



Australian Islamic College Adelaide

ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

The South Australian Government has identified regular attendance as a priority for the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) schools. Regular attendance at school is important to a child's learning and development so they get the most from their education.

Under the Education Act 1972 (SA), a child of “compulsory school or education age who is habitually or frequently absent from school or an approved learning program without a valid excuse is guilty of truancy”. A child of school age who is persistently absent from school without a satisfactory explanation is also regarded as being ‘at risk’ under the Children’s Protection Act 1993 (SA).

The Australian Islamic College Adelaide is required to follow strict guidelines as outlined in the following government legislation: Education Act 1972, Education Regulations 2012, Compulsory Education Legislation, and Children’s Protection Act 1993.

The legal provisions of non-attendance are found in section 79 & 80 of Education Act 1972 and section 6(2)(d) of Children’s Protection Act 1993.

A child who is between six years and 16 years is required to attend school. All students aged between 16 to 17 years must participate full-time in an approved learning program. This is irrespective of distance from the school or whether or not the student has a disability. These students are required to be enrolled and must attend the school unless the Minister has granted an exemption from the school. A parent or guardian must apply for an exemption from school attendance if they wish to take their child out of school temporarily or permanently. Students must continue to attend school regularly until such exemption has been approved.

The Importance of Student Attending School

Australian Islamic College Adelaide endeavors to provide a safe Islamic environment conducive and supportive of the educational process for students to develop academically, spiritually and socially.

Students that are regularly absent from school run the risk of:

1. Dropping out of school early.
2. Becoming long term unemployed.
3. Becoming welfare dependent.
4. Becoming involved in the justice system.
5. Becoming socially isolated.
6. Being under-educated and unable to access self-improvement programs.

Responsibilities

Everyone has a role to play in ensuring students are attending regularly and making the most of their learning opportunities here at the College. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

1. Parents/Guardians
2. Students themselves
3. Principal
4. Coordinators
5. Teachers
6. School administration staff
7. Peers
8. Members of our community

Importance of an Accurate Report

Accurate reporting of absences and rigorous follow-up should improve the student's attendance percentage, however there are students and families who cannot or will not comply. There are many reasons for this and some of them include:

1. Disengagement with the learning environment.
2. Family issues.
3. Cultural differences.
4. Health reasons.
5. Substance abuse problems.
6. Bullying.
7. Extra-curricular activities.

The College uses an electronic data collection system to collate and report on absences. This information is then used to intervene at the earliest possible opportunity to truancy using SMS, phone calls, letters, meetings and home visits. Stringent adherence to absentee procedures is critical to providing the best educational outcomes for students at AIC.

Attendance Percentage

If a student's attendance percentage drops below 90%, attempts must be made to restore regular attendance. The Australian Islamic College does this by:

1. Identifying which students are not regularly attending. This is done by entering into the Student Absentees in iWise where there is a list of students with the highest number of absent days. Each student's number of absent days is compared against the number of possible instruction days to calculate the attendance percentage. This should be done on a weekly basis.
2. An excel spreadsheet is then made of all students with attendance levels lower than 90% and a plan to restore attendance is commenced.
3. This list is then provided to the Principal and the Coordinator.
4. The Coordinator should talk to the student and impress upon them the need to take responsibility for their own learning.
5. Letters are sent to the student's parents/guardian outlining their responsibility for the student's attendance (see Appendix 1).
6. Telephone calls are also made to the parents/guardian to follow up.

Where a student's attendance is not improving the following steps must be taken:

1. The Attendance Intervention Record is to be filled out and regularly updated. This records the times contact has been made with the stakeholders.
2. The Attendance Intervention Checklist is to be filled out and regularly updated. This records the steps taken to ensure the student's attendance compliance.
3. If all reasonable steps followed to ensure compliance have not resulted in improved attendance, the student's details are to be referred to the College Principal.

ABSENTEES PROCEDURE

Recording of Student Absentees

The absentees are entered using the iWise system. The system should be updated daily by all class teachers for every period they teach. Relief teachers should also enter their absences. If for any reason there is a problem with entering the absentees, teachers must bring their student list to the school office so it can be entered and the data entry problem rectified.

Deadlines for entering the absentees

The deadlines for entering the absentees for all periods are:

- High School – within first 20 minutes of each lesson
- Primary School – by 9.30am for the morning and by 1.30pm for the afternoon

It is essential that the school is up to date and accurate in the recording of absentees, as it is a government requirement for registration. Failure to attend to this can result in de-registration and even prosecution.

- **Absentees should be entered under the 'Attendance Entry for Classes' button**
 - Any students who are late can be marked as late. Students should provide a note that they have obtained from the school office. This note should be marked with the reason for being late. This reason should be entered against the student in the reason column. All students who are late without a note, should be sent to the school office with a Student Movement Permission Slip.
 - Late students are also checked from the school office.
 - Parent notified absence and sick bay attendees are also entered by the school office so that there is an accurate record of student movements. If a teacher sends a student to the sick bay or the student is leaving to go home or going off the school grounds, the teacher should enter that student as absent for that period. The teacher should also put the reason in the reason column, and if necessary, make a note in the teacher's notes column. Some students say that they are going to the sick bay or home when in fact they are skipping school. Proper record keeping allows the school to keep track of each student's movements.
 - Students going on holiday for any duration must inform the school office. If they inform a teacher, the teacher must tell the school office.
 - Teachers who are running excursions should leave a list of all attendees with the school office. The teacher responsible for this is the teacher that has organised the excursion. If a student does not turn up for the excursion, the school office must be notified. The deadline for this list is the day of the excursion.

- If a student is in in-school detention, the sending teacher is responsible for entering these details into the system. If a student is in in-school detention for more than one period, or is in in-school detention all day, the teacher responsible for entering the absentees is the initiating teacher. If a student needs to be out of class during class time for any purpose, they must be accompanied by a Student Movement Permission Slip. These slips are available from the school office. Teachers are to pick them up themselves to avoid possible forging by students.

SMS notification to parents

Parents are notified of their child's absences via SMS at the end of period 3 each day. All parents of children who are away for the first three periods are contacted using the SMS Broadcast Website. This process is undertaken by the school office staff.

Entering Absentees

Absentees are entered under the 'Attendance Entry for Classes' button in iWise. All teachers will submit their absentees online, even if they are relief for a class.

Follow-up with parents if a student has left AIC

Every so often a student appears to have left the school. The parents of these students should be informed by a letter that their child has been absent from school and asked to account for their child's whereabouts. This is to be preceded and followed by a phone call. If no correspondence is forthcoming, the student is to be removed from the register at the Principal's discretion, according to Department of Education guidelines. If a teacher is told that a student has left or is on holiday, they must inform the school office.

Forms

If a student is going to be late or absent for any reason, the school needs to be informed in writing. Forms for absences can be picked up from the school office or a parent/guardian can write a note with the name of the student, ID number of student, duration of absence and signature of parent or guardian.

Unknown Student Movement Report

After a student appears to have left the school, all attempts must be made to follow up on the student's whereabouts by trying to get transfer notes or other information in writing. If this is not successful the student is placed into a spreadsheet titled Unknown Student Movement Report. This is then authorised by the Principal and sent to The Association of Independent Schools South Australia.

APPENDIX 1 – Unexplained Absences Letter to Parents/Guardians



Australian Islamic College Adelaide

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Tel: (08) 8340 7799 Fax: (08) 8340 9988
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Date _____

The _____ Family

Unexplained Absences

[Insert Student name - Student ID No. – Yr Group - Principal Name]

Dear Parent

[Insert child's name] was absent from School without explanation on the dates listed below. Except in the case of illness, misadventure or circumstances beyond their control, a student must be in attendance on all days, on which the School is open; unless leave of absence has been requested in writing and permission granted in advance.

All absences, whether they are for a full day or any part of a day (late arrival or early departure), require an explanation and consent in writing from a parent or guardian. Verbal notification of a student's absence must be followed up in writing. The Education Act requires parents / guardians to provide the School with such notice within 7 days of the absence.

To comply with this requirement please provide a reason for each unexplained absence in the space provided and return this letter to the school as a matter of urgency.

| Absent Unexplained | Reason |
|--------------------|--------|
| [insert date] | |

Yours sincerely,

[Insert Principal's Name]

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Please print name: _____