

Attendance and Engagement Policy

Research indicates that attendance and engagement at school positively impacts learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for young people. Scotch College Adelaide understands that students need to maximise attendance at school in order to gain optimum benefit from their education. Schools are required under the Education Act 1972 (SA) and the Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Act 2007 to ensure that students enrolled at their school are attending school or participating in an approved learning program.

Guiding Principles

The College believes that:

- society has a responsibility to prepare young people for successful participation in learning and the broader community
- families, society, peers and educators and other significant adults influence the life choices of young people
- monitoring student attendance helps keep young people safe
- attendance at school has benefits and consequences that increase or decrease life choices
- individuals can accept responsibility for their participation in educational programs according to their level of development
- continuity of relationships and learning in an educational program is dependent upon attendance
- attendance is a shared responsibility between the College staff, parents/caregivers, students, and members of the wider community
- attendance is critically linked to the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning and the development of relationships, which then foster improved learning outcomes and increased wellbeing for individuals and groups
- participation in educational programs fosters the development of personal and social skills.

Scope

This policy applies to students enrolled on the Mitcham Campus (Reception to Year 6) and the Torrens Park Campus (Year 7 to Year 12).

1. Legal Attendance and Engagement Requirements

The *Education and Children's Services Act (2019)* outlines the legal attendance and engagement requirements for students:

1.1 Compulsory School Age

A child who is at least 6 years old but not yet 16 years of age is known as being of 'compulsory school age'. It is a parent or caregiver's legal responsibility to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is enrolled at a government or non-government school and is fully participating in the program arranged and approved by the enrolling school.

1.2 Compulsory Education Age

1.2.1 All young people between the ages of 16 and 17 are required to participate in an approved learning program until they turn 17 years, or, until they have achieved an appropriate qualification under an approved learning program (whichever occurs first).

1.2.2 Approved learning programs include traditional schooling (SACE, IB Diploma, Steiner Education Secondary Certificate), Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses, Technical and Further Education (TAFE) courses, accredited courses offered by Registered Training Organisation (RTOs), apprenticeships and traineeships, university degrees or diplomas or other university award courses, and other programs authorised by the Minister for Education.

1.3 Starting School

A child is legally required to be enrolled at a school by their 6th birthday.

1.3.1 If a child turns 5 years of age *before May 1*, they can start school on the first day of Term 1 of *that year*.

1.3.2 If a child turns 5 years of age *after May 1*, they can start school on the first day of Term 1 of *the following year*.

1.3.3 While there is no legal requirement for children under the age of 6 years to be engaged in schooling or an approved learning program, there is an expectation that, once enrolled, children will attend on a regular basis to participate and complete their education program.

1.4 Leaving School Early for Full-time Employment

From 15 years, students can leave school if they have full-time employment:

1.4.1 If the student is 15 years old, parents and caregivers can seek an exemption from school if they have a job that is at least 30 hours per week.

1.4.2 If the student is 16 years old, parents and caregivers can seek an exemption from school if they have a job that is at least 25 hours a week.

1.4.3 To seek an exemption from school, parents and caregivers need a letter from the employer that guarantees the job and the number of hours the student will be employed.

1.4.4 If a student's employment finishes before they are 17 years old, they must return to full participation in school or an approved learning program.

1.5 Part-time Employment

Students can work part-time if it is outside of school hours. Part-time work must not interfere with school (including working long hours at night that may make it difficult for them to learn the next day). An employer or parent or caregiver can be prosecuted if they ask a student to work in these ways.

2. Satisfactory Attendance and Engagement

2.1 Satisfactory attendance at the College is when a student has attended 90% of the College's scheduled contact hours.

2.2 Satisfactory engagement at the College is achieved when a student reaches the minimum engagement requirement for a College program:

- For the teaching and learning program, this may be related to the participation in learning activities and the submission of assessment tasks.
- For the cocurricular program, this may be related to the participation in trainings/rehearsals and matches/performances.

2.3 Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS)

It is a visa condition that a full-fee paying overseas student attends a minimum of 80% of scheduled course contact hours.

3. Absence

3.1 Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is an absence where the reason provided by the parent or caregiver is legitimate or deemed appropriate by the Principal (or their delegate).

3.1.1 The *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* states the following as legitimate reasons for absence:

- A student is sick or infirm
- There was danger of a student of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease
- The child was reasonably required to care for a member of the child's family

3.1.2 The College may require further documentation for absences of more than two days for them to be deemed appropriate (such as a letter from a health professional)

3.2 Planned Absence

The *Education and Children's Services Act 2019* requires planned absences be approved by the relevant authority

3.2.1 Any planned absence of more than two days, but less than 2-weeks, must be approved by the relevant Head of School or Head of Campus. A request should be made in writing prior to the planned absence.

3.2.2 Planned absences of more than 2-weeks relating to the following reasons must be approved by the Principal (or their delegate):

- Family holiday/travel (up to 12 months)
- Ongoing medical (up to 1 month)
- Other or conditional (such as home education) (up to 1 month)

Applications should be made using *'Form A - Principal Approved Application for the Temporary Exemption from School Enrolment/Attendance and Education/Participation (Appendix A)* to the relevant Head of School.

For planned absences other than those listed, or that are longer in duration, please see **Section 4 – Exemptions for Attendance and Engagement**.

3.3 Unauthorised or Unexplained Absence

An unauthorised or unexplained absence is an absence where a reason has not been provided by parents or caregivers, or, the reason provided is not considered to be legitimate or deemed appropriate by the Principal (or their delegate).

Unauthorised or unexplained absences of more than two consecutive days will be investigated by the student's Homegroup teacher, Head of House, or Head of School.

3.4 Late Arrival

Late arrival at the College is recorded and but not included in attendance calculations. A student's Homegroup teacher, Head of House, or Head of School will follow up on patterns of late arrival.

3.5 Exclusion

Any period of exclusion from class (i.e., suspension) will not be included in student attendance calculations.

4. Exemptions for Attendance and Engagement

Exemptions for attendance or engagement (part-time or full-time) must be approved by the appropriate authority. Applications should be made in writing to the relevant Head of School using the appropriate form.

4.1 Exemptions for attendance and engagement on the following grounds are approved by the Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools of South Australia:

- Overseas exchange
- Family holiday / travel (greater than 12 months, up to 24 months)
- Part-time school attendance (e.g., for elite sport participation)
- Full-time employment
- Full-time non-school education

Applications should be made using '*Form B – Application for Exemption from School Enrolment/Attendance and Education Enrolment/Participation*' (see **Appendix B**) to the relevant Head of Campus.

4.2 Exemptions for attendance and engagement on the following grounds are approved by the Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools of South Australia:

- Disability
- Behaviour
- Health or medical

Applications should be made using '*Form C – Application for Exemption from School Enrolment/Attendance and Education Enrolment/Participation*' (see **Appendix C**) to the relevant Head of Campus.

4.3 Exemptions for attendance or engagement that are greater than 12 months must be approved by the Chief Executive, Department for Education and Children's Services, or, Executive Director, Preschool and School Improvement, or, Director, Programs and Regional Management.

5. Unsatisfactory Attendance and Engagement

When students do not have satisfactory attendance and engagement:

- There are negative impacts on their learning (see **Appendix D**).
- Parents and caregivers are at risk of not meeting their legal requirements regarding attendance at school (see **Section 1**) and may be prosecuted.

5.1 When a student's rate of attendance falls below 90%, the Homegroup Teacher or Head of House or Head of School will arrange a meeting with the family to discuss concerns and, if necessary, develop an Attendance and Engagement Plan (see **Section 6**).

5.2 Habitual Non-Attendance

Unauthorised or unexplained absences of 5 days or more per term is classified as habitual non-attendance. When a student falls into this category, the Homegroup Teacher or Head of House or Head of School will arrange a meeting with the family to discuss concerns and, if necessary, develop an Attendance and Engagement Plan (see **Section 6**).

5.3 Chronic Non-Attendance

Unauthorised or unexplained absences of 10 days or more per term is classified as chronic non-attendance. When a student falls into this category, the relevant Head of School will arrange a meeting with the family to develop an Attendance and Engagement Plan (see **Section 6**). The College regularly audits attendance to identify chronic non-attendance.

5.4 Truancy

Truancy is a deliberate non-attendance and/or non-engagement by a student without legitimate or appropriate reason and without the knowledge of their parents or caregivers. The College works collaboratively with parents and caregivers to apply consequences for truant behaviour.

5.5 School Refusal

School refusal is a complex and deliberate non-attendance and/or non-engagement by a student that can be driven by feelings of distress or anxiety and is often with the knowledge of parents or caregivers (see **Appendix E**). It often starts as regular authorised absence but then transitions to habitual and chronic non-attendance.

When the College or a parent or caregiver believes that a student meets the criteria for school refusal, the Head of School will arrange a meeting with the family to develop an Attendance and Engagement Plan (see **Section 6**)

5.6 For compliance reasons, the College is required to formally report attendance that is less than or equal to 80%.

5.7 Referral to the Department for Education Student Support Services – Truancy

The College will refer a student to the Department for Education Student Support Services – Social Work (Truancy) (see **Appendix F**) when:

- unauthorised and/or unexplained absences are ongoing, or there is a pattern of concerning absences, and despite multiple interventions, there has been no improvement in attendance
- a student has had six-consecutive weeks of unauthorised absence

5.8 Mandatory Notifications

College staff are required by the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* to make mandatory notifications to the child abuse report line (CARL) for concerns regarding:

- a parent or caregiver's refusal to send the child to school or engage with any other education options available (including Open Access College or home schooling)
- refusal of offers of support or attempts to help the family to overcome barriers to attendance
- a family have disengaged
- the child's education being seriously interrupted by patterns of non-attendance or non-engagement that are enduring or ongoing in nature (noting that an enduring pattern does not require extended consecutive absence) as defined by the Department for Child Protect (DCP) in the *Mandatory Reporting Guide*

5.9 Full-Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS)

5.9.1 If the attendance of an overseas student falls below 90%, then the student's Homegroup Teacher or Head of House or the International Student Coordinator will be advised. An Attendance and Engagement Plan (see **Section 6**) will be put in place.

5.9.2 If student attendance fails to improve despite support in place, and the student reaches the attendance threshold for a study period, the College will advise the student of its intention to report the student for breach of visa condition 8202. From this point, the student has 20 working days in which to access the College's internal complaints and appeals process.

5.9.3 The College will report to the regulatory ESOS authority in PRISMS that the student has not achieved satisfactory course attendance where practicable where:

- The student does not access the complaints and appeals process within 20 days
- The student withdraws from the complaints and appeals process
- The complaints and appeals process results in a decision for the College

5.9.4 Students will not be reported for failing to meet the 80% threshold where the student produces documentary evidence clearly demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances that have impacted attendance (i.e., medical illness supported by a medical certificate).

5.9.5 If the student does not obtain a suspension of studies under the Scotch College Adelaide's **Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy**, and falls below the 80% threshold for attendance, the process for reporting the student for unsatisfactory attendance (breach of visa condition 8202) will occur.

5.9.6 The College will not deliver a course exclusively online or by distance learning to an overseas student. The College can provide online or distance learning, which will be in addition to the minimum face to face teaching requirements approved by the relevant designated state authority or ESOS agency as part of the College's registration.

6. Attendance and Engagement Plans

Attendance and Engagement plans are developed to support the return to satisfactory attendance and engagement for a student (see **Section 5**). The development of an attendance and engagement plan is a multi-stage process that involves College staff, parents and caregivers, and the student.

6.1 Meeting with Parents and Caregivers

An initial meeting will be convened with the parents and caregivers, Head of School, a College Psychologist, and other parties that may be deemed relevant. The purpose of the meeting is to gather information relating to the student's:

- current behaviours (at school and at home)
- history
- wellbeing
- learning

6.2 Meeting with Student

A College Psychologist will arrange a meeting with the student. The purpose of the meeting is to gather further information from the student to inform the development of the plan.

6.3 Developing an Attendance and Engagement Plan

After relevant information has been gathered, an Attendance and Engagement plan will be developed. An attendance and engagement plan details structural considerations and accommodations that will support a return to satisfactory attendance and engagement. This includes structural considerations and/or accommodations to the:

- home environment
- school environment
- learning program

The Attendance and Engagement plan is developed in consultation with parents and caregivers, Head of School, College Psychologists, Director of Teaching and Learning, and any other relevant parties.

6.4 Home Visits

The development of an Attendance and Engagement plan may require a home visit, particularly to meet with the student. In instances where a home visit is required:

- Permission will be sought from parents and caregivers, who will be present for the home visit.
- At least two College staff members will attend the home visit, with one being the College Psychologist.

7. Responsibilities – Students

Students enrolled at Scotch College Adelaide have a responsibility for their attendance. The level of responsibility is determined by the age of the child and their individual circumstances.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Attend school, or other educational programs as negotiated, regularly on every day the program is offered.
- Be punctual in arriving at school or the education program and for all associated lessons and activities.
- Engage appropriately in the education program as expected.

8. Responsibilities – Parents and Caregivers

When they enrol their child at Scotch College Adelaide, parents and caregivers accept the responsibility to:

- Provide information to the College that may assist in planning for the child's learning (i.e., medical conditions, developmental milestones, family issues)
- Enable their child to attend punctually and regularly on everyday our education program is offered and to comply with the education program being offered.
- Provide an explanation to the College whenever their child is absent. Apply for an exemption whenever their child is removed from the school with no provision of evidence that their learning will be with another school.
- Work with the College on intervention strategies to improve attendance.
- Discuss with the Head of School any suspicions of neglect and/or abuse that may require mandatory notification

9. Responsibilities – College Staff

College staff have responsibilities for monitoring, investigating, and supporting the attendance and engagement of students enrolled.

9.1 School Office Administrators

School office administrators are responsible for:

- Recording any absenteeism notified by parents and caregivers
- Following up on unexplained absences by sending an SMS to parents and caregivers in the first instance, and then following up directly via Email or Phone Call if no response from the SMS is received
- Managing student 'sign-in and sign-out' procedures
- Identifying patterns of non-attendance, and reporting these to the relevant people.

9.2 Classroom and Subject Teachers

Classroom Teachers (Reception – Year 6) and Subject Teachers (Year 7 – Year 12) are responsible for:

- Providing a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage all children and students and offers opportunity for success, thus encouraging regular attendance
- Recording attendances and absences, according to College requirements
- Implementing school procedures to follow up non-attendance
- Support and implement collaboratively developed and agreed upon attendance plans
- Make mandatory notifications as appropriate (consult the *Mandatory Reporting Guide*)

9.3 Professional Services Staff and Specialist Tutors

Professional Services Staff (such as Student Services staff and Health Centre staff) and Specialist Tutors (such as instrumental tutors) are responsible for:

- Recording attendances and absences, according to College requirements
- Make mandatory notifications as appropriate (consult the *Mandatory Reporting Guide*)

9.4 Homegroup Teachers and Heads of House

Homegroup Teachers (Reception – Year 7) and Heads of House (Year 8 – Year 12) are responsible for:

- Following up on potential patterns of non-attendance, and then refer these to the Head of School when relevant
- Contributing to the development and implementation of attendance plans for students
- Make mandatory notifications as appropriate (consult the *Mandatory Reporting Guide*)

9.5 Heads of School and Director of Student Wellbeing

Heads of School, in conjunction with the Director of Student Wellbeing, are responsible for:

- Approving applications for exemption from attendance at school
- Informing parents of their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance, and possible implications of non-compliance (see **Section 1**).
- Ensuring appropriate intervention occurs regarding students' non-attendance and non-engagement (see **Section 5**)
- Engaging the College Psychologists to support with managing a student's attendance and engagement where appropriate.
- Referring to and seeking support from external agencies and support services when a student's pattern of attendance and engagement becomes irregular, and implementing interagency support for students considered at risk
- Developing attendance plans for students in consultation with parents and caregivers
- Informing the Head of Campus of students who are at high-risk regarding their attendance and engagement
- Make mandatory notifications as appropriate (consult the *Mandatory Reporting Guide*)

9.6 Heads of Campus



The Head of Campus is responsible for:

- Ensuring the maintenance of attendance records through the College's learning management system
- Ensuring procedures are in place to follow up non-attendance
- Ensure that notifications about suspicions of abuse and neglect are made under the Mandatory Reporting Guidelines
- Informing the Principal of students who are at high-risk regarding attendance and engagement



9.7 Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the College fulfils its student attendance and engagement requirements, and that delegated responsibilities are undertaken.

Appendix A – Form A: Principal Approved Application for Exemption from School Enrolment/Attendance and Education Enrolment/Participation

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
|  | Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development |  | Association of Independent Schools of South Australia | ED175 Form A Updated 06/10/2017 |
| APPLICATION FOR TEMPORARY EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ENROLMENT / ATTENDANCE AND EDUCATION ENROLMENT / PARTICIPATION | | | | |
| <b style="color: red;">PRINCIPAL APPROVAL | | | | |
| FOR ALL STUDENTS 17 YEARS AND UNDER | | | | |
| The student must attend school regularly until exemption is approved. Information provided is protected by the Government of South Australia Information Privacy Principles and each Independent school is governed by the Australian Privacy Principles. For information regarding the exemption processes, refer to www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/schools/school-life/exemption-from-attending-school | | | | |
| Section 1: Student Information | | | | |
| Name of student (in full) <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | ED ID <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | | |
| School / provider <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | Site No <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | | |
| Student's date of birth <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | Age <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | Gender <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | Year Level <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | |
| Section 2: Parent / Guardian Information | | | | |
| Name of parent / guardian (in full) <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian address <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian phone number <input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian signature <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | | | Date <input style="width: 10%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 10%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 10%;" type="text"/> |
| Section 3: Exemption Information | | | | |
| Period of exemption (inclusive): | | Start Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | End Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | |
| Reason for exemption (please tick): | | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Travel / Holiday (up to 12 months) <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Medical (up to 1 month) <input type="checkbox"/> Other / Conditional / Home Education (up to 1 month) | | |
| Comments | | <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/> | | |
| Section 4: School Use Only | | | | |
| Principal name <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | Signature <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | Date <input style="width: 10%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 10%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 10%;" type="text"/> |
| Please retain completed form at school (in students file) for audit purposes | | | | |

Appendix B – Form B: Application for Exemption from School Enrolment/Attendance and Education Enrolment/Participation

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
|  | Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development |  | Association of Independent Schools of South Australia | ED175 Form B Updated 06/10/2017 |
| APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ENROLMENT / ATTENDANCE AND EDUCATION ENROLMENT / PARTICIPATION FOR ALL STUDENTS 17 YEARS AND UNDER | | | | |
| The student must attend school regularly until exemption is approved. Information provided is protected by the Government of South Australia Information Privacy Principles and each Independent school is governed by the Australian Privacy Principles. For information regarding the exemption processes, refer to www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/schools/school-life/exemption-from-attending-school | | | | |
| Section 1: Student Information | | | | |
| Name of student (in full) <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | ED ID <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | | |
| School / provider <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | Site No <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | | |
| Student's date of birth <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | Age <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | Gender <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | Year Level <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | |
| Section 2: Parent / Guardian Information | | | | |
| Name of parent / guardian (in full) <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian address <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian phone number <input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian signature <input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/> | | Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | | |
| Section 3A: Exemption Information | | | | |
| Period of exemption (inclusive): | | Start Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | End Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | |
| Reason: | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas exchange | <input type="checkbox"/> Family travel / holiday (<i>more than 12 months</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Elite sports | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time employment (<i>30+ hrs for 15 year old / 25+ hrs for 16 year old</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time non-School education | | |
| Section 3B: Full Time Employment / Non-School Education | | | | |
| Period of exemption (inclusive): | | Start Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | End Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | |
| Section 3C: Overseas Exchange / Family Travel / Elite Sports | | | | |
| Reason: | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas exchange <small><i>Copy of confirmation document to be kept at site</i></small> | <input type="checkbox"/> Family travel / holiday <small><i>More than 12 months</i></small> | <input type="checkbox"/> Elite sports <small><i>Copy of confirmation document to be kept at site</i></small> | |
| Destination <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Principal - Recommendation | | | AISSA / DECD Central Delegate Use Only | |
| Principal name <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | | <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED | |
| Signature <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | | | Signature <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/> | |
| Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | | | Date <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 15%;" type="text"/> | |



**APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ENROLMENT / ATTENDANCE
AND EDUCATION ENROLMENT / PARTICIPATION**

**ED175
Form B (continued)**

PART TIME SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Updated 06/10/2017

Section 4: Supplementary School Program

Please specify the hours / days the student will be attending school:

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Start Time | | | | | |
| Finish Time | | | | | |

Additional comments:

Large empty text area for additional comments.

AISSA / DECD Central Delegate Use Only

Delegate name



APPROVED

NOT APPROVED

Signature

Date

Appendix C – Form C: Application for Exemption from School Enrolment/Attendance and Education Enrolment/Participation

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
|  | Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development |  | Association of Independent Schools of South Australia | ED175 Form C Updated 06/10/2017 |
| APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ENROLMENT / ATTENDANCE AND EDUCATION ENROLMENT / PARTICIPATION DISABILITY / BEHAVIOUR / HEALTH / MEDICAL – PART TIME SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR ALL STUDENTS 17 YEARS AND UNDER | | | | |
| The student must attend school regularly until exemption is approved. Information provided is protected by the Government of South Australia Information Privacy Principles and each Independent school is governed by the Australian Privacy Principles. For information regarding the exemption processes, refer to www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/schools/school-life/exemption-from-attending-school | | | | |
| Section 1: Student Information | | | | |
| Name of student (in full) <input style="width: 250px;" type="text"/> | | ED ID <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/> | | |
| School / provider <input style="width: 350px;" type="text"/> | | Site No <input style="width: 80px;" type="text"/> | | |
| Student's date of birth <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | Age <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | Gender <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | Year Level <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| Young person in care (<i>Guardianship of the Minister</i>) <input style="width: 40px;" type="checkbox"/> | | ATSI <input style="width: 40px;" type="checkbox"/> | SWD <input style="width: 40px;" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Section 2: Parent / Guardian Information | | | | |
| Name of parent / guardian (in full) <input style="width: 350px;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian address <input style="width: 450px;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Parent / guardian phone number <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/> | | | | |
| Section 3: Exemption Information | | | | |
| Period of exemption (inclusive): | | Start Date <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | End Date <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| The following supporting documentation must be attached | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning plan (e.g. IEP, NEP, OCOP, ILP) | <input type="checkbox"/> Transition timetable to full-time attendance | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home learning program | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter from medical practitioner (<i>if medical exemption requested</i>) | | | |
| <i>Other supporting information to consider attaching includes background information, behaviour support plan, sensory overview, autism support plan</i> | | | | |
| Has the Principal previously approved a 4-week exemption for this student? | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| If Yes, please specify dates of previous exemption: | | Start Date <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | End Date <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| All relevant signatures must be obtained before forwarding to AISSA / DECD Central Delegate | | | | |
| | Name | Signature | Date | |
| Principal | <input style="width: 180px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 180px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| Parent / guardian | <input style="width: 180px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 180px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| Social worker | <input style="width: 180px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 180px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> | |
| <i>(if student is under Guardianship of the Minister)</i> | | | | |



**APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ENROLMENT / ATTENDANCE
AND EDUCATION ENROLMENT / PARTICIPATION**

ED175
Form C (continued)

DISABILITY / BEHAVIOUR / HEALTH / MEDICAL – PART TIME SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Updated 06/10/2017

Section 4: Supplementary School Program

Please specify the hours / days the student will be attending school:

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Start Time | | | | | |
| Finish Time | | | | | |

Additional comments:

AISSA / DECD Central Delegate Use Only

APPROVED **NOT APPROVED** Signature Date

Appendix D – Impacts of Non-attendance and Non-Engagement

Adapted from ‘Spotlight - Attendance Matters’, published by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

“Every day counts and there is no ‘safe’ threshold for absences” – Hancock et al., 2013

Non-attendance has a variety of effects on 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.

Critically, evidence suggests that early non attendance and declining attendance habits from primary to secondary school have important ramifications for later years of schooling and student outcomes.

There are many factors that influence student achievement, including teacher quality and student engagement. Attendance is also an important contributor to a student’s academic achievement:

- Declines in student achievement are evident with any level of absence
- Greater declines in student achievement are associated with higher numbers of absences
- Although a smaller proportion of students have unauthorised absences, unauthorised absences have a more negative effect on student achievement than authorised absences.
- Studies of chronic absenteeism (missing more than 10% of school days) show that regardless of the type, absence has a compounding negative impact on academic performance.

(Hancock et al., 2013).

As absences accrue over several years, the effect on a student’s academic achievement is cumulative.

- **0-10 days absence per year** – This is within normal range. A student with this attendance rate should be able to take full advantage of the planned classroom and specialist programmes for the year.
- **12-20 days absence per year** – This attendance rate is below average and likely to impact on a student’s ability to access classroom and specialist programmes. If sustained, a student with this attendance rate could miss up to one year of schooling between Reception and Year 8.
- **22-40 days absence per year** – This attendance rate is well below average and will have an impact on learning and progress. At this attendance rate, a student could miss out on up to two years of schooling between Reception and Year 8.
- **40+ days absence per year** – This rate of absence is equivalent to approximately one school term per year. At this rate of absence, a student could miss over two and a half years of schooling between Reception and Year 8. A student missing school this regularly will not be able to make the progress of which they are capable.

Hancock, K. J., Shepherd, C. C. J., Lawrence, D., & Zubrick, S. R. (2013). *Student attendance and educational outcomes: Every day counts. Report for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra.* <https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.4956.6728>

Appendix E – School Refusal

Understanding School Refusal

School refusal is characterised by child motivated refusal to attend school. It is usually accompanied by high levels of distress and is emotionally-based.

There are a number of factors that can contribute to the development of school refusal behaviours, and these include:

- Individual e.g., anxious temperament, mood disorder
- Family e.g., parental separation or other stressors, parenting style
- School e.g., transition periods, learning difficulties
- Community e.g., social interactions

School refusal is a symptom of an underlying problem and is motivated by a desire to

- Avoid situations that evoke uncomfortable emotions
- Escape from challenging situations (e.g., interactions with peers) and/or evaluative situations (e.g., assessments)
- Get attention from significant others (e.g., parents)
- Seek rewards outside of school (e.g., watching TV/playing video games instead of doing schoolwork)

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development and put them at risk for mental health difficulties, social isolation, family difficulties and poor school and vocational outcomes. It is essential to respond early as the longer the problem persists, the more difficult it can be for a young person to get back into the routine of school attendance.

Parents/educators of school refusers often report seeing:

- Long or frequent periods of time spent out of class or away from school
- Lateness to school or class
- Difficulty attending school after disruptions such as holidays, camps, illness or weekends
- Extreme avoidance behaviours:
 - Tantrums (including from teenagers) and clinginess
 - Dawdling on arrival at school or running away from school
 - Frequent complaints of physical illness e.g., headaches, stomach upsets, tiredness
 - Frequent requests to go home from school or call a family member
 - Refusal to get out of bed in the morning or get into the car to go to school
 - Hiding in the mornings before school
 - Refusal to respond/engage with family members, especially in the mornings
- Changes in disposition after school:
 - Moodiness or excessive worry
 - Oppositional or challenging behaviour e.g., unwillingness to complete homework
 - Changes in sleep patterns or appetite
 - Reluctance to engage in bedtime routines (as this signals the imminent start of another school day)

Managing School Refusal

In managing school refusal, we need to remember that:

- The issue of non-attendance may have originated at school, but it is played out in the home environment and sometimes its maintenance comes more from approaches at home than from what is occurring at school.
- The brain of a young person is not fully developed and, when feeling anxious, their body is enacting the fight, flight or freeze response and they are unable to think logically. Their avoidance approach only creates more anxiety over time and so a school refuser relies on the adults around them for the structure, knowledge and skill development that will help them to make more appropriate choices.
- It is important for a school refuser to know that
 - Uncomfortable emotions are normal and usually pass with time
 - Avoidance of uncomfortable emotions is not a helpful strategy; it will make things worse
 - Learning to tolerate uncomfortable emotions is an essential skill for school attendance and, in fact, for life!
- A consistent approach shared between parents and school staff will have the best chance of facilitating a positive outcome for the student.

Practical Tips for Parents Dealing with School Refusal

- Listen to and validate your child's fears and feelings about school.
- Plan for a calm start to the day by having routines such as a regular bedtime.
- In younger children, reassure them that you will be back to pick them up at the end of school day. Be on time but avoid waiting at the classroom door.
- Try to avoid school goodbyes. Any goodbyes that do occur at school should be short and positive e.g., "There's your friend. Off you go and have a good day. I'll see you after school."
- Younger and older students alike may find it useful and calming to arrive at school a little earlier and assist a favourite teacher to set up for the day.
- Have someone else drop your child at school. Children often cope better with separation at home rather than at the school gate.
- How you communicate is important
 - Say, "When you're at school tomorrow" rather than "If you make it to school tomorrow."
 - Use direct statements that don't give your child the chance to say, "No!" e.g., "It's time to get out of bed" or "Please get up and have a shower."
 - Build confidence by saying positive things e.g., "I know it's hard but you're showing how brave you are by going to school."
 - Stay calm. If you are worried or stressed your child's anxiety is likely to be worse.
- Help your child understand that you will not be responding to any messages or calls from them during the school day. If there is an urgent reason for them to contact you they can use the school office.
- Don't pick up your child from school unless this is requested by a member of staff.
- Children often long to be at home with parents doing fun things. It is important that parents do not give detailed information of the things they will be doing while the child is at school.

Being at home when you should be at school should not be a pleasant experience. Establish clear boundaries and use rewards and consequences to encourage good choices and school attendance.

- Make a clear rule about illness e.g., you can only take time off school for illness if you wake up with a high temperature. Any other time off for serious illness will need to be confirmed by a doctor and will be spent in bed without electronics.
- Insist on structure to the day e.g., a wake up time, morning routine, physical activity. Follow the school timetable as far as possible and have your child undertake schoolwork to ensure they don't fall behind.
- If you need to leave your young person at home unsupervised consider
 - Disabling your modem and other electronics (e.g., remove TV remotes)
 - Leave a list of tasks and chores to accomplish during the day
 - Limit phone access, particularly to social media (there are apps available to help with this)

Find a “currency” that is valuable to your child and is age appropriate. Rewards for school attendance might be

- More internet time or increased data allowance on their phone
- Later bed time on weekends
- Outings with friends
- Special time with parents
- Special treats in lunch box
- A favourite toy or game that is earned in the form of tokens or piece by piece

Consequences for choosing not to attend school might be

- Removal of privileges for phones and other electronics
- Extra chores
- Refusal to drive your young person to chosen activities
- Refusal to provide your young person with driving lessons
- Withholding pocket money/allowance
- Removal of luxury items
- Early bed time

Recommended Reading:

Overcoming School Refusal: A practical guide for teachers, counsellors, caseworkers and parents (2018) – Joanne Garfi

Appendix F – Referring to the Department of Education Student Support Services – Social Work (Truancy)

Taken from document 'ED171 – Non-Government School Guideline & Request for Student Support Services Social Work – Truancy'

Expectations of School Prior to Requesting Social Work Support:

- Connect with the family via phone, letter, email, home visits, and meetings at the school
- Gather information on the students functioning, well-being and learning outcomes and develops strategies and plans to support student's re-engagement with school.
- Ensure mandatory notifications are submitted to the Child Abuse Reporting Line (CARL) as required
- Identify a staff member to manage attendance, truancy and engagement concerns who is able to be contacted directly regarding the referral
- Consider referral to internal support options
- Document all school interventions (and available to Social Worker upon request)
- Collate all relevant reports/correspondence from other agencies, medical professionals etc. to assist your request for Social Work support
- If Social Work support is required, attempt to gain consent from relevant caregiver(s)/student
- If a student leaves the school wait for transfer paperwork from new school prior to making 'Left'

Minimum Criteria to Request Support:

A request for support can be made where the absence meets, at minimum, the criteria of chronic non-attendance* AND

- The absences are ongoing and no reason has been provided by parent/caregiver OR
- There is a pattern of concerning absences AND
- despite multiple school interventions (e.g. home visits) there has been no improvement in attendance

Requesting Support

- Ensure all actions required prior to requesting support (as above) have been completed prior to contact
- Ensure school principal/relevant leader are aware of request for support
- Contact (email/phone) the local Education Department Office Social Work- Truancy team (phone contact details overleaf) to request support.
- Provide a signed copy of this document (ED171)

Social Work Role Upon Receipt of Request for Support:

- A Social Worker will make contact within 5 working days of your email/call for a consultation
- The Social Worker will determine if there are additional actions required before a referral is considered. If additional school actions are required the information will be documented as a 'Consult Only'-it is expected these actions are completed by the school prior to requesting further support.
- If it identified for Social Work referral the information will be documented for intervention and submitted to the Senior Social Worker for allocation consideration. The request will be prioritised and allocated according to Department for Education's service priorities. Note: a waiting list may apply
- Once allocated a Social Worker will contact the referring school staff member who will need to be available to attend home visits, arrange parent meetings and other actions as advised by Social Worker.
- The Social Worker supports with short term goals and intervention to the school and/or family to ensure a student attendance improvement plan is in place for student, caregivers and school to implement.