



## Compulsory School Age and Education Age Guidelines

Compulsory school age and education age legislation means that all young people aged from 6 - 16 years of age must be enrolled in and attend a primary or secondary school. Students aged 16 - 17 years are to be enrolled in and to participate in an 'approved learning program'.

The guidelines also apply to specific requirements for seeking exemptions from school.

### Compulsory School Age Students: 6 - 16 Years

Students of government and non government schools are required to seek exemption from school for the following reasons:

- Family holidays (**local**) – one week or more;
- Family holidays (**overseas and interstate**) – inclusive of weekends and school holidays;
- Interstate and Overseas Sporting commitments – inclusive of weekends and school holidays;
- Individual personal circumstances (i.e. carer responsibilities or family circumstances requiring a short term absence);
- Long term illness (longer than a month).

Under the Education Act 1972, the Minister is able to grant exemptions from enrolment and/or attendance for children of compulsory school age.

The Minister has delegated this power to Principals of all government and registered non-government schools for exemptions **of up to twelve months** for all family holidays, sporting and short term individual personal circumstances for children of compulsory school age in their respective schools.

For family holidays, sporting, Individual personal circumstances and long term illnesses that are **longer than twelve months**, exemptions will continue to be delegated to the Minister's Delegate, the Department of Education & Children's Services, for approval.

What this means to you as a parent:

#### *Absences approved and ED175 forms completed by Head of College*

- **Family holidays (local)**

Parents should write/email the College addressed to either the Head of College/Tutor Teacher/YLM

E: [reception@woodcroft.sa.edu.au](mailto:reception@woodcroft.sa.edu.au) or E: [absentees@woodcroft.sa.edu.au](mailto:absentees@woodcroft.sa.edu.au)

to advise of plans and dates for leave requested. This is for all short term family holiday local leave. The Head of College will complete and approve an ED175 form internally and details are recorded in student absentee records.

*Note: No exemption number is applied.*

#### *Absences with ED175 form completed by Parent and approved by Head of College*

- **Family holidays (overseas and interstate)** – inclusive of weekends and school holidays;
- **Interstate and Overseas Sporting commitments** – inclusive of weekends and school holidays;
- **Individual personal circumstances** (i.e. carer responsibilities or family circumstances requiring a short term absence);



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- **Long term illness (longer than a month)**

Parents should write/email the Head of College (E: reception@woodcroft.sa.edu.au) to advise of plans and dates for leave requested. This is for all overseas and interstate family holiday and sporting leave. A ED175 form will be emailed home for family to complete and sign Section 1. The Head of College then approves the leave on the return of the ED175 form and an exemption number is applied to the student's leave. Details are recorded in student absentee records.

*Note: An exemption number is applied and recorded for each student.*

- **Illnesses (short term)**

Normal notification is through the absentee offices (E: absentees@woodcroft.sa.edu.au)

*Note: sick certificates are required for student submissions of work and if requested.*

**Absences over twelve months:**

- **Individual personal circumstances**

Parents should write a letter applying for exemption to the Head of College and advise of circumstances and dates.

The Head of College will forward request through to DECD for approval of leave and exemption numbers.

- **Long term illness (longer than twelve months)**

Parents should advise the Head of College in writing and supply medical certificates to support request for exemption. The exemption from school request is then forwarded to DECDS for approval of leave and exemption numbers.

### **Compulsory Education Age Students: 16 - 17 Years**

In 2008, parents and students (in Years 9-13) were advised of the requirements under the compulsory education age via letters and other documents from the Minister for Education and Children's Services.

16 year olds must be enrolled in a school or other 'approved learning program' until they achieve a qualification, obtain an exemption, or until they turn 17 years of age. The legislation is in response to research which shows that young people who leave school too early are often unemployed by their 20s and then find it difficult to find work and careers of their choice.

***What this means to you as a parent:***

While the school leaving age will remain at 16 under the new legislation, all 16 years olds must be in full-time education or training by participating in an Approved Learning Program until they achieve a qualification or turn 17. Under the new law, these young people are defined as 'children of compulsory education age'.

'Approved Learning Programs' include:

- traditional secondary school education, including studying towards the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), International Baccalaureate (IB), or other approved Secondary Certificates e.g. Waldorf Schools;
- Technical and Further Education (TAFE) courses or accredited courses offered by Registered Training Organisations;
- apprenticeships or traineeships;
- university degrees, diplomas or other university award courses, and
- other programs authorised by the Minister of Education, or
- any combination of the above.

Those students who have gained employment which would prevent them from participating fully in education will need to seek an *exemption*. However, a 16 year old can have a part-time job under the new legislation provided it does not affect their ability to take part in their 'approved learning program'.

16 year olds who have already completed the SACE or an equivalent qualification such as IB or TAFE certification will not be required to participate in an 'approved learning program', nor will they be required to gain an exemption.

- Exemptions from enrolment and/or participation for young people of compulsory education age and compulsory school age for a period of up to one month will be delegated to Principals of all government and non-government schools. This is a new delegation to Principals of Independent schools.
- Exemptions from enrolment and/or participation for young people of compulsory school age (up to 16 years) for a period of more than one month will continue to be delegated to the Minister's Delegate, DECS.
- Exemptions from enrolment and/or participation for young people of compulsory education age (16-17 years) of more than one month and up to twelve months will be approved by the Executive Director, AISSA as the Minister's Central Delegate for Independent school.