



Growing · Building · Caring

Attendance Policy

Document Control

POLICY REVIEW

This policy may be reviewed periodically and republished; as applicable. The Principal may issue additional instructions within the policy framework as appropriate. The policy will also be reviewed on an annual basis.

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AMENDMENT		DATE	DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT
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ALL	2020.1	05/10/2020	Review and update of policy contents.
ALL	2022.1	21/02/2022	Review and update of policy contents and layout, definitions added, Parent Fact Sheet added.
9-10, 22-23	2022.2	12/03/2022	Addition of reintegration strategies and IAP enactment procedure.

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Background

“A parent or legal guardian has a legal obligation to send their child to school for each day that the child’s school is open for instruction and to provide an acceptable explanation for the child’s non-attendance on one or more days. An acceptable explanation is one that is acceptable to the school, in accordance with its attendance policy.” Association of Independent Schools Western Australia, per the School Education Act, 1999.

It is mandated by The School Education Act 1999 (the Act), that children of compulsory school age are required to enrol at a school and for parents to ensure that they attend school each day. Compulsory age is from the beginning of the year in which the child reaches the age of 5 years and 6 months until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months.

Parents who choose to enrol their child at Goldfields Baptist College (GBC) are meeting the compulsory enrolment requirements of the Act. Parents and the College then have an obligation under the Act to ensure students’ whereabouts are accounted for, and that they attend the College each day unless they have reasonable cause. Attendance at school each day enhances the learning opportunities of each child, allowing Goldfields Baptist College to build an educational community that is being transformed by the truth of God’s word, nurturing and equipping each person for life.

Scope

The Goldfields Baptist College Attendance Policy applies to all students enrolled at the College; their parents/legal guardians; all College staff; and may include representatives from the Department of Education Attendance Panel and/or the Student Tracking Coordinator, in accordance with relevant legislation and mandated requirements.

Policy

1. Definitions

1.1 Chronic non-attendance

A student’s non-attendance is considered ‘chronic’ when they have recorded ten or more absences in a single College term.

1.2 GBC@Home

The College’s home-schooling programme, which was developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. GBC@Home can be utilised to support students who are unable to attend the College for specific, sanctioned, reasons with the Principal’s approval. It cannot be used as an alternative to on-campus attendance as a matter of preference, however.

1.3 Individual Attendance Plan (IAP)

A specialist Support Plan, enacted to tailor support for a student who is struggling with their attendance for any reason. An Individual Attendance Plan may be established by the Grow, Enrich, Thrive Co-Ordinator, working in collaboration with a student’s Pastoral Care Team, as part of a reintegration plan, and may include some engagement with GBC@Home as an interim solution.

1.4 Support Plan

An individually tailored plan to support a student’s (generally) mental and/or emotional wellbeing. A Support Plan is a carefully considered document, that is discussed at length with the student who requires further support, to equip them with clear strategies that assist them in maximising their learning opportunities. A Support Plan will be established whenever student needs differ from student behaviour/conduct ordinarily considered appropriate/acceptable.

1.5 Unexplained absence

An absence which has not been explained or justified by a student’s parents or legal guardians. A student may have an unexplained absence recorded when they do not attend school on a school day, and parents/carers cannot be reached.

1.6 Unreasonable absence

An absence which is not considered reasonable, according to Section 25 of the School Education Act, 1999 (see [section 5](#)).

2. Guiding Principles

The College is committed to enabling parents/legal guardians to meet their obligation to ensure their child/ren attend school for every day that the College is open for instruction (s.23 of the Act) and providing acceptable explanations for non-attendance; whilst meeting the College's own various obligations, including maintaining accurate recording and rigorous monitoring of the attendance of all students (s.28 of the Act), responding promptly to address any attendance issues that may occur (s.26 of the Act), and observing relevant confidentiality, privacy, secure storage and retention requirements in relation to attendance records (s.28 of the Act).

In conjunction with the Goldfields Baptist College Attendance Procedures, this Policy outlines the College's processes for satisfying legislative requirements, expectations of students' attendance and how unfulfillment will be managed.

3. Attendance Expectations

Except under extenuating circumstances, as outlined in the "Sanctioned Variations" section below, all students of compulsory school age are required to attend GBC for every day that the school is open for instruction, or otherwise participate in the school's education programme, at school or elsewhere, as required by the Principal. This attendance is expected from the College's start time of 8:25am, until the College's finishing time of 2:55pm (Primary students) or 3:00pm (Secondary students), every weekday that the College is open for instruction, with students expected to participate in their scheduled learning throughout each day of instruction in its entirety. This expectation extends to attendance at:

- College excursions/camps
- out-of-hours compulsory school activities
- compulsory College extracurricular activities, including sports days
- internal and external examinations/assessments
- educational programmes at locations other than the College (e.g. Workplace Learning) when it is part of the student's instruction

4. Recording Attendance

Attendance records are to be maintained by every teacher for every period of the College day. Students who are on an excursion, have been withdrawn from a scheduled class/es by staff, or are participating in an off-campus, school-approved activity are recorded as being present and attending a school activity, with the activity noted.

Student absences will be reviewed by Pastoral Care Teachers and the Attendance Officer (or their delegate) at the commencement of the school day (Devotions) and monitored by teachers completing their attendance records at the commencement of every class. If a student is recorded as absent, where no prior advice has been received from a student's parents, every attempt will be made to ensure contact is made with the family by the College Office (using contact details provided by parents/carers) to enquire as to the reason for the student's absence. If parents cannot be reached, the procedure outlined in the [Managing Absences](#) section below should be followed. Parents are able to advise the College of their child's absence, as well as anticipated duration of, and explanation for, said absence, via Compass, telephone, email, in person, or written note. All student absences and explanations for absences must be submitted in writing to the College no later than three College days after the absence has commenced. Under Section 25 of the Act, the Principal has the authority to request a medical certificate be provided to substantiate a student's period of absence.

All student absences are recorded electronically by the class teacher. The College's Learning Management System (LMS – Compass) maintains attendance records as they are entered and saved by staff. Records for attendance during each period of the day are maintained by the teachers responsible for each class, and are available for perusal within the secure LMS if required. Staff

members should only ever mark the roll for a class that is physically present before them. Staff must not mark a class roll in absentia. All teachers should notate any absence during the school day that creates a discrepancy between the official records kept at the commencement and end of the school day. If an unexplained discrepancy arises during the school day, teachers must alert the Attendance Officer by marking the student's attendance or absence in the LMS, and then phoning Administration to notify them of the discrepancy. A member of the College Leadership Team should be advised immediately to follow up on the discrepancy, if necessary.

All attendance records and explanations of absence (notes, emails, phone records) are to be maintained securely within the LMS and/or physical archives for a period of seven years from the date that the student's enrolment ceased. These records may be maintained electronically, though they must be capable of being reproduced in written form on request by the relevant authority. All records must be maintained in accordance with confidentiality and privacy requirements.

Student attendance is monitored for patterns and trends, both on an individual and cohort level, by Pastoral Care Teachers, who monitor student attendance, working collaboratively with the Attendance Officer, at least once per week. Pastoral Care Teachers follow up with parents/legal guardians to discuss any contributing factors to students' absences and/or to discuss any patterns or trends that are noted. If a student's attendance falls below 90% in a school term, the College will investigate further and, where concerns exist, require an interview with the student's parents/legal guardians. Extended absences or unexplained absences, which are ongoing or of concern, may be referred to the Principal. In severe cases of non-attendance, the College may notify the appropriate authority. Every effort will be undertaken to re-engage students with a high rate of non-attendance, though it is to be noted that these efforts will be most effective with parental support. The procedures to respond to persistent and/or habitual non-attendance are further outlined in the "Managing Absences" section below.

Students who have an attendance rate of 96% or above in any school term will become eligible for a GBSee Award, in accordance with the Blessings System.

5. Reasons for Absence

Per Section 25 of the School Education Act 1999, acceptable reasons for student absence include:

- Temporary physical or mental incapacity
- If a parent has applied, or intends to apply, to be registered as the student's home educator
- Any other reasonable cause
- If the Principal requires non-attendance for health reasons

Per Section 142 of the Public Health Act 2016, the Chief Health Officer has the authority to direct a child who has not been immunised against a vaccine-preventable notifiable infectious disease not to attend or participate in the educational programme of the school for a specified period.

In the event of each of the aforementioned acceptable reasons for student absence, parents/legal guardians are required to inform the College of the student's absence, reason for absence, and anticipated duration of absence, no later than three College days of the first day of non-attendance.

Unacceptable reasons for student non-attendance at school include all reasons outside those listed above, including (but not limited to):

- Student/family holidays
- Student/family travel
- Student birthdays
- Family reunions
- Student lethargy/disinterest

In the event of a student being withdrawn from school by parents/guardians on days that the College is open for instruction, for an unacceptable reason, the Attendance Officer should notify the parent/guardian in writing that the College acknowledges, but does not approve, the withdrawal of the student during term time, outlining the College's concerns.

If parents/legal guardians must withdraw a student from school during the College day for an acceptable reason, they should notify the College via Compass, handwritten note, telephone, or email, and sign the student out via Compass on collection, registering the reason for withdrawal in writing through Compass.

5.1 Sanctioned Variations

Under specific circumstances, some students may have variations to their attendance sanctioned by the College. In addition to those listed under the acceptable reasons for absence above, the College/Principal may sanction variations to attendance requirements for students who:

- are not able to attend the school due to a serious and/or longstanding medical condition, or who have been excluded at the direction of the Chief Health Officer, and are thereby engaging in an adjusted programme or Individual Attendance Plan
- are participating in an adjusted programme or Individual Attendance Plan, as part of the College's efforts to re-engage a student to progress back to satisfactory attendance
- are engaging in an endorsed Workplace Learning programme or work experience
- are engaging in approved options other than school in the final two years of compulsory education, including part-time school studies engagement
- are engaging in approved 'study days' in the final two years of compulsory education, as part of their timetable
- have parental consent to engage in home study during approved times throughout College examination/assessment periods.

Students for whom the Principal has approved an adjusted programme or Individual Attendance Plan (IAP), may be required to engage with a variation of the GBC@Home programme, utilising home-based learning through Compass to ensure they are able to continue to engage with their learning. These plans must be documented and maintained via Compass and SharePoint, with staff working in close collaboration with parents/legal guardians to facilitate this learning. Adjusted programmes and/or Individual Attendance Plans that have been approved by the Principal shall be overseen and enacted by the GET Co-ordinator.

Students who are engaging in an educational programme that is conducted at a place other than the College (such as Workplace Learning) will also have their attendance verified. In these instances, the Attendance Officer will contact an on-site supervisor at the location of the educational programme, in order to verify students' attendance, with students then marked as present at an 'educational activity' via Compass. Students who are absent from these programmes must contact both their on-site supervisor and the College to record their absence.

Students who are in their final two years of compulsory education have the option to engage in a variety of approved options other than school, including part-time school studies. Students who are engaging in full-time school studies have the option to participate in either partial-day or full-day home-based study each Wednesday. Student attendance at any of these approved options will be recorded as attendance at an approved school activity in the LMS. Students who attend the College on study days will be required to log their attendance by signing in and out via Compass in the Administration building. Students in their final two years of compulsory education are also permitted to leave the College campus during student break times/study periods, with parent consent, though they must be in attendance for all scheduled classes and are required to sign in and out via Compass in the Administration building. Students who abuse this privilege will have it revoked, without necessity for warning, with parents notified.

6. Managing Absences

The Attendance Officer (or their delegate) reconciles all attendance registers electronically and parents are notified by telephone in relation to those students with unexplained absences. This process is completed as soon as practical - by no later than 10:15am each school day. As such, it is preferred that parents contact the College to notify the College of student absences prior to 8:40am. A student is marked absent if they are not physically present in the room, with records amended in the LMS by the Attendance Officer, if they are aware of the student's whereabouts.

If a student arrives at school after the roll is marked, the student is required to attend the office to sign in via the Compass Kiosk/obtain a 'Late Pass' which will be required before they are admitted into class. A student is considered late if they arrive after 8:30am. Late attendance will be entered on the system by: the Attendance Officer/the Compass Kiosk and also noted by the scheduled teacher in Compass.

Parents are required to supply a written explanation (handwritten or electronic) following verbal notification of their child's absence, late arrival or early departure. The Attendance Officer monitors this process, and written notifications are sent directly to those parents who have not followed this process.

6.1 Unexplained Absences

In the event of an unexplained absence, the Attendance Officer (or their delegate) will:

1. attempt to contact the student's parent/legal guardian by phone
2. attempt to contact the student's parent/legal guardian electronically (not social media)
3. if attempts have been unsuccessful by 11:00am, attempt to contact the student's parent/legal guardian on all listed contacts
4. attempt to contact the student's emergency contacts
5. check on the student's whereabouts/wellbeing with siblings/relatives and friends at the College
6. check on the student's whereabouts/wellbeing with external agencies (if involved)
7. conduct a home visit to check on the student's whereabouts/wellbeing
8. contact the Western Australian Police to report the student's unknown whereabouts (following three College days of no contact)

It is essential that each attempted contact be recorded in Compass, using the General Attendance Observation Chronicle template.

The above process should be undertaken if a student is unaccounted for during the school day, or from a school activity, and appears to be missing. If the student cannot be located, and the incident requires an emergency services or police response, it must further be reported by the Principal as a critical and emergency incident to the Director General and College Board (see **Critical and Emergency Incidents' Management Policy**).

6.2 Student Tracking System/Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown

Goldfields Baptist College follows the Student Tracking System and SWU Guidelines. In accordance with these guidelines, "A student can be regarded as 'missing' when they cannot be located and their parent/s cannot be contacted...and the school has not received advice that the student is being educated elsewhere. The SWU Request Form...should be completed for missing students within 15 school days of their last date of attendance."

Students at Goldfields Baptist College are considered a Student Whose Whereabouts are Unknown if the aforementioned process for unexplained absences has been followed for ten school days without successful contact being made. At this time, the Attendance Officer must refer the student to the Principal (or their delegate), who will consult with the Student Tracking Co-ordinator and complete the Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown (SWU) Request Form attached at [Appendix One](#) and available from the Department of Education.

6.3 Persistent/Chronic/Habitual Absences

When students have recorded five or more absences per term (an average of one day absent per fortnight), they are to be identified as a student at risk of chronic non-attendance. Students who have recorded ten or more absences per term (an average of one day absent per week), are to be identified as a student with chronic non-attendance.

Pastoral Care Teachers are required to monitor and analyse their students' attendance for patterns or trends of non-attendance at least once per week. Working collaboratively with the Attendance Officer, Pastoral Care Teachers should be making contact with parents/legal guardians to discuss any contributing factors to students' absences and/or to discuss any patterns or trends that are noted.

Conversation notes should be entered into Compass, using the General Attendance Observation Chronicle template.

If students reach five unexplained or unreasonable absences in the course of a single College term, Pastoral Care Teachers are required to make a further telephone contact with parents/legal guardians to highlight the educational risk that their child is placed at, as a result of non-attendance and to stress the importance of the need to engage with their schooling. Pastoral Care Teachers should again discuss any contributing factors to student absences and/or discuss patterns or trends that are noted. Re-engagement strategies should be discussed, and parents should be informed that a formal letter of concern will be sent home ([Appendix Three](#)), which outlines the parent's legal obligation to ensure their child attends school, as well as the possible consequences and follow up that might be employed by the College if non-attendance continues.

If students reach six unexplained or unreasonable absences in the course of a single College term, Pastoral Care Teachers should refer the student to their Team Leader, who will make contact with the parent to request a meeting with the parent/legal guardian, student, and Pastoral Care Teacher. At this meeting, the Matrix for Identification of Factors Contributing to Persistent Absences ([Appendix Two](#)) should be completed, as a means to inform a strategy for re-engagement. A strategic approach and/or Individual Attendance Plan to facilitate the student's re-engagement with their schooling should be discussed at this time and referred to the GET Co-ordinator for approval and ongoing oversight, prior to implementation.

Students who reach eight unexplained or unreasonable absences (non-contact days, as specified on a student's IAP, should not be considered absences) in the course of a single College term should be referred by the Pastoral Care Teacher to the College Principal. The Principal will then contact parents, and issue a formal letter outlining the student's chronic non-attendance ([Appendix Four](#)), explaining that the parent is in breach of their legal obligations, emphasising the risk of referral to the Department of Education's Attendance Team for assistance (which may result in prosecution), and explaining the implications on funding, which parents will be held financially accountable for. Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Principal, Team Leader, Pastoral Care Teacher and student to review the student's IAP, as necessary.

Students who reach ten unexplained or unreasonable absences in a single College term will be referred to the Department of Education's Attendance Team for possible referral to an Attendance Panel and parents will be held financially responsible for funding losses. The Principal will send a formal letter ([Appendix Five](#)) to advise parents/legal guardians that the attendance matter has been referred and that fees have been adjusted, with a reviewed fee invoice attached.

In situations in which the College believes that student non-attendance is more a case of truancy and the College is not being supported by the parent/legal guardian in its endeavours to re-engage the student, the College can make contact with the Department of Education's attendance team for assistance and possible referral to an attendance panel prior to reaching ten unexplained or unreasonable absences.

6.4 Re-engagement Strategies

Reintegration strategies should be individually tailored to the circumstances and specifics of each individual case of chronic, persistent or habitual student non-attendance, and should be informed by the data gathered through completion of the Matrix for Identification of Factors Contributing to Persistent Absences ([Appendix Two](#)). Through the use of this matrix, the Team Leader, Pastoral Care Teacher, parent/legal guardian/s and student will have the opportunity to discuss and analyse any contributing factors to the student's disengagement, and thereby discuss strategies that may mitigate these concerns. While not an exhaustive list, some reintegration strategies that may be employed by the Pastoral Care Team can include:

- Implementation of GBC@Home for students struggling with specific circumstances (such as mental health disorders or chronic/severe illness that impedes the student's ability to attend the College)

- Implementation of a [Support Plan](#), with specifically-tailored support strategies to make the student's experience at school more comfortable (e.g. use of 'time-out'; 'red card' systems; support person presence; etc.)
- Engagement with the Concerns, Complaints and Disputes Procedure, for instances in which bullying or harassment have contributed to the student's non-attendance
- Restricted or altered contact periods
- Engagement with external programmes or services on-or off-campus
- Referral to external agencies, and ongoing College partnership with external agencies, to provide tailored support to students, based on need
- Parent referral to community support groups, chaplains or external agencies, who can provide tailored support to parents, based on need
- Emphasis on student strengths and positive behaviours
- Regular reviews of the IAP and re-engagement strategies and their effectiveness
- Regular parent/carer and student meetings with the Pastoral Care Team to review the IAP and re-engagement strategies, with updated goals
- Engagement with the Department of Education's Attendance Team
- A system of incentives/disincentives for attendance/absence

7. Other Relevant College Policies and Guiding Documents

Critical and Emergency Incidents' Management Policy

Student Wellbeing Policy

Positive Student Behaviour Policy

Staff Handbook

Child Protection Policy

Duty of Care Policy

Student Code of Conduct

Families and Community Code of Conduct

AISWA Policies and Procedures Guidelines for Schools: Attendance

School Education Act 1999

Attendance Policy

Appendices



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PARENT FACT SHEET #1

ATTENDANCE

EVERY day counts.

Why is it important for kids to go to school?

Skipping school is illegal!

1. It's a Legal Requirement

Parents and legal guardians are responsible to
 a) ensure their children attend school
 b) provide an acceptable reason if they can't attend

2. Your Child's Education Matters

If they are away from school, they miss vital learning steps which can impact their long-term education.

1 or 2 days a week doesn't seem much but ...			
If you miss ...	That equals ...	Which is ...	And over 13 years, that's ...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
4 days per week	160 days per year	32 weeks per year	Nearly 10 years

How about 10 minutes late a day? Surely that won't affect my attendance ...			
I only miss ...	That equals ...	Which is ...	And over 13 years, that's ...
10 mins per day	50 min per week	Nearly 1.5 weeks per year	Nearly 1/2 a year
20 mins per day	1 hr 40 min per week	Over 2.5 weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 mins per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 hour per day	1 day per month	8 weeks per year	Nearly 2.5 years

Is it only classes that are compulsory?

What do I need to do if my child is away?

Contact GBC ASAP

1. Let the school know by 9am that your child is absent and why they are away.

2. You can do this by

- phone
- email
- written note
- in person
- on Compass

Let us know if they can't go ...

What happens if I don't tell GBC?

1. GBC will contact parent/guardian
2. Try emergency contact, known family/work contact or agencies
3. Visit your home address
4. Contact previous school
5. After 10 days, lodge a Student Whose Whereabouts are Unknown form with Dept of Education.

Keep your details up to date

All School Activities are Important

Students benefit from every learning opportunity.

- Educational Classes
- Extra-curricular Activities eg. Sports Days
- Excursions, Camps and Trips
- Community Projects eg. Fetes, Fundraising
- Exams
- After School Activities eg. Awards Nights

It's not OK to stay away!

ACCEPTABLE REASONS	UNACCEPTABLE REASONS
Physical sickness	Holidays or Travel
Mental incapacity	Student birthdays
Direction by principal	Family reunions
Application to home school	Student lethargy/disinterest

Thank you for working with us to make sure that we can provide the best education possible by sending your children to school every day.

e • gbcadmin@gbc.wa.edu.au
 4 Maguire St, Kalgoorlie WA 6430
 www.gbc.wa.edu.au

p • 08 9022 7535
 PO Box 10267, Kalgoorlie WA 6433
 ABN 25 631 095 923

Our Vision

Creating an educational community that is being transformed by the truth of God's Word, nurturing and equipping each person for life.