



Department of **Education**



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
OFFICE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN

Guidelines and procedures

A cross sectoral initiative between the Department of Education Western Australia, the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia and Catholic Education Western Australia, designed to support the needs of transient and mobile students.

Background

The guidelines and procedures outlined in this document apply to all Western Australian schools.

The Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown List (SWU) is produced by the Department of Education (the Department) and details students who have been reported as missing from:

- all schools (public, Catholic and independent)
- Home Education
- Participation
- Notice of Arrangement
- Exemptions.

A student can be regarded as missing when they cannot be located and their parent/s cannot be contacted and the school has not received advice that the student is being educated elsewhere.

Definition

The term 'parent/s' is used in this document in accordance with the *School Education Act 1999*; "parent in relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child, or for the day to day care, welfare and development of the child".

The Students Whose Whereabouts are Unknown List

Over the course of the school year Student Tracking receives requests to place students considered missing on the SWU.

Before listing these students on SWU, Student Tracking searches available databases to see if a new enrolment record for the student has been created. If no new enrolment record is found the student is placed on the SWU List.

Student Tracking generates the SWU List monthly and distributes it to nominated agency representatives from the:

- Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia
- Catholic Education Western Australia
- Department of Education:
 - Regional Offices
 - School Curriculum and Standards Authority
 - Education Services
- Department of Communities: Child Protection and Family Support
- Department of Justice.

The SWU List details:

- student's name
- student's date of birth
- student's gender
- student's year level
- sector missing from
- last school enrolled
- last date of attendance
- missing status
- whether the student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- additional safety and wellbeing concerns.

Guidelines

Non-attending students

Where a student is not attending school and either their location is known or contact with the student's parent/s is still possible they are not regarded as 'missing'. A non-attending student includes one whose:

- location is known but they are not actively engaged in an education program; and
- contact is still possible with themselves or their parent/s but they are not engaged in an education program.

Where a student discontinues attending school and a notice of transfer (or letter of withdrawal from parent/s) is not received, the school is to take all reasonable steps to locate the student and restore attendance by using school, Education Regional Office (public schools) and interagency resources such as Department of Communities: Child Protection and Family Support and the Department of Justice.

The Act requires that non-attending students remain on the current roll of the school's enrolment register and have their non-attendance recorded. These students should not be moved to the former roll.

Missing students

A student can be regarded as 'missing' when they cannot be located and their parent/s cannot be contacted (using the strategies listed below) and the school has not received advice that the student is being educated elsewhere.

The *SWU Request Form* provided as Schedule 1, should be completed for missing students within 15 school days of their last date of attendance.

A missing student is to remain on the current roll of the school's enrolment register until confirmation is received from Student Tracking to move the student to the former roll.

Schools are encouraged to use the following strategies in attempts to locate missing students:

- written communication to parent/s (social media is not an appropriate medium)
- telephone parent/s
- conduct a home visit
- telephone emergency contacts
- check previous school
- query relatives and peers attending the school
- contact relevant agencies (if involved) e.g. Department of Communities: Child Protection and Family Support
- consultation with staff at the Education Regional Office (public schools)
- consultation with Student Tracking Coordinator (STC).

Reporting a missing student

The *SWU Request Form* (Attachment 1) should be completed and emailed to the STC.

The STC will process the request and inform the school by email within 15 school days if the student has enrolled elsewhere (if at a public school) or is to be placed on the SWU List.

Public schools are advised to consult with Education Regional Office staff before submitting a SWU request as these staff may know the student's whereabouts through their connections with other agencies.

New school location advice

When a missing student is located, either by the Student Tracking System (STS) or enquiries made by the STC, a *New School Location Advice* email will be sent to:

- the school which reported the student as missing;
- the principal of the school where the student is enrolled; and
- the appropriate Education Regional Office (public schools).

A *New School Location Advice* email is also sent to the above parties when a student listed on the SWU enrolls in another public school. In this case the email notifies the new school that the student may not have attended school for some time and serves as reminder to contact the former school for student records to assist with educational planning.

Moving a student to the former roll

Section 21 of the Act outlines the circumstances by which a student may be removed from the enrolment register.

Where enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the student have not been successful, the STC will notify the principal (or delegate) via an entry notification email to move the student to the former roll as of the students' last date of attendance.

Under the provisions of section 21 of the Act:

- (1) The principal is not to remove a student's name from the register unless:
 - (a) the principal believes on reasonable grounds that the child has enrolled in another school in this State or elsewhere; or
 - (b) the principal believes on reasonable grounds that the child is no longer resident in this State; or
 - (c) an exemption is granted under section 11 in respect of the child; or
 - (d) a parent of the child is registered under section 48 as the child's home educator; or
 - (e) the enrolment is cancelled under section 20 or 83; or
 - (f) the Minister has authorised the removal on the ground that inquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child have not been successful.
- (2) In the case of children enrolled at non-government schools, the Minister may by instrument delegate the power of authorisation conferred by subsection (1)(f) to the chief executive officer referred to in section 151.
- (3) A person who exercises a power of authorisation conferred by subsection (1)(f) in relation to a particular child is to take reasonably practicable steps to establish the child's whereabouts in each year of the child's compulsory education period.

Guidance

Reasonable grounds for the above instances are:

- transfer notes, email from another school (interstate or intrastate);
- verbal confirmation from parent/s that student is leaving the state, letter or electronic notification from parent, interstate transfer note;
- exemption notification from either Education Regional Office or Independent Public School Principal
- home education notification from Education Regional Office;
- principal's application of Section 20; Director General's application of Section 83; and
- email confirmation from Student Tracking.

The date a student is removed from the current enrolment register should be recorded as the date the student last attended the school. Details of the reason for removing the student from the current enrolment register should be recorded in the student's file and in the school's student database in accordance with section 21 of the School Education Act (1999).

Primary schools should not remove Year 6 students from the current enrolment register until a notice of transfer has been received from the secondary school. Public primary schools should contact their Education Regional Office by Week 3, Term 1 of the new school year with any concerns relating to these students.

Notice of transfer

All Western Australian schools are required to notify the former principal of a student's transfer as per Regulation 11 of the *School Education Regulations 2000*. Transfer notes are the recommended form for such communication.

A notification of transfer should be completed and sent to the student's former principal within five school days of the student's new enrolment in a public school. It is highly recommended that Catholic and independent schools notify the student's former school principal within this five school day period as well.

It is important that Student Tracking is informed if a school receives a notice of transfer for a student previously reported as missing so they can be removed from the SWU List.

Notices of transfer for students moving between education sectors should also be reported to the Student Tracking to enable removal from the SWU List.

Procedures

Requesting to place a student on the SWU List

If a student has been absent from school for three days without a reasonable explanation from their parent/s all steps listed under the Missing Students section of this document should be utilised to locate the student and restore their attendance.

Once all attempts to locate or contact a student have been conducted, please contact Student Tracking Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au for the latest SWU request form and complete all details including:

- school name and code
- student's surname
- student's first name
- student's date of birth
- student's gender
- student's School Curriculum and Standards Authority ID (secondary students only)
- whether the student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- student's year level
- student's date of enrolment
- student's last date of attendance
- student's parent/s name
- student's parent/s address and contact number
- attempts made to locate student
- consultation with Education Regional Office (public schools)
- name of Education Regional Office (public schools)
- consultation with STC
- actions taken to locate the student
- name of referred person (this is the name of the person submitting the request)
- principal's approval
- principal's name
- school email address (this is where the confirmation email will be sent)
- date of request
- any additional safety and wellbeing concerns (eg. child protection or mental health concerns).

Email the completed SWU request form to STC at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au

Guidance

It is important to include information regarding concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a student. This information should include any referrals made to other government departments.

On receiving the SWU request form, Student Tracking will enter the information into the STS database. Once the STS database is checked, Student Tracking will confirm via email the actions required.

If the student cannot be located and is endorsed as missing, an entry notification email will be sent to the requesting school notifying them to transfer the student to their former roll. If the student is located, a new school location advice email will be sent to the requesting school, the Education Regional Office (public schools) and the new school where the student has enrolled.

For further information please contact Student Tracking on (08) 9402 6449 or email at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au



ATTACHMENT 1 REQUEST TO PLACE A STUDENT ONTO THE STUDENTS WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (SWU) LIST

- Please complete all *required information.
- It is recommended that schools consult with relevant Education Regional Office staff or the Student Tracking Coordinator.
- This Request form, along with the SWU Guidelines and Flowchart, are available on the SWU website by clicking [here](#).
- For additional enquiries please contact Student Tracking at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au or on (08) 9402 6449.

Please submit this form by clicking on the *Submit* buttons either at the beginning or end of this form or by emailing this completed form to the Student Tracking at Student.Tracking@education.wa.edu.au

Submit

Student Information									
*School name				School code					
*Student surname			*First name			Preferred name			
*Date of Birth	DD/MM/YY	*Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	School Curriculum and Standards Authority ID			
*Year level		Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	*Date of enrolment	DD/MM/YY	*Last date of attendance	DD/MM/YY	
*Parent/Carer name:									
Parent/Carer Address		Parent/Carer Contact number							
Attempts made to locate student									
Written communication <input type="checkbox"/>		Emergency telephone numbers contacted <input type="checkbox"/>			Relatives contacted <input type="checkbox"/>				
Phone calls home <input type="checkbox"/>		Transfer documentation checked <input type="checkbox"/>			Peer group queried <input type="checkbox"/>				
Home visit <input type="checkbox"/>		Previous school information checked <input type="checkbox"/>			Relevant agencies (if involved) contacted <input type="checkbox"/>				
Consulted with Education Regional Office : Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Region: _____ Name of Education Regional Officer authorising this request (Government schools). _____						Consulted with Student Tracking Coordinator: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Action taken to locate student									
Please record enquiries already made and any anecdotal information which may assist in the location of this student.									

Student safety and wellbeing concerns	
*Did you have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of this student? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, was a referral made in regard to these concerns? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Date/s of referral: DD/MM/YY	
Referring agency:	
Comments:	

School Information

Referring officer (name of person entering this request):			
Principal's approval	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Principal's name	
School email address: (confirmation of SWU will be emailed to this address)			
Date of request	DD/MM/YY		

Submit