



**HELENA RIVER
STEINER SCHOOL**

Attendance Policy

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1		08/2016	Creation of policy	TM
2		05/2019	Minor wording amendments	TM
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INTRODUCTION

Consistent attendance when enrolled at a school is an important aspect of a child's sense of belonging and access to learning opportunities and outcomes in a school environment.

Students of compulsory school age resident in Western Australia must, on the days on which the school is open for instruction, attend the school at which he or she is enrolled, or otherwise participate in an educational program of the school whether at the school or elsewhere, unless specific exemptions apply, as required by the Principal, and as set out in the *School Education Act 1999* (the Act).

The School recognises that the parents/guardians or caregivers of a child who is enrolled at school are responsible under the Act for ensuring their child is attending on a daily basis or are to provide an acceptable explanation for any absence.

Section 24 of the Act provides for arrangements alternative to attendance. Students who do not attend school regularly must be case-managed and encouraged to resume regular school attendance. The Act provides for persistent breaches of Section 23 to be referred to a School Attendance Panel and ultimately to a court of law.

1 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

The attendance policies are relevant for parents, teachers, administrative staff and management. Matters of attendance are recorded daily and monitored over time and are the joint responsibility of all stakeholders.

2 POLICY

2.1 The Parents/ Guardians or caregivers are Responsible for:

- Providing written notification (via email, text or the school communication application) to the administrative staff stating the reason/s for the intended absence. . Written notification and requests will be retained on the relevant school file.

2.2 The Class Teachers are Responsible for:

- Recording student attendance in the morning and afternoon in the Attendance Roll book (the Roll), recorded as a half day's attendance. These will be taken to the office at 9 am and 1.30 pm.
- Ensuring that any verbal notification given to them by a parent, guardian or caregiver for a child's absence is redirected to a written notification submitted to Reception.
- Ensuring all written forms of explanation notes are provided to administration staff.
- Ensuring that a child who arrives at the Classroom after the beginning of the school day provides a 'Late Note' issued by Reception and, if the child has not yet been to Reception, ensures that the student is recorded as present.
- At the end of the school day, provides Reception with any Late Notices collected.

- Identifying students with attendance issues, by means of a noticed pattern of either non-attendance with or without an explanation, non-attendance that is authorised or non-authorised or habitual lateness.
- Actively communicating with parents/caregivers of habitual non/late attenders to improve attendance.
- Working with the respective Education Coordinator or Principal to facilitate appropriate follow up.

2.3 The Administration Staff are Responsible for:

- Providing each class with an up to date class register with contact details and a class Attendance Roll
- Issuing students who arrive after the beginning of the school day with 'Late Notes' to be given to their teacher on arrival in class.
- Entering paper and electronically filed copies of explanation notes into the student's file and into the School's student records management database (the Database).
- Contacting parents/caregivers by telephone, school communication app or email, when a student is absent without notification to check on the student's whereabouts.
- Keeping detailed records of all contact, attempts at contact and the explanation given for the absence.
- Cross checking written notes received from the class teacher against the information recorded in the Database.

2.4 The Principal is Responsible for:

- Overseeing the accurate recording and rigorous monitoring of the attendance of all students.
- Identifying students with attendance issues.
- Implementing appropriate strategies to restore regular attendance for example arranging a parent-teacher meeting and assisting the teacher and parents to develop an attendance improvement plan.
- Contacting the School Attendance Officer at the Behaviour and Wellbeing Branch within the Department of Education to refer a student with chronic non-attendance.
- Ensuring all written explanations and medical certificates relating to each Register of Attendance is retained in the School for at least six (6) months after the end of the school year.
- Ensuring all completed Registers of Attendance are retained in the School for a minimum of six (6) years from the last date to which they refer.

3 RECORDING ATTENDANCE

The *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000* (the legislation) require that attendance records are kept showing for each day 'whether a student attended or participated in an educational program; or failed to so attend and participate'.

Helena River Steiner School consistently and accurately records student attendance in both paper and electronic forms.

Class registers are marked off twice daily and the information is then recorded electronically in the Database:

- A continuous absence not less than two (2) full hours' secular instruction is to be recorded as a half day's attendance.
- A student arriving 10 minutes after the 8.45 am start time (8:35 am in High School) or 1 pm will be deemed as late and must present to the Administration Office to be marked accordingly, with a Late Note issued to the student and to be handed to the class teacher before entering the classroom.
- If a student leaves before the end of the usual school hours, parents are required to sign the student out and state the reason, which is then recorded in the Database.
- Students who participate in a school approved off-campus excursion or educational activity are not to be marked absent.
- Students who are on suspension and are excluded from attending school will be marked as absent during the period of suspension.
- Attendance records such as attendance registers and class rolls must be kept for a period of seven (7) years.
- Absentee notes that are separate from the students' records are to be kept for a period of two (2) years from the date of receipt and destroyed appropriately.

4 MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The monitoring of attendance is an ongoing process, ensuring consistent and effective identification and required actions.

Class Teachers and Administration Staff are required to monitor attendance and seek additional clarification from the respective Education Coordinator whenever necessary.

- Students can be signed in and out of school by parent, guardian or caregiver who has been nominated on enrolment for this purpose, by means of the Student Sign In/Out Register kept in the Administration Office;
- If a student is absent at the start of any given school day and once the Roll has been sent to Administration, without notification received, Administration will contact parents/guardian/caregiver by telephone, school communication app or email to check on the student's whereabouts and reason for absence. If the absence is for a legitimate reason, no further action will be taken unless the frequency and/or number of absences give the school cause for concern. Class Teachers and Administration may seek further advice from the respective Education Coordinator or Principal;
- If it is established that there are no legitimate reasons for the absence, Class Teachers and Administration are to seek further advice from the respective Education Coordinator or Principal;
- If a student's attendance falls below 90% over a ten-week period, Administration must inform the Class Teacher, respective Education Coordinator and Principal;
- If a student displays a pattern of lateness or early departure, Administration or the Class Teacher must inform the respective Education Coordinator;

- Administration, the Class Teacher or the respective Education Coordinator should contact the parents/guardians/caregivers and determine if there are any issues happening within the household that are resulting in the absences;
- A Case Conference between the Parents'/care givers, Class Teacher and respective Education Coordinator may be convened to discuss and investigate the attendance issues, and implement intervention strategies to improve attendance;
- If there are no improvements in the student's attendance, the Principal will refer the student to the School Attendance Officer at the Behaviour and Wellbeing Branch within the Department of Education for further assistance.

5 REFERRALS TO THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

If a student has been identified as being a regular or chronic non-attender, and the implemented intervention strategies have not been successful, the student is to be referred to the district-based School Attendance Officer and/or School Attendance Panel.

- The respective Education Coordinator or Principal must complete the appropriate form and forward this and any supporting documentation, including evidence of all reasonable and repeated efforts to establish contact and restore the student's attendance to the School Attendance Officer at the district office.
- Helena River Steiner School will work collaboratively and transparently with the School Attendance Officer and other stakeholders to restore the student's re-engagement and attendance.
- Helena River Steiner School will continue to monitor and reassess the student;
- Helena River Steiner School will comply with any requests from the School Attendance Officer and District office to provide information on attendance.

6 PROCEDURES

Maintaining the record of attendance:

6.1 Daily

- Students' attendance must be verified by the Class Teacher twice daily in the Attendance Roll – once during the morning session by 9.00 am and once during the afternoon session by 1.30 pm. After each roll call one or two of the students will take the Roll to the office where it will be entered into the Database.
- Absences:
 - Record absences by writing the letter "a" in the appropriate half day column.
 - For any absences, a verbal or written explanation from the parent/guardian is required. This is noted electronically in the register by administrative staff.
 - For any absences on any school day, a written explanation from the parent/guardian/caregiver is required. This is noted electronically in the Database by administrative staff.

- All written explanations and medical certificates relating to each Register of Attendance must be filed in the respective folder in the order of date of receipt.
- Late Arrivals:
 - When an absence has been recorded and the student arrives later during the morning or afternoon session, place the letter “l” above the “a” in the appropriate half-day column.
 - For Primary students who are late, the parent/guardian must fill in the “Late Register” in the Office as well as a “Late Note” for the student to take to their class.
 - For Kindergarten students who are late, the parent/guardian or caregiver must take the child to their respective classroom after filling in the Late Register and collecting a Late Note.

6.2 At the End of Each Term:

Administrative staff must finalise the appropriate columns by:

- Entering the number of students entering and leaving the class during the week.
- Enter the total number of students in the class per week.
- Enter the half-day absences for each student if appropriate.
- Class teachers to sign the appropriate page of the Register.
- Forward the Register to the Principal who will initial the Roll page.

6.3 Reporting Unexplained Absences

Extended Absences and School Tracking System:

- If a student is absent without explanation on a school day, the parent/guardian is contacted immediately via phone, email or the school’s communication application.
- If an adequate written explanation is not received from the parent/guardian/caregiver within seven days of requesting it of the parent/guardian/caregiver, the matter must be referred to the Principal.
- If, after making thorough enquires, the Principal has received no explanation for the student’s absence or if the explanation supplied is not deemed genuine, the Principal must report this matter to the School Welfare Section, Education Department of Western Australia.

6.4 Children Whose Whereabouts are unknown

If it has been established that an enrolled student fails to attend school and all attempts to locate the student have failed, after fifteen (15) consecutive school days and the school has not received advice that the student has been enrolled at another school, the Principal is to refer to the "Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown" list, available from the School Attendance Officer.

The Principal is required to regularly review the "Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown" list and provide any information on students who are known on the list to the School Attendance Officer.

6.5 Removing Students from Attendance Registers

Helena River Steiner School recognises that students may change schools throughout their educational years and must accurately record a student's start and finish date.

- For students transferring from Helena River Steiner School to another school, the Enrolment Officer will send a "Student Transfer Note" to the student's new school, clearly stating the starting and finishing date of the child’s attendance at the school.

- Section 21 of the *School Education Act 1999* gives the Principal the authority to remove a student's name from the school's attendance records, when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the student is enrolled in another school, enrolled in home schooling, is no longer resident in the state or has been granted an exemption under Section 11 of the Act.
- If a student leaves the school and a transfer note is not received and their whereabouts are unknown, the student is considered to be 'missing'.
- 'Missing' students must be reported to the Department of Education.
- All records of students no longer attending the school will be filed under "Past Students" for a period of seven (7) years after they have left Helena River Steiner School.

7 REFERENCES

Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Handbook
Links With	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment Policy • Student Recruitment Policy
Related Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School Education Act 1999 and Education Regulations 2000, Section 23, 24</i>
Appendices	Appendix I: Appendix II: