be 'at risk' if their attendance falls below 90%.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

All parents and/or guardians have a legal obligation to send their child to school as required.

Section 23 of the WA School Education Act 1999 states that: '*A student must, for every year of the student's compulsory education period, on the days on which the school is open for instruction, attend the school at which the student is enrolled*'

All families must provide an acceptable explanation for their child's non-attendance if they are absent from school. Acceptable absences include:

- Illness;
- temporary physical or mental incapacity;
- an unforeseen adverse event e.g. bereavement or trauma;
- religious/cultural reasons;
- any other reasonable cause approved by the Principal.

It is at the discretion of the Principal to determine whether or not the reason for an absence is valid.

In the event of a student having been absent for three consecutive days due to illness/incapacity, even with notification, families are required to provide a medical certificate/note regarding the absence.

Medical or Other Approved Absences

If a student will be absent from school, parents must contact the school office as soon as possible (by phone or email) to advise of their child's absence. Where possible, this should occur prior to the commencement of the school day.

Unapproved Absences:

Where students are taken out of school during term time for family holidays, or for any other unapproved reason, the school is unable to approve the absence as it does not meet the requirements of the Act, and families will be in breach of their legal obligations. Families will still need to notify the school of the planned absence, which the school will acknowledge and record as an unapproved absence.

Late Arrival, Early Departure:

Students who arrive after their class start time will need to attend the school office to sign in. Students who leave before the end of the school day will need to attend the school office to sign out.

Unexplained Absences:

If a student is not present at the start of the school day, and no explanation has been provided for the absence, the school will contact the parent/guardian as a matter of urgency:

- An email message will be sent with a request to contact the school to explain the absence.
- If there is no response, the school will phone the parent/guardian directly using the contact phone numbers provided.
- If the school is unable to contact the parent/guardian regarding the absence, the school may contact the nominated 'Emergency Contact'.
- If the student's whereabouts cannot be established, other steps that may be taken to identify the student's whereabouts include:
 - Checking in with the student's relatives or friends at the school
 - Conducting a search of the school site (if relevant)
 - Checking with other agencies (e.g. DCPFS) if involved
 - A home visit by a school staff member
 - Contacting the WA Police.

Excursion, Incursions, Camps

Incursions, Excursion, and Camps are organised for Primary and Secondary students during the school year and are a compulsory component of the school curriculum. Attendance and participation are not optional.

It is understood that there may be situations where parents may wish to withhold a child from attending/participating, and this should be discussed with the Principal beforehand.

Principal's Responsibilities:

The Principal must ensure that attendance records are kept showing for each day whether each student attended, or participated in an educational programme of the school or, in the alternative, failed to attend or participate.

The Principal can require a student not to attend for health reasons.

The Principal will monitor and manage the non-attendance and absenteeism of any student identified with high levels of non-attendance, late arrival, or early departure. They will contact the student's parent/guardian to follow up and discuss the issue.

Recurring or Concerning Absenteeism

In the case of recurring or concerning absenteeism or late arrival, including absenteeism that has not been explained by written notice or medical certificate, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Principal will contact the parent/guardian regarding any concerns and offer support to allow the student to return to school as often as possible.
2. If the absenteeism or late arrival does not improve, a letter will be sent home outlining the legal obligations by both the school and the parent to ensure that the student can attend school as often as is possible.
3. If, after making thorough enquiries into a student's absence, the Principal is not satisfied that the explanation is genuine or if the absenteeism is continuing then:
 - The Principal may refer the matter to the Department of Education (District Office) and / or the Department of Communities (Child Protection & Family Support)).
 - The school may request that the family withdraws the student from the school due to their ongoing non-compliance with the school's policies and procedures.