

# Attendance Policy

## VISION STATEMENT

Geraldton grammar school will provide outstanding education and a strong sense of community, cultivating people of integrity, independence of mind and a love of learning.

## VALUES

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Inclusivity
- Perseverance

<b>Introduction</b>	This statement outlines the Geraldton Grammar School policy on Student Attendance.
<b>Scope and application</b>	Policy applies to all teaching staff and students of Geraldton Grammar School.
<b>Related legislation and guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Education Act, 1999 (WA) (<i>Sections 11, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 40, 159(1)(h), 182</i>)</li> <li>• Public Health Act 2016 (WA) (<i>Section 142</i>)</li> <li>• Australian Education Act 2013 and Australian Education Regulations 2013</li> <li>• Registration Standards</li> </ul>
<b>Related Policies</b>	Staff Induction booklet
<b>Evaluation</b>	Annual

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b> (issue, reissue, amendment, replacement of pages, etc)	<b>Initials</b>
31/3/10	Revised	SSW,SPN
5/8/10	Revised	SSW
22/03/11	Revised	GMY
25/3/13	Crest	SPN
13/05/14	International Students amendment	GMY
18/02/15	Amended SEQTA changes included	DLE
08/03/16	Updates: Attendance Officer procedure updates to meet current practices.	NJE
21/02/17	Revised – no amendments	DLE
28/02/2018	Revised multiple amendments	DLE
27/03/19	Revised and amended	NFT
28/06/19	Revised and amended	DLE
26/03/2021	Revised and amended	DLE
14/09/2023	Revised and amended	NFT

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The Principal is responsible for the accurate recording and rigorous monitoring of the attendance of all students and for implementing appropriate strategies to restore attendance if there are attendance issues. School attendance is mandated and vital in ensuring that children have the opportunity to achieve appropriate educational outcomes.

It is the responsibility of all teachers at Geraldton Grammar School to ensure all students are accounted for throughout the school day. Any student not accounted for will be treated as missing.

### **BACKGROUND**

In Western Australia children can start their education in Kindergarten.

All children of compulsory school age must be enrolled in school and attend every day - that is the law. This is from the beginning of the year in which a child reaches the age of 5 years 6 months until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years 6 months or turns 18, whichever happens first.

Geraldton Grammar School offers instruction from junior kindergarten to year 12. The School Education Act 1999 requires compulsory aged students, as defined in the Act, to attend school, or participate in an educational program of a school, on the days on which the school is open for instruction unless an arrangement in writing has been entered into for a student.

Students are deemed at educational risk once attendance falls below 90%. If a student is deemed to be at educational risk or attendance is of concern, Geraldton Grammar School will contact the family. Each student will then be case managed by the appropriate Head of School. In cases where non-attendance cannot be resolved a referral to the School Attendance Officer will be made.

### **RECORDING ATTENDANCE:**

The Principal is to ensure that accurate attendance records are kept for each student enrolled at Geraldton Grammar School.

- a. A continuous attendance by a student of not less than two (2) full hours of instruction is to be recorded as a half day's attendance. Students who arrive late, but still meet this requirement, are not included as a half-day absence. Rolls are taken on an AM/PM basis in primary to ensure accurate recording. In the secondary school, period basis attendance ensures accurate recording of this.
- b. Students who are on an excursion, participating in an off campus program or in some other school-approved activity are not to be counted as absent.
- c. Students on an internal or external suspension are to be recorded as either suspended (internal) or suspended (external).
- d. Attendance records are to be kept on SEQTA and reports generated when required.
- e. SEQTA allows records to be kept and reported upon for any date range the system has been in operation (inception January 2014).
- f. The particulars recorded for each day whether a student:

- i. attended, or participated in an educational programme of the school or was not required to attend; or
- ii. failed to so attend.

These records are to be retained for 7 years from the day on which the student's enrolment ceases.

- g. Unsatisfactory attendance reports on students must be retained in a student's records for 25 years from date of birth (Refer to *Manual for Records Management: School, College and Campus Records*).

#### **MONITORING ATTENDANCE:**

- a) Geraldton Grammar School monitors and inputs data in a systematic and consistent manner allowing for the effective identification and action for all students with attendance issues.
- b) A software package (SEQTA) is used to enter and collate data so as to maintain consistency and accuracy of record keeping and reporting.
- c) When a student has been absent from school and an acceptable explanation has not been forthcoming, the Attendance Officer will send a written request (email) for an explanation to the student's family to establish the reasons for non-attendance.
- d) If it is established that the student was absent from Geraldton Grammar School for a legitimate reason, no further action is required unless the frequency and or number of absences gives the School cause for concern. As there is no requirement in the School Education Act 1999 for the reason to be provided in writing, schools must record all details when a parent/guardian provides the School with a verbal reason, either in person or over the telephone, that the School believes is an acceptable reason in the context of the School.

#### **PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:**

All children of compulsory school age must be enrolled in school and attend every day - that is the law. This is from the beginning of the year in which a child reaches the age of 5 years 6 months until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years 6 months or turns 18, whichever happens first.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- a. Notifying the main administration office by phone, email or in person before 8.30am to confirm a student's absence, unless prior contact has been made.
- b. Ensuring a student reports to administration if he/she is more than 5 minutes late.
- c. Notifying the school by phone, email, written note or in person if a student is to be absent for any part of the day.
- d. Notifying administration of an impending absence by phone, email or in person prior to the absence.
- e. Resolving by phone, email, written note or in person an unresolved absence as soon as is practicable.
- f. Notifying the Principal in writing or via email prior to an extended absence. Note: Extended absences from school, for recreational purposes, are discouraged.
- g. SEQTA will flag students as an attendance alert in situations of unexplained absence.

### **STUDENTS AT EDUCATIONAL RISK:**

- a. Students are deemed to be at educational risk when their attendance falls below 90%.
- b. An absentee report will be printed periodically and at the end of the term to determine any student who falls below 90% attendance.
- c. The Principal and Heads of School will receive information from the Attendance Officer regarding any student whereby attendance falls below 90%. The Heads of School will then make contact with the parents/guardians. Initial contact will be made by phone with a follow up email. Contact will be made regardless of the grounds for the period of absence.
- d. Geraldton Grammar School uses a case management approach for attendance issues and is mindful of consulting with all stakeholders, and accessing support from other community groups and agencies, if required.
- e. If there is difficulty or little success with restoring a student's attendance, prior to making a formal referral to the School Attendance Officer (Department of Education & Training, Midwest Office), Geraldton Grammar School will make informal contact with the School Attendance Officer who may be able to provide advice or alternative intervention strategies.

### **REFERRALS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER:**

- a. If Geraldton Grammar School has identified a student as being a regular or chronic non-attender, and the intervention strategies implemented have not been successful in restoring the student's attendance, the student is to be referred to the School Attendance Officer (Department of Education & Training, Midwest Office) by the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- b. Geraldton Grammar School will work collaboratively with the School Attendance Officer, the Deputy Principal or Head of School, the student's family and other community groups and agencies to restore the student's attendance at school. If the School Attendance Officer considers it to be appropriate, he or she will facilitate inter-agency access and support through structures and or protocols established by the district office.

### **TRANSFERRING STUDENTS:**

#### **Withdrawal:**

- a. A student may only be withdrawn from enrolment at Geraldton Grammar School when formal notification from parents/guardians is received. This withdrawal must be in written form.
- b. When a student is withdrawn from Geraldton Grammar School, to another school within Western Australia, a transfer note is sent from his/her new school. If this is not received within 1 week of his/her withdrawal, the new school is contacted, if known.
- c. If a new school is unknown Geraldton Grammar School will make every endeavour to contact the student's parent/guardian.
- d. If the student did not commence and their whereabouts is unknown Midwest District Education Office is advised.
- e. When a student is withdrawn from Geraldton Grammar, to another school other than a West Australia school parents/guardians must have notified the School in writing.

- f. Notice of Arrangements need to be sought in cases where students leave school before the appropriate leaving age to begin work. This will be done by the Deputy Principal.

**Enrolment:**

- a. If a student enrolls from another school, Geraldton Grammar School will send a Transfer Note to their previous school on the commencement day, if that school is in Western Australia.
- b. If a student enrolls from another school, other than in Western Australia, the previous school will be noted on enrolment forms and a Transfer Notice will be sent to the interstate school.
- c. Regular uploads of the Student Registration and Demographics Report to the School Curriculum Standards Authority will ensure enrolments at Geraldton Grammar School are kept up to date.

## **ABSENTEEISM PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

All children of compulsory school age must be enrolled in school and attend every day - that is the law. This is from the beginning of the year in which a child reaches the age of 5 years 6 months until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years 6 months or turns 18, whichever happens first.

Absenteeism is all recorded on SEQTA through collaboration with Reception staff and teaching staff. Rolls are legal documents which can be used in a court of law so they must be accurate. Rolls are also used in the case of an emergency situation so again accuracy is paramount at all times during the day.

Absentees are handled in Administration by the Receptionist.

Parents/guardians are directed to use the school contact details.

School contact details: by phone (9965 7800) or by email [ggs@gegs.wa.edu.au](mailto:ggs@gegs.wa.edu.au)

Staff are expected to aid this process by ensuring rolls are marked correctly and in a timely manner.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Staff are to ensure they are familiar with their responsibilities and uphold his/her duty of care at all times. Rolls are legal documents which can be used in a court of law so they must be accurate.

## **Teaching Staff:**

- Staff are to complete the roll on SEQTA.
- Primary teachers mark attendance on an AM and PM basis. The morning roll must be marked prior to 8.45am and the PM prior to 2.15pm.
- Secondary teachers are required to mark the roll, commencing with homegroup at 8.30am. Rolls are then to be marked every lesson and must be completed within the first 15 minutes for all lessons.
- It is the teacher who has the class who is responsible for this, not the class teacher.
- If a student is marked absent and arrives late for class, the teacher must change the attendance to *'late to class'* on the roll. Teachers must ensure that the student has signed in at reception.
- If a parent/guardian comes to collect a primary student at any time of the day they must have a note from reception. If they don't, they must return to the front office to get one before the student can leave. If returning to school the student must report to the main administration office to collect a return slip, to hand to the class teacher.
- If a parent/guardian comes to collect a secondary student at any time of the day they are required to collect him/her from the front office where the student will be signed out. If returning to school the student must report to the main administration office, before returning to class, to be signed in.
- If a staff member receives any form of communication from a parent/guardian indicating that a student will be absent, that staff member must redirect the information to reception. Reception staff will then note this on the roll.
- If your class has an excursion planned, you must let reception know the

date, time, duration and students involved so they can record this.

### **Reception:**

- Contact parent/guardian of students recorded as absent without a previous explanation.
  - SMS sent after Homegroup/Period 1 roll marked in Secondary and AM roll in Primary.
  - SMS will be sent to primary contact (in cares of 50/50 custody, SMS will be sent to both parties unless court orders apply).
  - A follow up phone call will be made if no response is received within 30 minutes.
  - A follow up email will be made if there is no response to the phone call.
- Record all verbal and written absences against the student's record on SEQTA. Medical certificates must be scanned and saved on the student's record on SEQTA.
- Provide primary students who are late with a 'sign in' slip so staff are aware the student has now been marked as present.
- Provide parents/guardians of primary students with a 'sign out' slip to give to teachers indicating they have permission to collect a student. Provide a 'sign in' slip to give to the teacher when the student returns to school.
- Record late, sign in and sign out on student's attendance on SEQTA
- If a parent/guardian indicates that a student will be collected by anyone other than themselves, they must ensure reception has the name of the person collecting the student and that person must bring ID and collect a 'sign out' slip from reception before the teacher can let the student go.
- Provide students with a KKIS (Keeping Kids in School) pass as required, this will only ever be to students in years 11 and 12 during allocated times. During school hours students will not be served by any business unless they are with a parent/guardian or have the KKIS leave pass.
- Record excursions, camps, off-site activities, as directed by staff.
- Monitor student attendance throughout the day.
  - Ensure teachers mark their roll.
  - If a student is marked as absent, email teacher to check if the student has arrived late to class.
  - Resolve any absences from class due to music lessons or being with another teacher or staff member.
  - If a student is still considered absent or unaccounted for contact Head of Primary or Head of Secondary School.
  - Head of Primary or Head of Secondary School will make contact with parents/guardians.
- Attempt to resolve any absences by sending an email to both parents/guardians requesting an explanation for days that are unresolved on a student's attendance. This is done on a weekly basis.
- Print absentee reports periodically and at the end of the term to determine any student who falls below 90% attendance. The Principal and Heads of School are to receive this information, with the Heads of School responsible for contact with the parent/guardians.