

Draft ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The Friends' School's Attendance Policy addresses the attendance expectations of all students and the management of absences. This includes the expectations and requirements specific to SV500 students, in keeping with the National Code 2018.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. Principal
- 2.2. Deputy Principal
- 2.3. Heads of School (Morris, High School, Clemes)
- 2.4. K-12 International Student Coordinator
- 2.5. Enrolment Manager
- 2.6. Director of Residence
- 2.7. All staff
- 2.8. All students
- 2.9. Students studying on SV500 (specific compliance sections of policy)
- 2.10. All Parents
- 2.11. Nominated Guardians
- 2.12. Homestay Host Parents
- 2.13. Education Agents

3. POLICY

3.1. Attendance and Absence Procedures

The School has an obligation and duty of care to monitor students' attendance, and any absences, on a daily and lesson-by-lesson basis and to ensure that the reason for an absence is both truthful and legitimate. To this end the School has in place *Attendance and Absence Procedures*. As applicable, these procedures will be published in:

- 3.1.1 Student Handbook - Junior and Secondary
- 3.1.2 Staff - Tutor and Teacher Packages (HS/Clemes), New Staff Induction program,
- 3.1.3 Website - Policies and Guidelines
- 3.1.4 Attendance for each student is monitored by class teachers in Morris and (pastoral) Tutors in High School and Clemes using the School's LMS Seqta. Additionally, subject teachers will take attendance each lesson and will also contribute to the oversight of attendance through LMS SEQTA.

3.2. Attendance Expectations

- 3.2.1. The Friends' School reasonably expects all students to maintain a full time (100%) attendance record for the School's academic year, therefore maximising their learning opportunities
- 3.2.2. This expectation includes students attending all requirements of the School's weekly timetable and calendar, including but not limited to, subject classes, Tutor Group (Registration), Gatherings and Assemblies.
- 3.2.3. If a student is enrolled in a unit of study or course with a third party provider, as part of their principal course of studies at TFS, the School's attendance requirements apply, as do any additional attendance requirements of the third party provider

- 3.2.4.** The expectation of full attendance at Friends' extends to students attending all classes punctually, as scheduled
- 3.2.5.** If a student falls below 90% attendance (Clemes) or to a level of concern at the discretion of the Head of School (High School and Morris), a meeting between their class teacher (Morris) or Tutor (HS and Clemes), the student, the relevant Head of School and their parent/guardian ensues. The meeting will examine the reason for the absences.
- 3.2.6.** Boarders and international students returning from school holidays are expected to be in residence the day before the commencement of the school term, and in attendance on the first scheduled day of the new school term
- 3.2.7.** Boarders and international students are expected to schedule end of term departures to follow the final dismissal of classes on the last day of each school term or the date of final external examinations for Year 11 and 12 students.

3.3. Reasons for Absences

The School acknowledges that from time-to-time students will be unable to reasonably attend all lessons or full school days for a range of reasons, including but not limited to:

- 3.3.1. illness, injury, dental or other medical/health conditions, including mental health conditions
- 3.3.2. compassionate grounds including but not limited to the serious illness or bereavement of a close family member or friend
- 3.3.3. unexpected events including but not limited to natural disasters and/or political upheaval, which prevent travel, and health emergencies such as the Coronavirus
- 3.3.4. representative activities and competitions including but not limited to sport, the arts, academic pursuits, (at local, State, National or international level)

3.5 Planned Absences

- 3.5.1 Planned absences of no more than one day, which are for health, bereavement or compassionate circumstances require a written (email) explanation from parents to the student's Tutor or Head of House, in advance of the absence or by 9.30am on the day of the absence
- 3.5.2 Where possible, planned absences such as medical appointments should not be scheduled during the school day, and particularly not at times that conflict with significant assessments or School events such as House Carnivals, Exam sessions and the like.
- 3.5.3 All planned absences of more than one day that are not related to medical, health or family bereavements, require the permission of the Principal. Parents are required to make requests in writing at least one week prior to the planned absence
- 3.5.4 It is expected that families will plan family holidays/travel during the 13 weeks of annual school holidays and not during term time
- 3.5.5 Students are responsible for catching up on any work missed and/or liaising with teachers to determine what work can be done during their absence.

- 3.5.6 Teachers are generally not required to provide work for students during planned absences. In exceptional circumstances, where the absence is due to extended health treatment and recovery, or compassionate grounds, at the Head of School's (Morris, High School, Clemes) discretion, teachers may provide work for up to 4 weeks

3.6 Leave of Absence

- 3.6.1 The *School's Conditions of Enrolment* provides for exceptional circumstances where a student may request a period of leave of more than 4 days See *Enrolments Policy*

3.7 Unplanned Absences

- 3.7.1 The *Attendance and Absence Procedures* detail staff responsibilities and processes for recording, following-up and monitoring absences
- 3.7.2 The *Attendance and Absence Procedures* detail parent responsibilities to notify the School of a student's absence by 9.30am on the day of the absence and required follow-up with providing reasons for the absence, including medical certificates

3.8 Frequent Absences

- 3.8.1 Subject teachers, Tutors, Heads of House and the Director of Residence will monitor student absences. Students who have frequent absences, even if due to health reasons, including those that are for only a lesson or part of the school day, which are not due to a health management regime or other reasonable explanation, will be addressed by the Head of House, in the first instance and may involve an Attendance Management Plan, if required. See *Attendance and Absence Procedures*

3.9 Extended Absences

- 3.9.1 Subject teachers, Tutors, Heads of House and the Director of Residence will monitor the reasons for, and supporting medical certificates or communications from parents, for students who have an absence of 5 or more days, or regular absences of several days, to determine if the student requires additional support or there is the need for an intervention. See *Attendance and Absence Procedure*.

3.10 Unexplained Absences

- 3.10.1 All unexplained absences, not supported by medical certificates or parent permissions, and in some cases absences which are excused by parents, will be monitored to determine the need for support and/or an intervention. Such interventions may include a range of support measures and or behaviour management strategies. The purpose being to ensure that the student remains safe and can re-engage with school, as soon as possible. The School's educational psychologists will be involved in supporting students to maintain attendance
- 3.10.2 Some unexplained absences may be a behaviour management issue and a behaviour management plan in line with Due Process procedures will be enacted using Restorative Practice principles.

- 3.10.3 The School is required to report ongoing non-approved absences the Tasmanian Office of Education Registrar in accordance with the Education Act, Tasmania (2016).

3.11 Boarders

- 3.11.1 See 3.2.6 and 3.2.7 for beginning and end of term attendance expectations
- 3.11.2 Exceptions to the expectations in 3.2.6 and 3.2.7 are at the discretion of the Principal, and require a written request directed to the Principal.
- 3.11.3 Absence from School while in residence - Walker House will contact the relevant School Office to inform them of the reason for absence who in turn informs the relevant Head of School. Unexplained absences will be followed up by the Director of Residence when notified by the school.
- 3.11.4 Absence from School and Boarding - Walker House will contact the relevant School Office to inform them of the reason for absence and include communication from the students' parents. This is subsequently forwarded to the relevant Head of School.
- 3.11.5 A boarder may need to return home or be cared for outside of boarding in instances such as, but not limited to, infectious disease, mental illness/health concerns where the wellbeing of the student and other boarders is at risk.

3.12 International Students

- 3.12.1 All international students must comply with the Attendance Policy as outlined in points 3.1 -3.11
- 3.12.2 All international students are required to arrive in Hobart and be in residence at their School approved accommodation at least one day prior to the commencement of each new school term
- 3.12.3 All international students are expected to complete the School term in full and if returning to their home country or travelling otherwise out of Hobart for the holiday period, must complete the last day of the school term before departing the School and Hobart
- 3.12.4 The permission of the Principal is required if for exceptional or compassionate reasons a student will return late for the commencement of any new school term or needs to leave early at the end of any given school term
- 3.12.5 The School will publish term dates 12 months prior to the new school year to enable parents to plan and book travel arrangements well in advance, and meet full attendance requirements
- 3.12.6 Dates of external examinations in Years 11 and 12 are the responsibility of the Office of Tasmanian Accreditation, Standards and Certification (TASC) and the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). These will be made available to students once published.
- 3.12.7 International students in Years 11 or 12 studying the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) must also meet attendance requirements and expectations relevant to those pathways.

3.13 SV500 Attendance Requirements

- 3.13.1 Maintaining 'satisfactory attendance' is a condition of a Student Visa 500. See *SV500 Student Visa Requirements Policy*
- 3.13.2 The K-12 International Student Co-ordinator will ensure the names of all international students are labelled as such on Seqta and report any absences or irregularities in attendance to the appropriate Head of School.
- 3.13.3 Students studying on an SV500 must comply with the *Attendance Policy* as outlined in points 3.1 – 3.12
- 3.13.4 If a student falls below 90% attendance (Clemes) or to a level of concern at the discretion of the Head of School (High School and Morris), a meeting between their class teacher (Morris) or Tutor (HS and Clemes), the student, the relevant Head of School and their parent/guardian ensues. The meeting will examine the reason for the absences.
- 3.13.5 Subject teachers (High School and Clemes) are also required to monitor and report irregularities in student attendance across individual subjects/lessons - reporting these to the relevant Head of School or their delegate through published procedures. For Morris, class teachers are required to oversee class attendance patterns, reporting any irregularities to the Head of School.

3.14 Managing SV500 student absences

- 3.14.1 In addition to the steps outlined in 3.13.4 and 3.13.5, the daily and lesson by lesson management of SV500 students' absences will be monitored by Deputy Heads of School (Morris), The International Student Coordinator (High School) and Dean of Students (Clemes) in accordance with the *SV500 Attendance and Absence Procedures* and supported by the respective campus administrative staff.
- 3.14.2 Should a student have more than 5 full days – do not need to be consecutive over a study period (1 semester) of non-approved absences the Head of School will oversee an intervention in consultation with the Enrolments Office who share oversight of visa requirements. The first stage will include a formal letter to the student's parent/guardian, and host family, detailing the student's absences, the attendance expectations, Visa requirements, concerns and risk to the student's enrolment if they do not meet attendance requirements, and the intervention and support strategy to be offered going forward
- 3.14.3 Should a student's attendance drop below 90% (Clemes) or at the discretion of the Head of School (High School and Morris) in any given point and/or there is no possibility of the student attaining the stipulated attendance requirements of their student visa in the given academic year,, the student and their parents/guardian will be advised that the student has not achieved satisfactory attendance and the School reserves the right to report the student for unsatisfactory attendance. Please see *SV500 Complaints and Internal Appeals Policy and SV500 External Appeals Policy*
- 3.14.4 Should a student's absences exceed 20% of the stipulated School academic program and the reason for the absence is a medically verified (certified

medical certificate required) and prolonged or chronic illness or health condition, or in the case of extenuating and/or compassionate circumstances, and the student is making a genuine effort to meet course requirements in spite of their absences, the Principal may decide to:

- Give the student a probationary period at the Principal's discretion
- Use discretion not to report the student for unsatisfactory attendance, unless their attendance drops further in the given semester until appropriate resolutions are found and all other requirements (such as TASC and IBO) can be met.

- 3.14.5 Should the School decide to report a student for unsatisfactory attendance, the School will simultaneously advise the student and their parent/guardian of the School's *SV500 Complaints and Internal Appeals Policy* and the process for lodging an appeal
- 3.14.6 In the case of any single day (or part there-of) absence where the School is unable to verify the whereabouts of a student with a Parent, Guardian, Homestay Host of the student, or with a third party, then the School will implement the *Critical Incident Management Policy*
- 3.14.7 Various support services, accessed through the School, are utilised when dealing with students who fall below required attendance rates. Professional counselling, along with academic and careers advice are provided, as well as mentoring from other relevant staff members.
- 3.14.8 At all times the School utilises restorative practices to resolve issues of attendance while also fulfilling its obligations to report breaches of attendance requirements as per the ESOS act and the Tasmanian Office of Education Registrar.
- 3.14.9 The daily and lesson by lesson management of SV500 students' absences will be monitored by Deputy Heads of School (Morris), The International Student Coordinator (High School) and Dean of Students (Clemes) in accordance with the *SV500 Attendance and Absence Procedures*
- 3.14.10 Should a student have more than 5 full days – do not need to be consecutive of non-approved absences within a study period (1 semester), Head of House/School will implement an *Attendance Management Plan*. The first stage of this Plan will include a formal letter to the student's parent/guardian, and host family, detailing the student's absences, the attendance expectations, Visa requirements, concerns and risk to the student's enrolment if they do not meet attendance requirements, and the intervention and support strategy to be offered going forward
- 3.14.11 Should a student's attendance drop below 80% in any given semester or year, and/or there is no possibility of the student attaining an 80% attendance in the given semester or year, and the School has previously invoked an *Attendance Management Plan* and *Attendance and Absence Procedures*, the student and their parents/guardian will be advised that the student has not achieved satisfactory attendance and the School will report the student for unsatisfactory attendance. Please see *SV500 Complaints and Internal Appeals Policy* and *SV500 External Appeals Policy*

- 3.14.12 Should a student's absences exceed 20% of lessons and the reason for the absence is a medically verified (certified medical certificate required) and prolonged or chronic illness or health condition, or in the case of extenuating and/or compassionate circumstances, and the student is making a genuine effort to meet course requirements in spite of their absences, the Principal may decide to:
- Give the student a probationary period of one more semester to meet attendance requirements of 80%
 - Not report the student for unsatisfactory attendance, unless their attendance drops below 70% in the given semester
- 3.14.13 Should the School decide to report a student for unsatisfactory attendance, the School will simultaneously advise the student and their parent/guardian of the School's *SV500 Complaints and Internal Appeals Policy* and the process for lodging an appeal
- 3.14.14 In the case of any single day (or part there-of) absence where the School is unable to verify the whereabouts of a student with a Parent, Guardian, Homestay Host of the student, or with a third party, then the School will implement the *Critical Incident Management Policy*

4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 See definitions documents

5 LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 The Education Services for Overseas Student Act 2000 (ESOS Act 2000)
- 5.2 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)
- 5.3 Education Act 2016 Tas 2016
- 5.4 Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tasmania)
- 5.5 TCE Attendance Requirements
- 5.6 IBDP Attendance Requirements

6 ASSOCIATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES, FORMS AND SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

- ❖ **Attendance and Absence Procedures**
- ❖ **SV500 Procedures: Attendance and Absence**
- ❖ Boarding Policy
- ❖ Critical Incident Management Policy
- ❖ Homestay Policy
- ❖ International Student Health Management Policy
- ❖ International Student Welfare Policy
- ❖ SV500 Complaints and Internal Appeals Policy
- ❖ SV500 Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling an Enrolment Policy
- ❖ SV500 External Appeals Policy
- ❖ SV500 Student Visa Requirements Policy

