

# Australian Islamic College of Sydney

## Attendance Policy and Procedure



### Purpose

In order to obtain the best possible education, it is important for students to attend College on a daily basis. The entire process of education requires regular classroom participation to achieve continuity of instruction and learning experiences.

The Australian Islamic College of Sydney (AICS) aims to achieve a College-wide standard of academic excellence and acknowledges that one of the most important ways of achieving this is through the regular attendance of lessons by students. This is the key to maintaining continuity in learning and achieving academic success. The College staff, in partnership with parents, are jointly responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

This policy outlines principles, responsibilities and the procedures at the AICS to encourage regular student attendance at the College.

### Policy

Section 22 of the *Education Act (1990)* states that it is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school-age to ensure that:

- The child is enrolled at and attends a government school, a registered non-government school or be registered for home schooling with the BOSTES
- All students who are enrolled at AICS are expected to attend the College whenever instruction is provided
- An attendance register is maintained by the Principal and made available for inspection during College hours by an authorised person (in accordance with section 24 of the Act)

Students under the age of 17 who are enrolled at AICS are required to attend the College regularly and punctually.

The Management Board and staff of the AICS ensure that students are in class each day and on time for every class in order to provide the best possible learning situation for every student. We acknowledge that there are some occasions when a student cannot be at the College.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Parents/guardians of students enrolled at the AICS are responsible for:**

- ensuring that their child attends the College daily and on time
- informing the college before 8:30am if their child is going to be late or absent on a particular date
- explain any partial or whole day absences of their child from the College as soon as possible following the absence (ideally the day of the child returning to the College following the absence)
- taking any necessary measures to resolve attendance related issues involving their child
- attending any scheduled meetings regarding the leave or absence of their child
- planning family vacations to coincide with scheduled College vacations where possible
- informing the College when the child leaves the College, providing information about reasons for leaving the College and the next school/College the child will be attending.

### **Students of the AICS are responsible for:**

- attending College daily and on time
- attending all classes, participating fully and to the best of their ability
- making up work missed as soon as possible after an absence and within the time designated by the College

### **College staff are responsible for:**

- supporting the regular attendance of students by providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the College community
- recognising and rewarding improved student attendance
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise
- providing clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- ensuring that they adhere to and apply all attendance related procedures
- ensuring that they are particularly vigilant when marking attendance and check that their records are up to date and accurate
- maintaining the security of login details to AWMS roll-marking software, in accordance with IT policy and procedures
- ensuring that they follow up any unexplained partial or whole day absences with parents/guardians
- notifying parents/guardians or relevant authorities of students' absence

- ensuring students are safe and do not exit and or leave the premises without permission
- following up on any student suspected to be truanting by notifying parents/guardians and or authorities where required
- informing parents/guardians of attendance requirements
- investigating all cases of unsatisfactory attendance

**The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:**

- students are enrolled as per requirements
- parents/guardians are complying with College procedures
- staff strictly adhere to College attendance procedures
- staff are trained and receive the necessary information and support to ensure that all attendance records are both accurate and stored in a safe and appropriate manner
- all acceptance and or denial of leave requests are communicated
- staff are nominated to handle student enrolments
- staff are nominated to maintain attendance registers and records of attendance and absence
- where a student is absent for 30 days the Mandatory Reporting Guide of the Keep Them Safe website [www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au) is consulted to determine whether a report is required.

**Procedures**

**Arrival**

- All students (K to 12) are expected to arrive at the College by 8.25am.
- Roll call begins at 8.30am; teachers are expected to mark the roll using the AWMS system by 8.45am using the codes stipulated within the **ACARA National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting as approved by the Minister**. In the event that technical difficulties are experienced each roll call teacher is issued with a 'paper roll' and the roll is marked manually. This is then updated by the rolls supervisor once connectivity is restored.
- Students who arrive after 8.30am are noted as partial absence, issued with late notes at the reception by the office staff. Late notes are issued electronically using the AWMS system. The student is then expected to return late notes to the teacher (K-6) or roll call teacher (7-12) signed and annotated by their parent/guardian (Appendix A).

**Non Attendance**

- Should a student be marked as absent and they have not arrived at the College by 9.30am an SMS notification is sent to the parent/guardian stating this (Appendix B)

- Upon returning to the College the student will be issued with a 'letter of absence'. The parent/guardian of the student is required to explain the absence, sign the letter and return it to the roll call teacher so that they are able to enter the relevant code on the AWMS system (Appendix C).

### **Early Departure Procedure**

Students may be collected by their parent/guardian during the College day. Should this be the case the parent/guardian must report to the front office. This absence is noted as 'partial; explained'.

### **Unexplained Absences**

Absences that are not explained after three days are required to be followed up by the Classroom Teacher (Primary School) or roll call teacher (Secondary School). Absences that remain unexplained after three days are flagged by the teacher. The teacher has the option of calling a parent and requesting written notification be sent in, or generating a letter listing the days absent for parents to provide a reason and return. If this achieves a positive response (a letter is provided) the absence is changed to 'explained' with the appropriate coding. If the absence remains unexplained after 7 days it will be recorded on the AWMS system as a 'declared absence' (Aa). Declared absence reports are then provided by office staff to Assistant Principals so that follow up action can be taken. **Appendix F** shows a flow chart procedure for roll call teachers to follow when they are performing the duties of roll call teachers.

There are a number of strategies that can be implemented in attempting to restore a student's attendance in accordance with the school's policy and procedures. A strategy that can be effective in restoring the unsatisfactory attendance of a student is putting the student on an [Attendance Improvement Plan](#) whereby undertakings are made by the student (where applicable), the parent/s and the school that intend on restoring the student's attendance to a satisfactory level over a 20 consecutive school day period. If strategies such as the Attendance Improvement Plan are not successful in restoring the attendance of the student then further action may be pursued by the Principal.

Should an Attendance Improvement Plan fail to restore absence, they may consider the [Keep Them Safe](#) legislation in determining whether the matter meets Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH). There should be significant consideration given to the online [Mandatory Reporter Guide](#) (MRG), specialist advice and professional judgment, where there are concerns about suspected risk of harm. In accordance with the MRG, *Neglect Education - Habitual Absence* is defined as 'The child/young person is of compulsory school age (6 years to current leaving age) AND is habitually absent'. 'Habitually absent' is a minimum of 30 days absence within the past 100 school days. However, the Principals may

consider other factors, such as the student's age and learning support needs in deciding on action earlier than the 30 days indicated. Other decisions trees can be used if the underlying issues impacting on school attendance are also of concern. For example, concerns around the care of the child/young person, neglect: supervision or the child/young person is a danger to themselves or others.

### **Attendance Folder**

All teachers with roll marking responsibilities are issued with an attendance folder at the beginning of the year. Each teacher uses this folder to track attendance and ensure safe keeping of all attendance notes. This is archived annually.

### **Backup of Data**

The school has a replica server within the same premises which keeps the up to date image of the data base server. The school also keeps one copy of the data base on an external hard drive on a weekly basis. In the future the replica server will be relocated to the Abraham Street campus.

### **Strategies to Promote 100% Attendance**

At the AICS we promote 100% attendance by planning and providing engaging lessons / learning experiences which have a clear focus that meet students' needs and therefore enable every student at the AICS to succeed. Monitoring of every student's attendance and effective communication with parents supports improvement in achievement levels.

At AICS, staff encourage attendance by consistently applying the following strategies:

- Promote the importance of school to parents
- Make teachers known to parents so that communication about attendance is ongoing
- Encourage involvement in school events
- Require staff to monitor and identify the early warning signs of irregular school attendance:
  - o Missing lessons during a school day
  - o Arriving late for school or classes
  - o Leaving early from school, with patterns of this occurring
  - o Many days absent, either unexplained or citing 'family reasons'
  - o Being the victim of bullying or harassment

AICS recognises positive attendance records through presentations at assemblies and annual award ceremonies.

Selected school attendance practices have been identified as having a positive effect in encouraging students to regularly attend school classes.

The strategies currently implemented at the Australian Islamic College of Sydney (AICS) are:

### **Strategy 1: Teachers are trained in the AWMS System**

Teachers are trained in the AWMS system so they can analyse data. The best way to identify students with poor attendance is to calculate the data the College is already collecting. The AWMS system allows teachers to see school-wide averages and shift the data to see how many students are missing a certain percentage of the school year. The AWMS system helps to examine patterns and identify which students are at risk due to poor attendance.

### **Strategy 2: Extracurricular activities for students**

Students are involved in extracurricular activities such as debating competitions, lunch sports, PDHPE sports and camps. The College also encourages involvement of students on excursions. Excursions with high involvement of student activities always have a high rate of attendance.

### **Strategy 3: Awarding of certificates**

Students with a very low rate of absenteeism are awarded at the AICS. Students who have been absent up to only three days of absences are awarded end of the year with an 'Excellent Attendance Certificate'.

### **Strategy 4: Involvement of the School Counsellor**

The School Counsellor is already counselling certain students who may be facing family issues. The method of engagement of the Counsellor has always encouraged students to see her when they have family or personal concerns. This allows students not to be absent and have someone to talk to when they have issues or concerns. Based on a case by case scenario the Counsellor makes contact with the student.

### **Strategy 5: Timely advising parents**

The AWMS allows parents to be informed via SMS if their child is absent from school by 8.45 am. Regular correspondence goes out to the parent, via a letter, on daily basis in regards to the student being late or absent. This enables parents to be aware of their child's absenteeism and to be mindful using the advice of the College to utilise an approach which can help their child not be absent or late in the future.

### **Strategy 6: Passionate about subject**

AICS knows the importance of employing teachers who show a passion for the subject they are teaching. Teachers need to be dedicated about the subject they are teaching as studies have shown this plays a positive impact on the students' mentality and approach towards the particular subject. Even more importantly, teachers must display they are willing to assist and help students to do well in those areas. AICS currently run extra support classes before and after school for all students. Some teachers have utilised their own break times to assist students. Students like this and see that the teacher is caring and is trying to help them succeed.

### **Strategy 7: Classroom strategies**

Teachers at the AICS have been refining their classroom strategies. The effect of that with fair and consistent discipline, has increased student attendance and student achievement. Teachers have begun to recognise and praise industrious behaviour – things like genuinely wanting to do well at something, working hard to achieve it, and persisting even when things go wrong. The second is to nip small or potential issues in the bud, using techniques such as positive correction, redirection and warnings. However, the key strategy is what Robert Marzano calls ‘with-it-ness’ – a routine state of awareness about what is going on in the classroom. It is this ‘with-it-ness’ that enables a teacher to catch students doing things right and to address minor misbehaviour without having to resort to punitive measures.

### **Strategy 8: Becoming a better teacher**

This strategy is a part of the College’s discipline policy. Students are more likely to come to school if they are succeeding, and they are more likely to succeed if they are taught well. Teachers help students to master the material they are meant to learn based on evidence based teaching strategies and ensure that everything taught is underpinned by evidence based principles. The strategy that is particularly linked to school attendance is *adjunct questioning*. Adjunct questioning involves asking students to show their understanding of something before moving onto the next part of the lesson. AICS implement this strategy by running FLIP class sessions.

### **Strategy 9: Communication with parents**

AICS teachers communicate with parents on a regular basis via telephone, diary or in person. Students, whose parents value education, and more specifically attendance, are far less likely to have high levels of avoidable absence. Therefore, teachers should spend time explaining the value of education to parents during any contact made. There is a clear link between education and students’ subsequent *wellbeing*. Teachers need to get this message to parents and ask them to reinforce it with their children coupling with this, the general message of the link between school attendance and how well students subsequently do at school. Teachers at AICS repeat this message at every opportunity, including parent information nights, newsletters and parent-teacher interviews.

### **Strategy 10: Having roll call teachers**

The College has an established roll call room period in the Secondary school section with the students remaining with the same roll call teacher all six years of schooling. The roll call teachers are responsible for monitoring their students’ attendance records. This current strategy allows the roll call teacher to develop a care-taker bond with the students and allows students to develop an openness with the teacher as a bond has developed over the years.

### **Future strategies which AICS plans to implement to further minimise absenteeism:**

#### **Strategy 1: Competitive sports**

Currently the College has house colours and currently an Athletics Carnival is held in September annually. It is the aim of the College to implement a more competitive sports environment within the

College. The students will stay within their current house colours and enroll themselves in competitive sports of choice such as: cricket, touch football, soccer, basketball, table tennis and badminton. Establishing a sense of healthy competition will help the students to develop a sense of team-work, achievement, a respect for rules and an enthusiasm toward sports.

### **Strategy 2: Term Attendance certificates**

Introducing Term Attendance certificates to students will encourage them to be proactive in coming to school early and not being absent. Currently certificates are awarded at the end of the year, but to introduce during the term would inspire students to achieve positive attendance. Small prizes such as movie tickets or theme parks tickets will also be awarded.

### **Strategy 3: Organising after school gatherings with parents**

It is important to educate parents on the importance of attendance by having stage assemblies after school. Attendance improves when the College community offers a warm and welcoming environment that engages students and families and offers enriching learning opportunities. A key component of the engagement is helping families learn about the positive impact of good attendance and the negative effects of chronic absenteeism on realising their hopes and dreams for their children. Parents may not realise that even excused absences can affect their child's school grades (such as when taking the child out of school for holidays during or at the end of the school year).

### **Strategy 4: Involvement of the Local Council and other school supporting bodies**

The College can liaise with the Local Council of Blacktown to award certificates of attendance to the students and send a positive message that attending school is very important. Also approaching sports federation bodies to award and attend school sporting events would encourage students to attend school regularly.

### **Strategy 5: Creating awareness around the school with posters and videos**

Posters and videos can be a constant visual reminder for parents and students. Putting up posters in the school in different languages so that all parents and students from different backgrounds can understand the importance of attendance and its effects on the child's education and future. These posters can be designed by students thus creating a sense of belonging. These posters can also be a part of a poster competition which will encourage students to create well designed and creative material. Visual material such as a short video on positive attendance can be created by students and uploaded to their student accounts can be a fun reminder of school attendance.

### **Strategy 6: Establishing an Attendance Committee**

Establishing an Attendance Committee in the College comprising of a student and teacher body who can run all the major events in relation to getting the regular attendance message across. The students in the committee will be responsible for the organisation and running of assemblies, meetings and competitions relating to positive attendance. The teachers in the committee will be a support and guide to encourage students with high rate of absenteeism to be a part of this committee.

### **Strategy 7: School Counsellor**



The College will organise the School Counsellor to run behavioural, social and emotional support programs to the students who have chronic absence issues and who may suffer from interpersonal problems.

### **Strategy 8: Changing Ramadan timings**

The College imparts an interest in religious activities. However, historically in Ramadan, the College has faced a vast drop in student attendance. During Ramadan, students are involved in late night and early morning religious activities which can cause them to be absent from school. The college can implement a change in the timings for Ramadan so that the students have a chance to wake up and get to school. In the past, the College closed 40 minutes earlier than regular College timings. But rather than finishing early, the College can start late i.e. not 8.30am but 8:50am and close at 2.50pm rather than 2.30pm.

### **Strategy 9: Having more adventure programs.**

Adventure programs place students in an unfamiliar environment for an extended period, and involve experiential challenges such as rock climbing, assault course at Cataract Dam and team building games. Quality programs include specific goals and structured preparation (emotional, social and skill-based) to achieve those goals. Program facilitators give students individual feedback that helps them rise above their personal challenges and achieve their goal. Finally, the facilitators explicitly help students to crystallise their learning and transfer it back to their success at school. One such program with a proven impact is the Australian version of [Outward Bound](#). If the College wants to improve school attendance, targeted year levels (e.g. Yr. 9 & 10) students should be sent on such a program.

### **Exemption and Extended Leave**

Under the [Education Act 1990 – Section 25](#), parents of a student of compulsory school age may seek an exemption from attending school. A child may be exempt from being enrolled at and attending school if the Principal is satisfied that conditions exist which make it necessary or desirable that a Certificate should be granted.

Where parents of a student of compulsory school age seek an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the school will process the application in reference to the delegations, processes and conditions outlined in the [Exemption from School- Procedures](#).

Only the Principal can consider an application for exemption and will take into consideration:

- Whether it is in the best interest of the child for them to be exempt from attendance or enrolment. There should be significant consideration as to whether there are any welfare or child protection concerns relating to the child and whether any period of exemption will negatively impact on the child's learning, developmental or social progress.
- Put the parental application on letterhead and give to the parent to complete
- Review the parent's application against the criteria in the Department of Education [Exemption from School- Procedures](#)

- Put the Certificate of Exemption on school letterhead and complete for the parent if the application is supported.
- Give the original Certificate to the parent
- Keep a copy of the Application, the Certificate and the Minister's delegation on the student's file.

### **Scheduled Absences/Leave Procedure**

Parents/guardians are supplied with the College term dates at the start of each academic year. At this point they are advised to only schedule holidays during the official College holiday periods.

**Travel, either local or international, is no longer considered under the *Exemption from School - Procedures*.** Parents or applicants are required to complete an [Application for Extended Leave](#) and it is at a principal's discretion to accept the reason provided by the parent or applicant relating to their travel requests. It is good practice to request travel documentation from the parent or applicant for periods of travel over 5 days, this may include a travel itinerary or e-ticket. There is no minimum or maximum period of time that a parent may request leave provisions for the student. However, if the leave request exceeds 30 school days, the leave is denied. If the principal accepts the reason and wishes to grant a period of leave to the student then they are required to complete a [Certificate of Extended Leave](#) and record a 'L' for the given period on the school's register.

The Principal may delegate the responsibility of preparation of leave approval forms but retains the right of approval.

The parent or applicant should be issued with the original Certificate of Extended Leave and a copy of the Certificate and the Application should be kept on the student's file.

### **Student Enrolment Destination Unknown Notification**

This form (Appendix E) has been prepared to provide a Department of Education Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) with details where the enrolment destination of a student of compulsory school age is unknown.

Reviewed: March 2016

Reviewed: March 2017

Next Review: March 2019

## Appendix A



### Automated Late Note

# *Australian Islamic College of Sydney*

33 Headcorn Street Mt DRUITT, NSW 2770

TEL: (02) 9677 2613 FAX: (02) 9677 2648 Email: [info@aics.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@aics.nsw.edu.au)

Website: [www.aics.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aics.nsw.edu.au)

(Day, date)

Time issued - (Time)

(Student name)

Year/Form - (Class)

Date of Late Attendance - (Day, Date)

Arrival time - (Time)

Reason – (Reason Name)

#### Step 1

(Student name), please hand this note to your Classroom/Roll Call Teacher immediately.

#### Step 2

Roll Call teacher – if reason for absence is unknown, please separate and return the bottom section to (Students name) to take home for (his/her) parents to sign. Upon receipt, please file into Roll Call folder.

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(Student name)

Year/Form - (Class)

Date of Late Attendance - (Day, Date)

Arrival time - (Time)

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent' Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

### **SMS Notification**

**"<First Name> is marked absent at AICS on <Date Today>.  
Please send a note with <First Name> explaining the absence.  
AUTOMATED MESSAGE, DO NOT REPLY"**

## Appendix C

### Automated Absence Letter



# *Australian Islamic College of Sydney*

33 Headcorn Street Mt DRUITT, NSW 2770 A.B.N:60 085 245 245

TEL: (02) 9677 2613 FAX: (02) 9677 2648 Email: [info@aics.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@aics.nsw.edu.au)

Website: [www.aics.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aics.nsw.edu.au)

«Date\_Today»

Assalam-u-alaikum

Dear «Family\_Greeting»

The government requires all Colleges to receive and file notes from parents/guardians regarding their child's absences. These notes need to be hand signed by a parent/guardian (emailed notes cannot be accepted). Your «Son\_Daughter» has an outstanding unexplained absence. Please provide a reason(s) and signature for your «Son\_Daughter»'s absence as listed below. Please ensure that each time your «Son\_Daughter» is absent a note of explanation is sent with «HimHer» to «HisHer» Roll Call teacher on the first day of their return.

Wassalam

Class/Roll Call Teacher

Name of Student: «Student\_Firstname» «Student\_Lastname» («Class»)

Date of Absence:	Reason for Absence:
«Attendance_Date»	

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give to your «Son\_Daughter» to hand in to their Class/Roll Call teacher.



**Appendix D**  
**Request for leave form**  
*Australian Islamic College of Sydney*

33 Headcorn Street, MT DRUITT, NSW 2770 A.B.N: 60 085 245 245  
 TEL: (02) 9677 2613 FAX: (02) 9677 2648  
 Email: [info@aics.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@aics.nsw.edu.au) Website: [www.aics.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aics.nsw.edu.au)

**Request for leave form**

**Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel**

The student/s whose details appear below has/have been provided a period of extended leave from school for the purpose of travel.

*Note: Where an application is made by a parent with more than one child a separate copy of this Certificate should be placed in each student's file.*

**STUDENT DETAILS**

Please complete table below with details of all students associated with the period of travel:

FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	DOB	AGE	GRADE	Enrolment Register Number

Student address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_ School telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of extended leave: From: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Number of school days: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for providing the period of extended leave:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Conditions applicable to providing the period of extended leave:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

It has been explained to the parent of the above mentioned student/s that they are responsible for his/ her/ their supervision during the period of extended leave.

It has been explained to the parent that the period of extended leave is limited to the period indicated and the parent has acknowledged that the provided period of extended leave is subject to the conditions listed.

Principal name:\_\_\_\_\_ Principal signature:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**This certificate has been issued without alteration and must be produced when requested by police or other authorised attendance officers.**

Place on School Letterhead



**Education**  
**Public Schools**

**Student Enrolment Destination Unknown Notification**

This form has been prepared to provide a Department of Education Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) with details where the enrolment destination of a student of compulsory school age is unknown.

**Name of School:**  
**Location of School:**  
**School contact details:**

**Student Details**

**Student Name:**  
**Date of Birth:**  
**Last known address:**  
**Last day attended:**  
**Has the student enrolment been withdrawn and parent notified (date):**

**Parent Details**

**Parent Name(s):**  
**Contact details:**

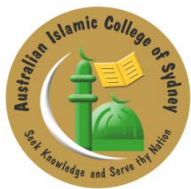
**Further information**

**Possible destination:**  
**Other relevant information:**

**Any risks associated with contacting the student or parent?**  
**Outline what efforts the school has taken to locate the child/children**

**Principal Name:**  
**Principal Signature:**  
**Date**





## APPENDIX E

# *Australian Islamic College of Sydney*

33 Headcorn Street Mt DRUITT, NSW 2770 A.B.N:60 085 245 245

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Website: [www.aics.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aics.nsw.edu.au)

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Name of School:  
Location of School:  
School contact details:

### Student Details

Student Name:  
Date of Birth:  
Last known address:  
Last day attended:  
Has the student enrolment been withdrawn and parent notified (date):

### Parent Details

Parent Name(s):  
Contact details:

### Further Information

Possible destination:  
Other relevant Information:

Any risks associated with contacting the student or parent?  
Outline what efforts the school has taken to locate the child/children

Principal Name:  
Principal Signature:  
Date

Return to : NSW Department of Education : [attendance@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:attendance@det.nsw.edu.au)

## Appendix F

