

# ISP Attendance Policy

## **Purpose**

To outline the Department of Education and Training (DET), International Education Division (IED) policy on school attendance for international students enrolled in the International Student Program (ISP). This policy describes how the ISP attendance requirements for an international student differs from the standard DET requirements outlined in the [School Policy \(SPAG\) - Attendance Policy](#).

This policy aims to ensure that DET (IED), schools and students comply with DET procedures, where applicable, as well as Commonwealth law and student visa conditions.

This policy should be read by DET (IED), schools, and students (including the student's parent) who are enrolled in the ISP.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to **international students** who are:

- enrolled in the primary course, secondary course, or the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary Course (VCASS) of the ISP
- the primary holders of a **subclass 500 Student - Schools sector visa**.

## **Policy**

### **Satisfactory attendance requirements**

**Students enrolled in an ISP course are required to attend school on every school day.**

All school students (both domestic and international students) have their attendance recorded every school day in accordance with DET requirements; attendance is recorded twice per day for the primary course and in every class in the secondary and VCASS courses. Please refer to the [School Policy \(SPAG\) - Attendance Policy](#) for further information.

### **Recording and calculation of attendance**

Schools regularly monitor student attendance and are proactive in identifying, notifying and assisting students who are at risk of not meeting attendance requirements.

Schools record student attendance in CASES21 in accordance with the DET [School Policy \(SPAG\) - Attendance Policy](#); absences for both international students are treated the same as domestic students.

However, the threshold for intervention, attendance calculation and the consequence for breaching school attendance requirements are different for students enrolled in an ISP course.

This is because:

- maintaining satisfactory attendance is a student visa condition (8202)
- Commonwealth law requires DET (IED) to be proactive in notifying and counselling students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements
- DET (IED) is required by law to report students who have breached attendance requirements.

The school attendance for students is calculated using CASES21 on a term basis rather than 'year to date'. Attendance percentages are 'counted down', meaning that students start at 100% attendance at the beginning of the term, which then reduces for every absence. In addition to the DET School Attendance Policy (SPAG) referenced previously, please refer to the [CASES21 absence code list](#) for further information on what counts towards a student absence (PLEASE NOTE: most school-approved absences - such as absences due to illness - are counted as an absence in CASES21, including for international students).

### **Monitoring, early intervention and support, and reporting**

Schools must notify students, their parents, and DET (IED) if students are 'at-risk' (as defined in the table below) of not meeting attendance requirements. It is a condition of the student's visa to achieve satisfactory attendance for the course. The minimum attendance to achieve satisfactory attendance is 80% of scheduled course hours.

Please note that students enrolled in the secondary or VCASS courses and are completing Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) units may be subjected to higher attendance requirements in order to achieve satisfactory progress in each unit. Please refer to the [VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook 2019](#) for further information.

Schools are responsible for monitoring attendance of students who conduct part of their studies with another DET-approved provider. Please refer to the [ISP Modes of Study Policy](#) for further information.

## **Intervention and support**

Schools **must** develop and implement strategies to:

- inform students and parents of attendance requirements

- support students to attend school every school day
- assist students who are at risk of not meeting attendance requirements.

Schools must ensure that a student's attendance does not fall below 80% of scheduled contact hours (generally ten full day's absence, or equivalent) in any school term.

Attendance category	Attendance percentage	Description of school and DET (IED) action
Early intervention	<90%	When a student's attendance is 90% or lower, schools develop, implement and document student-specific and circumstance-specific <b>early intervention strategies</b> to improve the student's attendance. This may include a recommendation to temporarily suspend the student's enrolment in accordance with the <a href="#">ISP Student-Initiated Deferrals, Suspensions and Cancellations Policy</a> . When enrolment is temporarily suspended, students are not marked as absent; recording of attendance recommences when the student resumes study at school.
At-risk	<85%	When a student's attendance is 85% or lower, the student is identified as being ' <b>at-risk</b> ' of unsatisfactory attendance. Students are also identified as being at risk of not meeting their attendance requirements if they have been absent from school <u>for more than five consecutive days without approval</u> . Schools will place the student on a <b>compliance contract</b> which contains appropriate intervention strategies. The compliance contract will have a maximum review period of 4 weeks. Compliance contracts will be translated, if necessary, and are still valid even if the student and/or parent does not sign the contract. Schools provide compliance, intervention strategies, and other relevant supporting evidence to DET (IED); DET (IED) staff may provide advice on the compliance contract and intervention strategy implemented in order to improve the effectiveness of the support provided. Please refer to the <a href="#">ISP Attendance Procedure</a> for the process to be followed by schools and DET (IED).
Unsatisfactory attendance	<80%	DET (IED) initiated reporting process, as described in the following section.

Schools must use the ISP Course Progress, Attendance and Behaviour Compliance Pack ([checklist template](#), [meeting template](#), [Compliance Contract Template](#)) to support record keeping and compliance requirements.

Records of interventions (for example, phone calls and meetings) are retained on the school's student file and in DET (IED)'s Student Document Manager (SDM) in accordance with the [ISP Record Keeping Procedural Guidelines](#).

A student may apply for leave from school by initiating a temporarily suspending their enrolment in the course. DET (IED) only approves temporary suspensions of enrolment on compassionate or compelling circumstances, as described in the [ISP Student-Initiated Deferrals, Suspensions and Cancellations Policy](#). When enrolment is temporarily suspended, absence from school is not included in attendance monitoring calculations. Schools are also proactive in initiating a temporary suspension of enrolment where (compassionate or compelling) circumstances exist and the student is at risk of breaching the 80% minimum attendance requirement. An exemption from compulsory schooling or compulsory participation due to illness is not required.

### Reporting

DET (IED) is required to report students who have not achieved satisfactory attendance, as required by Commonwealth law.

If a student breaches the minimum 80% attendance requirement in a school term, DET (IED) will report a student to the Commonwealth Government, unless **both** of the following apply:

- the student is still attending at least 70% of the scheduled course contact hours in any school term, and
- the student provides evidence demonstrating that compassionate or compelling circumstances apply.

In making a decision to not report the student for unsatisfactory attendance due to compassionate or compelling circumstances, DET (IED) will also consider if it is in the best interests of the student to continue the course.

When a student's attendance falls below 80%, DET (IED) will proceed with the reporting process as described in the [ISP Attendance Procedure](#), which may result in the student being reported to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and their student visa being cancelled, even if the student subsequently withdraws from the course.

Students can appeal decisions in relation to attendance in accordance with the [ISP Complaints and Appeals Policy](#). This includes the ability to provide DET (IED) evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances as to why the student should not be reported to the DHA.

If an under 18 year old student is reported to the Commonwealth Government for breaching attendance requirements, the school must maintain welfare arrangements in accordance with the [ISP Accommodation and Welfare Policy](#).

### **Legislation**

- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cth)
- *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Student 2018* (Cth)
- *Migration Regulations 1994* (Cth)

### **Associated Documents**

- [ISP Attendance Procedure](#)
- [ISP Accommodation and Welfare Policy](#)
- [ISP Course Progress, Attendance, and Behaviour - checklist template](#)
- [ISP Course Progress, Attendance, and Behaviour - meeting template](#)
- [ISP Compliance Contract Template](#)
- [ISP Complaints and Appeals Policy](#)
- [ISP Record Keeping Procedural Guidelines](#)
- [ISP Student-Initiated Deferrals, Suspensions and Cancellations Policy](#)
- [ISP Modes of Study Policy](#)
- [School Policy \(SPAG\) - Attendance Policy](#)
- [School Policy \(SPAG\) - Attendance Exemptions](#)
- [School Policy \(SPAG\) - Manage and Record Attendance School Policy](#)
- [School Policy \(SPAG\) - Re-engagement Strategies](#)
- [School Policy \(SPAG\) - School Enrolment Guidelines](#)
- [School Attendance Portal](#)

### **Definitions**

- **Compassionate circumstances** refers to circumstances that are not in the student's control or created by the student and adversely impact on student welfare or attendance (for example, illness, bereavement or traumatic events may qualify).
- **Compelling circumstances** are circumstances which in the opinion of DET (IED) are in the student's best interests, as assessed on a case by case basis.
- **CASES21** is an online platform used by all Victorian government schools to record and manage student data (including attendance data). Please refer to Appendix 1 in the [ISP Record Keeping Procedural Guidelines](#) for further information.
- The **National Code 2018** refers to the *National Code of Practice for Provider of Education and Training to Overseas Student 2018* (Cth).
- **Parent** refers to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of an international student.
- **Scheduled contact hours** refers to course hours that the student has been scheduled to attend, which may or may not equate to the total school hours. For example, if a school has 6 periods in a day but the student only has 4 periods of course contact per day then the student will have attended all scheduled course hours if they attend the 4 periods (the 2 remaining school periods will not count towards the student's absences).

### **Policy Contact Officer**

For further information, please contact the DET (IED) International Student Support Team on [international@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:international@edumail.vic.gov.au) or +61 3 7022 1000.

Policy Maintenance Officer

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**Authorised**

Executive Director, International Education Division

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**Review frequency:** This policy will be reviewed at minimum of every 24 months or when any changes arise impacting its currency, including legislative or regulation change.