

## Introduction

This policy is a requirement *Standard 8* of the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*, and Faith Lutheran College, as a registered CRICOS provider must ensure that students who are enrolled in its accredited courses are systematically monitored to ensure attendance requirements are met.

Early identification of students, whose attendance is not regular, is crucial to minimising student absences. The College will take reasonable steps to follow-up on unexplained absences as soon as possible. The College may need to work closely with other agencies to support parent/legal guardians to meet their obligations concerning the enrolment and attendance and participation of their student.

## Definitions

Study Period	Where reference is made to a study period this is recognised as one (1) semester.
Compassionate or compelling circumstances	<p>Circumstances beyond the control of the student that are having an impact on the student's progress through a course. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ serious illness, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes</li> <li>○ bereavement of close family members such as parent/legal guardian or grandparent/legal guardian (with evidence of a death certificate if possible)</li> <li>○ major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring their emergency travel that has impacted on their studies</li> <li>○ a traumatic experience which has impacted on the student (these cases should be where possible supported by police or psychologists' reports)</li> <li>○ where the College was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit</li> <li>○ inability to begin studying on the course commencement date due to delay in receiving a student visa.</li> </ul> <p>For other circumstances to be considered as compassionate or compelling, evidence would need to be provided to show that these were having an impact on the student's progress through a course.</p>

Expected Duration	The length of time it takes to complete the course studying full-time. This is the same as the registered course duration on CRICOS.
College Day	Any day for which the College has scheduled course contact hours.

## Details of Policy

### 1. Expectations and Guidelines with Regards to Student Attendance.

- a) Satisfactory course attendance is considered 80% of scheduled course contact hours.
- b) The College expects students to be in attendance on each school day and properly uniformed.
- c) Student attendance is:
  - o checked and recorded at the start of each day and during each lesson;
  - o monitored and assessed regularly; and
  - o recorded and calculated over each term and semester.
- d) Late arrival to school will be recorded and will be included in attendance calculations.
- e) All absences, explained and unexplained, from the College will be included in absentee calculations.
- f) Explained absences must be accompanied by a medical certificate, an explanatory communication from the student's homestay provider or parent/legal guardian evidence for the College Principal to approve the leave. Any absences longer than three consecutive days without approval will be investigated as required under Standard 8.6 of the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*; however, Faith Lutheran College will contact a student after three days of unexplained absence to investigate.
- g) Student attendance will be monitored by the International Student Liaison Coordinator every two weeks over a study period to assess student attendance using the following method:
  - o The process for calculating the number of days the student would have to be absent to fall below the attendance threshold for a semester is the number of study days multiplied by contact hours (6 hours per day), multiplied by 20%
- h) Attendance for any period of exclusion from class will be assessed under Faith Lutheran College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.
- i) Parent/legal guardian of students at risk of breaching Faith Lutheran College's attendance requirements will be contacted in writing and students will be counselled and offered any necessary support when they have absences totalling 10% and 15% respectively during any assessment period.
- j) All absences from school should be accompanied by a medical certificate if absence impacts on the student's ability, regardless of year-level, to partake in internal or external assessment tasks; or an explanatory communication from the student's homestay provider or parent/legal guardian or evidence that the leave has been approved by the College Principal. Extended leave of a personal nature requires prior approval by the College Principal, otherwise the absence will be considered an unexplained absence. Details can be found in the Student Deferment, Suspension & Cancellation Policy.
- k) Any unnotified absence days will be followed up by the College. Student attendance will be monitored by College administrative staff on a daily basis to assess student attendance patterns.
- l) For all students, an attendance report will be submitted to the Deputy Principal as soon as the student breaches the College attendance requirements (i.e. once they miss 10% as per the College's policy) or are at risk of breaching their visa requirement. The Deputy Principal will then devise strategies to engage student to attend school, determine

whether a student has breached this policy, visa requirements, ESOS requirements or any other legislative policy or requirement through excessive absenteeism.

- m) If the student is in Year 11 or 12, this may have implications towards satisfying QCAA requirements; therefore, possibly jeopardising their ability to attain a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and/or Overall Position (OP).

## **2. Guidelines to Address Absenteeism, School Refusal and Truancy**

- a) The issue of absenteeism is complex and covers a range of behaviours, including chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy. It is important for the College to investigate patterns and underlying causes of non-attendance so that appropriate strategies that address the specific type of absenteeism can be implemented. There is no quick and simple solution, nor a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to address absenteeism. However, partnerships between schools, parent/legal guardian and the local community can assist in reducing absenteeism.
- b) School attendance management practices are crucial to minimising absences. The College will attempt to:
  - o identify absences quickly;
  - o follow-up absences promptly; and
  - o send clear messages to students and parent/legal guardian/carers that attendance is vital. It is widely recognised that early identification and intervention best manage attendance problems.

## **3. Procedure if a Student Has Failed to Meet Satisfactory Attendance**

- a) If the calculation indicates that the student has passed the attendance threshold for the study period, Faith Lutheran College will assess the student against the provisions of Item 3(c) (below). Where the student has failed to meet the minimum attendance requirement, and Item 3(c) does not apply, the College will promptly advise the student of its intention to report the student for breach of visa condition 8202, and that the student has 20 working days in which to access the College's internal complaints and appeals process.
- b) The College will notify the ESOS agency via PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory course attendance as soon as practicable where:
  - o the student does not access the complaints and appeals process within 20 days;
  - o the student withdraws from the complaints and appeals process by notifying the College Principal of Faith Lutheran College in writing;
  - o the complaints and appeals process results in a decision in favour of the College.
- c) Students will not be reported for failing to meet the 80% attendance threshold for a study period where:
  - o the student produces documentary evidence clearly demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances e.g., medical illness supported by a medical certificate or as per the definitions below, and
  - o the student's attendance has not fallen below 70% for the study period. The method for calculating 70% attendance is the same as that outlined above, with the following change; number of study days x contact hours x 30%, or number of study days x number of days per week x 30%.
- d) If a student is assessed as having nearly reached the threshold of 70% attendance for a study period, the Deputy Principal will assess whether a suspension of studies is in the interests of the student as per Faith Lutheran College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.
- e) If the student does not obtain a suspension of studies under the Faith Lutheran College's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy, and falls below the 70% threshold for attendance for the study period, the process for reporting the student for unsatisfactory attendance (breach of visa condition) will occur.

#### **4. Stakeholder Obligations with regards to Student Attendance**

- a) Homestay Providers/Parent/Legal Guardians will:
- Ensure their student arrives at the College or commences their educational program on time every day.
  - Ensure their student attends the College or their educational program every school day.
  - Minimise disruption to their student's school day so their student has the best opportunity to learn.
  - Contact the College prior to any planned absences.
  - Provide an explanation (preferably in writing) for each absence, either before or as soon as possible within two days of the student's return to school. This may take the form of a medical certificate, a written explanation containing the student's name, date of absence(s) and reasons for absence(s), a verbal explanation to the College through either a phone call or visit to the College's front office, or any other form of communication agreed by the College (e.g. email communication to the student's Care Group Teachers).
  - Ensure their student follows the College's recommended processes and procedures for late arrival and early departure.
  - Notify the College if their student will be late using the College's recommended communication processes. This may take the form of accompanying the student to the College, phoning the College, or providing the student with a signed and dated note, possibly in the student's diary.
- b) Care Group Teachers, Year Level Coordinators and Director of Student Services will:
- Inform parent/legal guardian of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance.
  - Implement strategies to manage student enrolment, absences, chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy using the guidelines to address chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy.
  - Monitor student absences and identify when a student is absent for three or more consecutive days, or where there is a pattern of persistent unexplained absences,
  - Take reasonable steps to follow-up unexplained absences as soon as possible, or ideally within three days of the absence, as well as inform the International Student Liaison Coordinator and/or the Deputy Principal.
  - Continue to work with relevant agencies to engage with the student and their homestay provider, parent/legal guardian with the aim of returning the student to the College.
  - Follow appropriate processes for enforcing parental/legal guardian obligation in regard to attendance.
- c) Under the following circumstances the legal obligations of the homestay provider and parent/legal guardian in regard to compulsory schooling do not apply:
- The student is prevented from attending school because he/she is consider too ill or injured, with appropriate medical documentation available if their absence is for three or more days;
  - The student is suspended or excluded by the College;
  - The student is participating in an approved co-curricular activity (i.e. Metropolitan West Sporting Trial etc.);
  - The student is in Year 11 or 12, and has approved absence during the Senior Exam Block to complete private study at home; or
  - A student initiated suspension of study, in communication with the College.

#### **5. QCAA Requirements For Students In Years 11 And 12**

- a) The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) requires students to not only complete an assessment package across each course of study, but also, to participate in the learning which allows these assessments to be completed to the best of their ability. In order for this to occur this requires senior students to be in attendance for the majority of this learning across their senior years.
- b) Determining the exact number of days this entails draws on syllabus' documents developed from each course of study – i.e. each QCAA recognised course (e.g. Authority English). Each course prescribes a minimum number of teaching and learning hours per semester, which is generally 55 hours. Using the College current timetable structure at Faith, where each subject includes 210 minutes of teaching and learning per week, as well as considering the average semester length is 18 weeks (notwithstanding other interruptions such as public holidays), this would then require all students to miss no more than 10 days per semester. Again, only absences which are unreasonable or not explained will contribute towards this total, with days absent which are approved (see above guidelines, pg. 3) not contributing towards this total.
- c) The College will attempt to inform students and their homestay provider and/or parents/legal guardians when they are at risk of not meeting this QCAA requirement; however, ultimately, this responsibility falls to each student's family. The College will however ensure this requirement is suitably communicated to all students and their families, so that there is no confusion or misunderstanding if and when this requirement is breached.

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## Policy Release Details

Date of Policy:	April 2018
Approved by:	Plenary
Responsibility:	College Principal
Point of Contact:	International Student Liaison Coordinator
Review Date:	October 2020