



SILVER TREE STEINER SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

2025

This policy applies to: Staff and Parents

AUTHORISED BY:	Head of School
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Contents

Policy	3
Background.....	3
Policy.....	3
Related Policies.....	3
School Hours.....	3
Students on School Grounds Before or After School	4
Students Who Are Late to School or Leave School Early.....	4
Attendance Records	4
Absence Explanations.....	4
Managing Unexplained Student Absences.....	4
School-Initiated Non-Attendance.....	4
Holidays Scheduled During Term Time	5
Compulsory Education.....	5
Anti-Discrimination Compliance.....	5
Retention of Records.....	5
Procedures.....	6
Class Attendance Roll	6
Confidentiality and Privacy Requirements.....	6
Removal of Names from the Class Attendance Roll.....	6
Recording Daily Attendance.....	6
Early Identification and Restoration of Attendance.....	6
Attendance Reports.....	7
Addressing School Refusal.....	7
Addressing Persistent Absenteeism	7
Locating Missing Students.....	7
Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown	7
Reporting Missing Students.....	7
References.....	9

Policy

Background

The Education Act requires that students attend school on site, or for school educational programs conducted elsewhere, such as attendance at excursions or school camps, on each day designated a school day in the school's calendar for the given year. The school at which a child is enrolled, and the child's parents or guardians, share a responsibility for the child's attendance at school. Parents or guardians have a legal obligation to send their child to school for each day that the child's school is open for instruction and to provide an acceptable explanation for the child's non-attendance on one or more days. A school's responsibility in relation to a child's attendance ranges from recording and monitoring attendance to managing absenteeism concerns from an educational and duty of care perspective, as well as to ensure compliance with Non-Government School Registration Standards, Public Health requirements, State and Commonwealth funding and associated legislated requirements.

Silver Tree Steiner School (STSS) expects all enrolled, compulsory school-aged children to attend school daily except in case of illness or special circumstances with the prior approval of the Head of School or Education Coordinator. Additionally, students will be asked to participate in school activities out of usual school time, such as festivals and other whole school events. On the few occasions when this is required, students and parents will be given adequate notice and will only be asked out of educational necessity. These occasions are considered compulsory and students will be expected to attend as if a normal school day.

Routine and rhythm are part of the school day at STSS and teachers attempt to bring continuity to lessons from day to day and from week to week. Regular attendance and participation at school is important for all children enrolled at STSS, including those who are not of compulsory school age, to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind or experience difficulties socially or academically.

Policy

Silver Tree Steiner School understands that a strong, consistent level of school attendance is essential for learning and, as such, the school sets high expectations in relation to student attendance and works to develop strong partnerships with parents in which the importance of attendance and punctuality is a shared goal. The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to make clear to students, staff and parents:

- the legal requirement for children of compulsory school age enrolled at Silver Tree Steiner School to attend school every day the school is open for instruction.
- the key practices and procedures Silver Tree Steiner School has in place to support and maintain student attendance and record, monitor and follow up student absences and to report on attendance data to authorities as required.
- where attendance issues are identified for a student, appropriate measures to restore regular attendance will be implemented.

The policy ensures compliance with the School Education Act and anti-discrimination legislation, while promoting student engagement and wellbeing.

Related Policies

- Enrolment Policy
- Records Management Policy

School Hours

Hours of operation are published in the School Handbook and on the School's website.

Students on School Grounds Before or After School

Supervision of students by a Duty Teacher commences at 8.15am. Students who arrive at school prior to 8.15am must remain with and be under the active supervision of their parent.

The School provides supervision of students on school grounds for 15 minutes after the close of school while students are being collected by parents. Once a parent collects their child, they assume responsibility for their children's safety and for their active and direct supervision of them while on school grounds.

Students Who Are Late to School or Leave School Early

Students who arrive after 8.30am must sign in, or be signed in by a parent, via the Student Register in Reception. A reason for being late should be provided and a Late Notice collected to be given to their class teacher. Students who need to leave before the end of the school day must be signed out by a parent or authorised person by means of the Student Register held at Reception.

Attendance Records

The school ensures accurate attendance records are maintained for each student. Records indicate daily attendance or instances of non-attendance and, if known, the reason for absence. These records are kept electronically but can be made available in written form.

Absence Explanations

Parents or guardians must provide an explanation for all student absences. The school requests this explanation by phone (9295 4787), SZapp absentee form, or email: welcome@silvertree.wa.edu.au prior to 9am. Legitimate reasons for Student Absences may include:

- being sick or having an infectious or contagious disease.
- having an unavoidable medical appointment.
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday.
- exceptional or urgent family circumstances e.g. attending a funeral.
- published public transport delays or traffic accidents.

The Head of School may request a medical certificate be provided to explain prolonged absences due to sickness or injury. In such circumstances, the Class Teacher will liaise with the parents and student in relation to any schoolwork that might be provided and completed by the student while recovering at home. A comment relating to extended absence may be included on the student's written report where it is deemed that it has had a serious impact on the student's achievement.

Managing Unexplained Student Absences

An unexplained student absence is treated as a matter of urgency by the school and has the potential to be a significant issue if parents do not provide an explanation for the absence as quickly as possible.

An unexplained absence is followed up by Reception on the day of the absence. Parents of children marked as an unexplained absence on the *Class Roll* are sent an email requesting a reason for the absence. If no attempt is made by parents to contact the school regarding the child's absence, the Receptionist will attempt to contact the parent either by phone or by email to seek clarification. Any forthcoming explanation will be noted in the School Management Database and communicated to the Teacher.

When a student is absent from school without reasonable explanation (contact from the parents within 3 days), the Head of School (or nominee) will take all reasonable steps to contact the student's parents to locate the student and restore attendance.

School-Initiated Non-Attendance

The Head of School may need to temporarily exclude a student from school for health reasons, as outlined in the School Education Act, s.27. This measure helps prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases, following guidance from the Government of WA and the Department of Health.

Students who are on suspension and are excluded from attending school (as per the School's Behaviour Management Policy) will be marked as absent during the period of suspension.

Holidays Scheduled During Term Time

Attending school regularly is crucial for your child's success, as it ensures consistent learning and engagement with the curriculum. While occasional absences due to illness are understandable, taking your child out of school for family holidays can disrupt their education and hinder their progress. To support your child's academic growth, we encourage planning vacations during school holidays. This way, your child can stay on track with their learning and avoid the negative impacts of missed instructional time. Consistent attendance is key to building a strong educational foundation and ensuring your child's success both academically and socially. Any leave organised during term time must have approval by the Head of School; this can be done via email.

Compulsory Education

In Primary School, children are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the year in which they reach the age of 5 years and 6 months. At Silver Tree Steiner School, this is usually in Kindy 5 but will depend on the child's date of birth.

Once a child reaches compulsory school age, they are required to be enrolled and participate in full-time education. Exemptions from compulsory enrollment can be granted by the Director General, under delegation from the Minister [School Education Act, s.11].

Anti-Discrimination Compliance

The school adheres to Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws and the WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984. Students are protected from discrimination and harassment, and those with disabilities are entitled to reasonable adjustments under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 to enable full participation in the educational program.

Retention of Records

It is a legal requirement for each student's enrolment record and attendance records be retained by the school for seven years from the day on which the student's enrolment ceases [School Education Regulations, reg.7]. At the end of that time, or if the school closes earlier, the records are to be transferred to the Director General for permanent retention [reg.8 and 10].

Should the school's registration is cancelled must transfer all its student records, including the SCSA records for each current student, to the Director General [School Education Act, s.167(8)]. This applies even if the school voluntarily surrenders its registration.

Procedures

Class Attendance Roll

Each class teacher must keep a roll book as documentary evidence of a student's presence or otherwise at the time the roll is marked. This should be marked in black ink and initialed by the class teacher at the beginning of each school day. Any special medical information pertaining to individual students should be noted clearly in this book for the attention of relieving teachers. The roll book should be readily accessible.

Confidentiality and Privacy Requirements

School staff are made aware of the legal expectations in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of every student's information, including attendance data. Maintaining privacy over student attendance and associated records is a legal obligation, under the Privacy Act 1981 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which includes observance of the Notifiable Data Breach Scheme (NDBS).

Removal of Names from the Class Attendance Roll

When a student transfers to another school and the enrolment at the new school is confirmed by receipt of a Transfer Note, the student's name may be deleted from the roll. The student's name can also be removed if a Certificate of Exemption has been granted, if enrolment at a registered school interstate or overseas has been advised or if the student has been expelled. To remove a child's name from the class roll, a red line must be ruled through every page of the book on the line pertaining to the child whose name is being removed.

Recording Daily Attendance

- Attendance to be taken by Class Teacher by 8:45am each morning.
- Record of students present/absent to be recorded in Teacher's *Class Attendance Roll* (to remain in each classroom at all times) and *Daily Absentee Slip*.
- *Daily Absentee Slip* to be taken to Reception by a designated student by 9:00am.
- Receptionist to record *Daily Absentee Slip* data in the School Management Database.
- Late arrivals and early departures are to be recorded at Reception, then transferred into the *Teachers Class Attendance Roll* by the Teacher.
- Keep a written record where a student is taken out of School to attend regular appointments approved by the Head of School (e.g. Speech therapy)
- Submit the Class Attendance Roll and all absentee notes to Reception at the end of each school year for archiving as required by governing regulations.

Early Identification and Restoration of Attendance

The school identifies students with attendance issues early and takes appropriate measures to restore regular attendance by:

- Monitoring attendance patterns
- Following up on unexplained absences
- Engaging with families to address attendance concerns
- Developing strategies to prevent poor attendance and provide necessary support

If a student displays a pattern of lateness or early departure, or persistent absence, parents will be informally contacted to determine if there any issues happening within the household that might be contributing to attendance issues.

Engagement strategies will be considered for students who are absent from school for 10 days or more in a term.

Attendance Reports

The Head of School will report to the Board of Governors on school attendance once every semester. Data in this attendance report will include:

- whole school attendance (percentage)
- class attendance (percentage)

The attendance report will also include students who have been identified early with attendance issues and what appropriate measures have been implemented to restore regular attendance.

Addressing School Refusal

If a student is refusing to attend school, it is crucial for parents or guardians to seek support from the school as soon as possible. School refusal can stem from various issues, including emotional or psychological factors, and can significantly impact a student's education and wellbeing. Parents are encouraged to communicate openly with Class Teachers, the Education Coordinator or Head of School and seek assistance from school counsellors, support staff, and relevant external agencies to address the underlying causes of school refusal and develop effective strategies to encourage regular attendance.

Addressing Persistent Absenteeism

For students with persistent absenteeism, the school will:

- Continue to include them on the school roll
- Record all instances of non-attendance
- Utilise resources from the school, AISWA, and relevant interagency partners to locate and engage the student
- Only remove students from the roll upon receiving a transfer note or other valid reason

Locating Missing Students

To locate missing students, the school will use the following strategies:

- Written communication with parents (excluding social media)
- Telephone calls to parents
- Home visits
- Contacting emergency contacts
- Checking with previous schools
- Querying relatives and peers
- Contacting relevant agencies (e.g., Department of Communities)
- Consulting the Student Engagement/Tracking Coordinator and completing the SWU Request Form if the student has been absent for 15 school days

Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown

The school will follow the Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown Guidelines and Procedures (2018) before placing student details on the Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown list. Strategies to restore attendance will be considered. A student is deemed 'missing' if they cannot be located, their parent/guardian cannot be contacted, and the school has not received information about the student being educated elsewhere.

Reporting Missing Students

A student is considered 'missing' when:

- The student cannot be located
- The parent/guardian cannot be contacted
- The school has not received information about the student being educated elsewhere

STSS Attendance Policy 2025

The Head of School must report the missing student to the Student Engagement/Tracking Coordinator within 15 school days of the student's last attendance date. The student will remain on the roll until confirmation is received from Student Tracking to remove them.

References

- Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown Guidelines and Procedures (2018)
Available: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/dl/qr3r8gn>
- School Education Act 1999
Available:
https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_878_homepage.html
- Guide to the registration standards and other requirements for non-government schools, NGRS 2024
Available: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/dl/8zk94nr>

Version Management

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1		Created	
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