

## ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Approving authority</b>	Executive Management Team
<b>Purpose</b>	This policy and procedure has been developed to meet the requirements of the National Code 2018 Standard 8, Section 19 of the ESOS Act and VRQA's Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	International Student Coordinator
<b>Associated documents</b>	Student Support and Services Policy and Procedure Refusal, Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Student Enrolment Policy and Procedure Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure Student Support and Services Policy and Procedure Records Management Policy and Procedure VCAA Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

### 1. RATIONALE

This policy has been developed to meet the requirements of the National Code 2018 Standard 8 and other requirements for school registration, which requires that Ozford College (the College) monitors student's compliance with visa conditions relating to attendance and are proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements. The College has an obligation to report international students who have breached the attendance requirements under Section 19 of the ESOS Act.

This policy ensures that the College has processes to:

- check and record the daily attendance of all students
- records any unexplained absences to ensure:
  - the care, safety and welfare of students
  - continuity of learning.
- monitor attendance twice daily and identify absences from school or class
- identify the person(s) with responsibility for monitoring daily attendance
- follow up unexplained absences on the day of a student's absence
- notify the family (parents, guardians or carers) of unsatisfactory attendance
- maintain current contact details for the family (parents, guardians or carers)
- Accurately record attendance on student files.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and students.

### 3. POLICY

#### Attendance requirements

- 3.1 All students are informed before they commence the course of the requirements to achieve satisfactory attendance in each study period, a semester.
- 3.2 Students are expected to attend all classes on time as scheduled on the timetable. Students must be at College from the first class on the first day until the last class on the last day of each term. Leaving early and returning late from holidays is not permitted except in compelling and compassionate circumstances.
- 3.3 To achieve satisfactory attendance and VCAA attendance requirements, students are required to attend 80% or more of their classes in every study period (a semester). It is also a visa requirement for international students to satisfy the requirements of the course

enrolment, course level, course progress and course attendance (ie. VCAA course requirements).

- 3.4 Unsatisfactory attendance is defined as failure by a student to achieve more than 80% attendance for any study period (a semester).

## **Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

- 3.5 The College's teaching staff record student attendance for all students during every class using the Compass system whether in face-to-face delivery or online.
- 3.6 The student attendance records are used by the College to monitor daily attendance, identify and follow up with absences, and calculate attendance rates.
- 3.7 All students or the family (parents/guardians/carer) are required to inform the College on the same day, either by email or phone call, if students are late/unable to attend any classes. Documentary evidence must be provided to the College as soon as practicable to verify the reasons of absence. If the student fails to provide valid reasons and documentary evidence, a follow-up meeting with students and the family (parents/guardians/carer) may be required. For students living in homestay arrangements, carers may also be advised.

## **Students at risk of breaching attendance requirements**

- 3.8 The College implements the following intervention strategies when a student misses more than five consecutive days without contacting the College.
- The student will be contacted via phone/email/Zoom message to meet with the International Student Coordinator either in person or via Zoom. The intent of contacting the students is to find out why they have been absent and to see what support the College may be able to offer the overseas student. For example, the overseas student's absence may not be due to medical reasons, but rather to homesickness or social issues – matters which may be addressed through student support services
  - The discussion will include providing support through targeted strategies such as:
    - Students may need to be reminded of the attendance requirements and the implications for their student visa.
    - Students may need some time management strategies such as setting an alarm to wake them early enough to attend class.
    - Students may need be provided with support from student services if the cause is homesickness or social issues.

Records of all contact and counselling made with the student will be kept in the Student Management System.

- 3.9 If a student's attendance rate falls below 90%, the first warning letter will be issued to the student, who will receive counselling from the HS Coordinator and the Student Welfare Officer. The student's family (parents/guardians/carer) will be notified. For students living in homestay arrangements, homestay hosts may also be advised.
- 3.10 When a student's attendance rate falls below 80% for the study period, a student is deemed to have failed to meet satisfactory attendance requirement.

## **Reporting students for breaching attendance requirements**

- 3.11 A letter stating the College's intention to report the students' unsatisfactory attendance on PRISMS and to cancel the student's enrolment will be issued. The letter will:

- notify the student that the College intends to report the overseas student for unsatisfactory course progress or unsatisfactory course attendance
  - informs the overseas student of the reasons for the intention to report
  - informs the student that he or she has the right to access the internal and external Complaints and Appeals process and that the student has 20 working days in which to do so.
- 3.12 The student's family (parents/guardian/carer) will be notified of the intention to report.
- 3.13 The College may only decide not to cancel the student's enrolment and report a student for breaching the 80% attendance requirement when:
- The student produces documentary evidence that clearly demonstrates that compassionate and compelling circumstances apply, and;
  - The student is attending at least 70% of the scheduled course contact hours for the course, and;
  - The decision is consistent with the College's documented procedures.
- 3.14 'Compassionate or compelling' circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the overseas student and which have an impact upon the overseas student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:
- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the overseas student was unable to attend classes
  - bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
  - major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies; or
  - a traumatic experience, which could include: involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports)
  - where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit, or the overseas student has failed a prerequisite unit and therefore faces a shortage of relevant units for which they are eligible to enrol.
- 3.15 The College will only report unsatisfactory course attendance in PRISMS in accordance with section 19(2) of the ESOS Act if:
- the internal and external complaints processes have been completed and the decision or recommendation supports the College, or
  - the student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 20 working day period, or
  - the student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process, or
  - the student withdraws from the internal or external appeals processes by notifying the College in writing.
- 3.16 The College will report the change to the overseas student's enrolment under section 19 of the ESOS Act as set out in the Refusal, Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Student Enrolment Policy and Procedure.

## 4. PROCEDURES

### Record and Monitor Attendance

- 4.1 Students are informed of the attendance requirement during orientation.

- 4.2 Student attendance is recorded every lesson. Teachers mark the rolls on the attendance tracking system within the first 30 minutes of every lesson.
- 4.3 Students who arrive at the college later than class scheduled start time are required to report to Front Desk upon arrival to obtain a late pass before entering the classrooms. The late pass states a student's arrival time and the reason for lateness, which will be recorded on the Compass attendance tracking system.
- 4.4 The International Student Coordinator checks the attendance tracking system each day to identify absent students and contact students with unexplained absences on the day of a student's absence.

### **Identify, Offer Support to At Risk Students and Notify the Family**

- 4.5 If a student is absent for 3 consecutive days, the student will be contacted via phone/email/Zoom message to attend an attendance meeting. During the meeting, students will be asked to explain reasons of absence. Reasons of absence and documentary evidence will be analysed to ascertain if students provide acceptable reasons/evidences for absences. Students will be counselled on strategies to improve attendance and be reminded of the attendance requirements.
- 4.6 Records of all contact and counselling made with the student will be kept on Compass Student Management Systems.
- 4.7 All documentary evidence for absences will be collected. If students or the family (parents /guardian/carer) is unable to provide evidence to support student absence, a meeting will be organised to meet with student/ parents/ guardian to ensure they fully understand the requirement to provide evidence to support absences.
- 4.8 Student attendance rates are calculated automatically by the student management system. If a student's projected attendance drops below 95%, a warning letter will be issued and the student will be contacted and asked to attend an interview with the International Student Coordinator. The family (parents/guardian/carer) of students will be notified and invited to the interview.
- 4.9 During the interview, the student will be counselled on strategies to improve attendance. The family (parents/guardian/carer) will be invited to support the intervention strategies. All records of all contact and counselling made with students and families are kept in the Student Management System.
- 4.10 The International Student Coordinator closely monitors students who have received the first warning letter and checks their attendance weekly. The students will be advised that it is still possible for them to meet the attendance requirements if they continue to attend ALL classes for the rest of their enrolments.

### **Student Appeal and Report Breach of Attendance Requirement**

- 4.11 Once the students' projected attendance falls below 80% for a semester, it means that the students will not have the capacity to reach 80% actual attendance even if they continue to attend ALL classes for the rest of the semester. The student is officially breaching the attendance requirement. A final letter of intention to report will be issued. The family (carer/parents of students) will be contacted and informed of the contents of the letter, in writing or by a phone call.

- 4.12 Upon receiving the final letter, the student is required to apply for an internal appeal within 20 working days using the Students Complaints and Appeal Policy and Procedure.
- 4.13 The College may only decide not to cancel a student's enrolment and report a student for breaching the 80% attendance requirement when:
- Documentary evidence is supplied, clearly demonstrating that compassionate and compelling circumstances apply; AND
  - The decision is consistent with this documented attendance policies and procedures; and
  - The student is attending at least 70% of the scheduled course contact hours
- 4.14 The College will report unsatisfactory course attendance in PRISMS in accordance with section 19(2) of the ESOS Act if:
- the internal and external complaints processes have been completed and the decision or recommendation supports the College, or
  - the student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 20 working day period, or
  - the student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process, or
  - the student withdraws from the internal or external appeals processes by notifying the College in writing.

#### **Cancellation of enrolment.**

- 4.15 The Refusal, Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Student Enrolment Policy and Procedure sets out the cancellation of enrolment process.

#### **5. Feedback**

Feedback or comments on this policy and procedure is welcomed by the listed responsible officer.