

Australian Islamic College of Sydney

AICS Student Attendance Policy



Australian Islamic College of Sydney policies have a commitment to Australian Islamic ethos and values, and should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures and with relevant legislation.

POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every two years.

POLICY DATES

Last reviewed	March 2019	Reviewed	August 2023
Next Review Due		August 2025	

POLICY OWNER

Mohammed Riaaz Ali
PRINCIPAL

POLICY APPROVER

AICS Board

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 relevant authority.
- 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 18 who are enrolled at AICS are required to attend the College regularly and punctually.

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:

- marking period by period attendance of secondary school students on Seqta
- marking roll call and period 1 attendance of primary school students on Seqta
- 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
- 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 a prolonged period without explanation, has to have an attendance improvement plan and ensure correct reporting to School Liaison Officer.

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 Seqta system by 8.45am using the codes stipulated within the **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 Attendance Officer 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 Seqta system. Thus students' late arrival is automatically recorded in the attendance system.

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 (refer to Appendices)

Early Departure Procedure

Please refer to the the AICS Student Leave Policy on College's website

Unexplained Absences

Absences that are not explained are required to be followed up by the Attendance Officer. Attendance Officer sends an Absent/Late Follow up Letter every week (refer to Appendices) to those parents who have not responded to the daily Absent SMS. Wellbeing Coordinator identifies and is being notified of habitual absentees and late arrivals. On a case by case basis attendance improvement strategies are implemented to iron out any student attendance issues.

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. 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, the College will consider the 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. If attendance remains unsatisfactory after the Attendance Improvement Plan, The College will pursue further action such as Secretary's Compulsory Schooling Conference with DoE. If attendance issue remains unresolved after the Conference the the College may apply to Children's Court for Compulsory Schooling Orders/Conference. Breach of these legislations may have severe penalties including fine up to \$11,000.

Attendance Record

All attendances re marked electronically in Setqa and data can be retrieved at any time. AICS also keeps NSW attendance report separately on our network. All responses received through emails are recorded directly in Seqta and any document received in paper form is scanned and uploaded in relevant student's file in our online data storage.

Backup of Data

The school has a replica server located at our Abraham Street premises. The school also keeps one copy of the data base on an external hard drive on a weekly basis.

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 SEQTA System

Teachers are trained in SEQTA system so they can analyse data. Teacher can see any student's attendance data for any a week, month, three months, year or all times. This enables teachers to find out any attendance related issue or pattern such as number of absences, number of late arrivals or number of early leave.

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 100% attendance rate for the whole year are awarded at the end of year with an 'Excellent Attendance Certificate'.

Strategy 4: Involvement of the School Counselor

The School Counselor is already counseling certain students who may be facing family issues. The method of engagement of the Counselor 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 Counselor makes contact with the student.

Strategy 5: Timely information to parents

Through Seqta parents can be timely informed via SMS if their child is absent from school by 9:30 - 10:00am. Regular correspondence goes out to the parents via SMS and letters, 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 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 as far as possible. 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. The same is done with year advisors.

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: 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.

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
- 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

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](#) (refer to Appendices) 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 7 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 7 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](#) (refer to Appendices) 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 (refer to Appendices) 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.

SMS Notification Template

**"<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"**

Application for Extended Leave –Travel



Australian Islamic College of Sydney

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

TEL: (02) 9933 6900

Email: info@aics.nsw.edu.au Website: www.aics.nsw.edu.au

Application for Extended Leave

NOTE: PARTS A, B and C are to be completed by the student's parent and/or guardian and emailed to attendance@aics.nsw.edu.au

PART A: STUDENT DETAILS

Please complete table below with details of all students at this school associated with the period of travel. Separate applications are required for each school if siblings do not attend the same school.

FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	DOB	GRADE

Student address: _____ Postcode: _____

Dates of extended leave applied for: From: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

Number of school days: _____

Reason for travel (including why this travel is occurring in school time):

PART B: PREVIOUS EXEMPTIONS/EXTENDED LEAVE - TRAVEL:

Date of prior exemption/extended leave: From: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

Number of school days: _____

Certificate of prior Exemption/Extended Leave -Travel attached (Please tick): Yes ☐ No ☐

PART C: PARENT AND/OR CAREGIVER DETAILS

Family name: _____ Given Name: _____

Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____ Relationship to student: _____

As the parent and applicant, I hereby apply for a *Certificate of Extended Leave* and understand my child will be granted a period of extended leave upon acceptance by the Principal of the reason provided.

I understand that if the application is accepted:

- I am responsible for his / her supervision during the period of extended leave.
- The provided period of extended leave is limited to the period indicated.
- The provided period of extended leave is subject to the conditions listed on the *Certificate of Extended Leave*.
- The period of extended leave will count towards my child's absences from school.

I declare the information provided in this application is to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate and complete. I recognise that should statements in this application later prove to be false or misleading any decision made as a result of this application may be reversed. I further recognise that a failure to comply with any condition set out in the Application for Extended Leave, may result in the provided period of extended leave being cancelled.

Parent and/or caregiver signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

PART D: TO BE COMPLETED BY HEAD OF SCHOOL - OFFICE USE ONLY

Student's overall attendance rate prior to date of requested leave (%)	
Behaviour	
School Tuition Fees – Up to date	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

PART E: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PRINCIPAL/ DELEGATE

I accept this *Application for Extended Leave*

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please provide more detail here (if required):

Principal/ Delegate Name: _____ Principal/ Delegate Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel



Certificate of Extended Leave

The student/s whose details appear below has/have been provided a period of extended leave from school for the purpose of absence. Please complete table below with details of all students associated with the period of absence. *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			
FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	DOB	GRADE

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 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's name: _____ Principal's signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

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

Mount Druitt Campus
02-9933 6900
33 Headcorn Street
Mount Druitt 2770

Rooty Hill Campus
02-9933 6900
24 Abraham Street
Rooty Hill 2766

ABN: 60 085 245 245
CRICOS: 03715G
info@aiccs.nsw.edu.au
www.aiccs.nsw.edu.au

Absent / Late Follow Up Letter



A message from Australian Islamic College of Sydney

Dear {salutation}

Please note that your child, {firstname} {surname} ({rollgroup}), was either absent or late on the dates indicated below **[date only indicates Full Day Absence, and Date with (L) indicates Late Arrival on that date]**. Please provide reason(s) of absence or late arrival, as soon as possible, by replying to this email. Please type in a short reason in the box provided against each date.

{block_dates_1}

Date	
09/Mar/2023	

Please print your name here:

Kind regards

AICS Attendance

Example letter - Declining an Application for a Certificate of Extended Leave – Travel



Dear parent,

We have received your application for extended leave, requesting permission for your children (**names and grades**) to be absent from school from **date to date**. **According to Education Act 1990:**

- (a) every child has the right to receive an education,
- (b) the education of a child is primarily the responsibility of the child's parents.

The Australian Islamic College of Sydney reserves the right to take further action where children of compulsory school age have **recurring number of unexplained or unjustified absences from school**. From 2015, under changes to the government legislation, any family holiday/ leave taken during term time **is not permitted** unless there are exceptional and unavoidable circumstances as defined by the criteria below:

- misadventure or unforeseen event
- domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member
- attendance at funerals of immediate family members.

Students may only be granted leave for exceptional and unavoidable circumstances mentioned. The AICS board actively supports this process, and therefore students are only given approval for **seven consecutive school days** of leave in a year for exceptional circumstances as mentioned above or similar.

I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence on this occasion, because the reason provided does not fall in the above-mentioned category and the length of leave requested.

If your children are absent from **date to date (total number of school days absent)**, it will be recorded as **unauthorised absence**. Moreover, the **school may take one or more of the following actions:**

- ask you to attend a compulsory schooling conference.
- apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order.
- in circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occur, further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court.
- cancellation of your children's enrolment.

Based on the number of days absent per calendar year, your children may be at risk of not meeting the course outcome requirements and not being promoted to the next grade.

Regards,

Principal



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

Website: www.aics.nsw.edu.au

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

Return to : NSW Department of Education : attendance@det.nsw.edu.au