Open Access College enrolment policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the creating, updating and deleting operational policies page.

Overview

This policy outlines conditions for student eligibility to enrol in the Open Access College.

The Open Access College provides an online education program for eligible students who are isolated or whose special circumstances prevent them from attending school on a regular basis. Open Access College also provides access for those students unable to access an appropriate curriculum in their local school.

Scope

This policy describes the responsibilities of Open Access College, schools and parents in relation to:

- compulsory education and the enrolment, attendance and participation requirements of children and young people under the Education and Children's Services Act 2019 (SA).

Open Access College must obtain consent from a child or young person's parents when assessing an enrolment application, in line with the department's admission procedure.

Government of South Australia
Department for Education

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Detail

College-based students

College-based students can undertake their entire course in an approved primary or secondary program with Open Access College.

The principal, Open Access College determines the category under which a student will be admitted and the duration of the enrolment by considering the student's individual circumstances, documentary evidence and advice or recommendations from other departmental staff, and relevant professionals.

The following categories of students are eligible to enrol as a college-based student:

- a rural and remote student whose home is geographically isolated
- a student who is unable to access a government school
- an adult student
- an interstate student
- a student exempted from school for the purpose of home education.

Rural and Remote

Rural and remote students living in areas of Australia that are considered geographically isolated may be able to enrol in Open Access College. Geographical isolation is determined based on the distance or transport circumstances between the child's home and the nearest government school, which offers the same year level.

Note: School of the Air (SOTA) Port Augusta campus provides Reception to Year 7 for geographically remote students.

Accessibility

Students, including students from non-government school sectors who are unable to access a government school for one of the following reasons, can enrol in Open Access College. Further information about student exemptions can be found in the department's exemption from school procedure (staff login required).

Travel

Students who are unable to attend a local government school because they are travelling within Australia, or posted overseas, for a minimum period of 1 term. Proof of an approved exemption from the principal of the current enrolled school, travel documentation and proof of identity and residency are required.

The maximum period of enrolment for travel is one school year for the family. In extenuating circumstances, an extension of another school year may be granted by the principal.

Elite or Specialised Vocational Study

Students who are unable to attend a local government school because they are participating at an elite level

in performing arts or sport, which prevents them from attending a local school for more than the equivalent of 1 term in a year.

Students in this category are expected to have exhausted all other departmental provisions before seeking enrolment at Open Access College.

The student's daily timetable will integrate suitable times for the student's education learning through each day's program.

Parents must provide documented evidence of the student's participation at an elite level, such as:

- Achievement records eg certificates at state, national or international levels of competition
- Testimonials from industry-based professionals
- Letters of offer and acceptance, employment contract or selection into an elite team, squad or program
- Any other evidence that demonstrates the student is performing at an elite level and the commitment is such that a local government school cannot cater for such commitment through significant program adjustments including leave in excess of the equivalent of 1 term per year

The principal of the student's current school must review the supporting evidence and provide a statement on the enrolment application. This statement must articulate:

- Any program adjustments that have been made to cater for the student's circumstances.
- That the student is performing at an elite level and the commitment is such that a regular school could not cater for this commitment through program adjustments including exemption from attendance as per the exemption from school procedure (staff login required).

Work commitments

Students who are 16 years of age or over and are unable to attend a local secondary school due to work commitments. A letter from the employer detailing the student's work requirements (hours and shifts) is required.

Medical

Students who have a medical condition (see students with medical conditions in this policy).

Adult students

Adults aged 18 years to under 21 years who wish to complete their studies may do so. Students who have left school for more than 6 months may be eligible through the adult education enrolment policy (PDF 627KB).

Adults aged 21 years or older who have not achieved their SACE can complete this qualification under the adult education provision (AEP) detailed in the adult education enrolment policy (PDF 627KB).

All adult students who have left school for more than 6 months must have a current working with children check before starting their studies as outlined in the adult education enrolment policy (PDF 627KB).

Interstate students

Open Access College has an agreement with some interstate distance education counterparts that allows the following interstate students to enrol, if they:

- live in New South Wales, and their home is geographically isolated in the proximity of Broken Hill
- live in the Northern Territory and are eligible to enrol at the Northern Territory Distance Education School but the subject that they wish to enrol in is not available.

Home education students

Students who have a current exemption from school for the purpose of home education can enrol in Open Access College subjects as a college-based student on a part-time or full-time basis under the following conditions:

- reception to year 9 students may enrol in language or music programs
- year 10 students may enrol in 'Exploring Identities and Futures' only or undertake a full load of year 10 in preparation for SACE studies
- year 11 to 12 students may undertake a full load of SACE subjects including a combination with a school-based apprenticeship or VET course.

When attendance issues occur, a student wellbeing leader will work to engage the student. The placement may terminate if a student doesn't attend required lessons over a 4-week period. Open Access College will inform the home education team at the commencement of this re-engagement process before the 4-week period is over, and termination is recommended.

Length of college-based enrolment and reviews

All college-based enrolments are valid for a:

- minimum period of 1 term; or
- maximum period of 12 months (excluding students enrolled through Port Augusta School of the Air).

The student's continuation at Open Access College must be reviewed annually, by the principal (or delegate). The review will consider whether it is appropriate for the student to continue the external education program at Open Access College, or whether they should be attending a local school.

For students with a medical condition, a medical report will be sought from the relevant health professional.

School-based students

School-based students have the option of an alternative placement from their enrolled school, by enrolling at Open Access College (full-time or part-time).

The following category of students may be eligible to enrol as a school-based student:

- a student wishing to access a specific subject not available at their current enrolled school due to availability or timetabling issues.

- a student unable to attend full-time at their current enrolled school due to family commitments
- a student who requires a temporary exclusion placement
- a student requiring an alternative placement for a specific period, including medical conditions.

Specific subject not available at enrolled school

Students can undertake specific subjects at Open Access College that they are not able to access or are not offered by their current enrolled school. The enrolled school must agree to the student accessing a specific subject through Open Access College.

The enrolment at Open Access College will cease when the student completes the required subject/s.

Students with family commitments

A student who is unable to attend their enrolled school on a full-time basis due to family commitments may be eligible to enrol into Open Access College. Family commitments include, but are not limited to:

- a student who cares for a relative. To support this enrolment, it is essential that there is a discussion with the enrolled school as to the circumstances of the individual student, the nature of the caring, the supports that have been provided and any impact the caring responsibilities have on school attendance and achievement.
- a student who is pregnant, or any new parent who is unable to attend their enrolled school on a full-time basis. Consideration will be given to flexible options that may benefit the student in attending Open Access College. Many families have existing relationships with government and non-government agencies outside of school. It is important to discuss with the family and the student's current school regarding supports that are in place or may be required. It is also important to work collaboratively with any other agencies involved to ensure a coordinated approach.
- Any concerns regarding student general wellbeing and attendance concerns should be discussed with the Social Work Duty line via phone 1300 620 673 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) or email education.SocialWork@sa.gov.au.

Student placement during exclusion

Students under 17 may be excluded, by negotiation, from their current enrolled school to Open Access College.

This is determined through consultation at the pre-exclusion conference, with the site leader of the student's enrolled school and the local student support services, as per the department's suspension, exclusion and expulsion processes (staff login required).

Other alternative placements

Behaviour or supported learning strategy

When a school is in the process of developing a behaviour support plan (staff login required), or considering

a strategy to support learning outcomes, it may be an appropriate strategy to achieve the goals identified for the student through an alternative placement with Open Access College. In these circumstances the length of the alternative placement will be negotiated between Open Access College and the student's current enrolled school.

Enrolled schools interested in this option must discuss the alternative placement with their local student support services and contact an Open Access College student wellbeing leader for a pre-referral discussion, phone 8309 3500 or email student.services@OpenAccess.edu.au.

A local student support services or interagency referral is required for an alternative placement to Open Access College.

The referral documentation for the student, including behaviour support plans (staff login required), must be provided to Open Access College.

Length of school-based placements and recharge

All school-based enrolments are valid for a minimum period of 1 term to a maximum period of 12 months.

The enrolled school maintains the student's substantive enrolment while the student participates at Open Access College as a school-based student.

The student's current enrolled school must agree to a school-based enrolment at Open Access College, and agree to pay all fees, including temporary relief teachers (TRT) recharge by the department.

Students with medical conditions

Students with medical conditions may enrol as either school-based or college-based students.

Enrolment for students with medical conditions must be considered on an individual basis and in negotiation with Open Access College and the enrolled school.

Medical issues may be long-term or short-term (physical or psychological), which prevent the student attending their enrolled school on a full-time basis.

In all cases, a health professional must provide a comprehensive written medical report which outlines the student's condition and how treatment impacts on their ability to attend their school or other local education provision. This will support the enrolment to Open Access College. Further information can be found on the department's intranet - Managing student medical conditions (staff login required).

Physical conditions

Where possible, school-based enrolments are preferable for students with physical conditions, with the student completing some subjects face-to-face in their enrolled school.

Curriculum continuity and learning programs will be negotiated between Open Access College and the enrolled school.

Psychological conditions

In the case of psychological conditions, the following is considered:

- current/previous enrolled school interventions including documented health support plans.
- local student support service staff involvement and documentation outlining involvement in maintaining face-to-face education.

Initially, a school-based enrolment with Open Access College will occur for students with a psychological condition for a period of 1 term, with the student attending their enrolled school on a part-time basis where possible.

This will enable Open Access College to assess the suitability of the placement and allow the student to maintain contact with their enrolled school.

A review will occur at the end of the school term between Open Access College, relevant student support service staff, the student's current enrolled school, and the student (where appropriate) and/or their parents to discuss ongoing Open Access College involvement.

Supervision

All students (except adult students) must have a parent or supervisor (at home or at their enrolled school) available at all times. This will assist to ensure child safety measures are maintained during their course of study, for example supervision, as well as to provide support for the student as they complete the learning programs developed by Open Access College.

Roles and responsibilities

Home education team

Inform parents of subject options.

Inform parents of requirements for paying materials and services charges (unless excluded by the Education and Children Service's Act 2019 (SA)) to Open Access College.

Provide contact details of relevant Open Access College staff to parents.

Notify Open Access College if the approved exemption for the student for the purpose of home education is revoked or denied at any stage.

Principal of Open Access College

Manage day-to-day operations of Open Access College, including enrolments. The principal must:

- make sure this policy and related procedures are followed.
- manage processes to acquire necessary resources and facilities to accommodate eligible students.

- make sure relevant enrolment information is communicated to families and prospective applicants.
- manage all enrolments in a transparent manner with consideration of a child and young person's best interests, safety and wellbeing, right to education, and without discrimination or prejudice.
- make reasonable adjustments for all children and young people to participate in education to maximise their educational opportunities and outcomes.
- make sure Open Access College provides a supportive learning environment, including access to services, to engage all students in their learning, with consideration to a student's personal circumstances, physical, social, mental wellbeing, and cultural safety needs.
- make sure communication in relation to enrolment is accessible, promotes inclusion and details the available complaints processes.
- make sure children and young people and their parents are provided with an opportunity to participate in decisions affecting them and be taken seriously.
- make sure every effort is made to support students to remain engaged in their learning including consultation with families and the student's enrolled school.

Education director

Make sure the principal manages enrolments in accordance with instructions set out by relevant legislation and departmental policies and procedures.

Student support services

Work with Open Access College and the student's current enrolled school to facilitate access and support for students requiring specific school-based or college-based placement.

Student wellbeing leader – Open Access College

Consider enrolments and make recommendation to the Assistant Principal, Wellbeing or delegate.

Request parents to provide a copy of the approved exemption for the student for the purpose of home education to Open Access College on an annual basis.

Confirm home education approvals and other exemptions.

Contact parents to provide an appropriate meeting time to discuss subject choices.

Outline Open Access College role and expectations at pre-enrolment meetings.

Send appropriate transfer request to enrolled school for students that become a full-time college-based Open Access College student.

Provide all necessary student information to the enrolled or new school when a student leaves Open Access College as per the department's transfer procedure (staff login required).

Supervisor – Open Access College

Directly supports students and families studying Open Access College courses by:

- ensuring students attend scheduled lessons and complete work set in the allocated time.

Supervisor – home or school

The supervisor directly supports students studying Open Access College programs. The supervisor will provide support for students by:

- ensuring students attend scheduled lessons and complete work set in the allocated time
- providing necessary technology and access to internet.
- monitoring student progress and maintaining a schedule of assignments due.
- providing a suitable working environment for students
- ensuring that completed tasks are submitted by the due date
- maintaining close contact with Open Access College teacher about matters impacting student progress.

Sign the Open Access College enrolment forms.

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools

Evaluate and review this policy in collaboration with key stakeholders and Open Access College.

Give advice in the interpretation and implementation of requirements determined by the Chief Executive and the department.

Make sure that this policy is compliant and up to date with relevant legislative and state government obligations.

Definitions

adult student

A student who is 18 years of age or over. Any action required of a parent in this policy may be done by an adult student on their own behalf.

Excludes those students who turned 18 years during their studies at school. These students are referred to as current or continuing students.

alternative placement

A student's attendance at a specific program or service for a set period of time (temporary in nature), and they are expected to return to their enrolled school.

best interest of a child or young person

Consideration of the long-term and short-term welfare concerns for a child or young person, such as their intellectual, social, and emotional needs, aspirations, and abilities.

behaviour support plan

Required when a student is suspended or excluded from their current enrolled school. They can also be developed whenever concerns are raised about a student's behaviour.

child or young person

Persons under 18 years of age.

child of compulsory school age

A child of or above the age of 6 years but under the age of 16 years.

child of compulsory education age

A child who is 16 years of age but under the age of 17 years.

college-based students

Students who undertake their entire learning program at Open Access College (full-time or part-time).

delegate

A person or persons appointed and engaged in the department that has been delegated powers or certain functions by the Minister or Chief Executive pursuant to the Education and Children's Services Act 2019 (SA).

discrimination

When a person treats another person or their child in a way that is less favourable because of their gender, nationality, culture, age, disability, religion, gender identity, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, sexual orientation, intersex status, marital or relationship status, and family responsibilities as defined in the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA), the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) and Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).

elite or specialised vocational study

Participation in the arts or sport through an accredited or regulated organisation for example Tennis SA.

enrolled school

The non-government and government schools registered with the Education Standards Board SA that the child or young person is currently enrolled as an active student. The enrolled school maintains the student's enrolment and records them as attending Open Access College. Government schools record the student as per the department's data dictionary (PDF 1MB).

exemption certificate

A formal certificate issued by the Minister or delegate exempting a child or young person of compulsory school age or a child of compulsory education age from attending or participating at school or in an approved learning program permanently or for a nominated period.

geographically isolated

A student is regarded as geographically isolated from appropriate schooling if one of the following criteria is met:

- The distance between the student's residence and the nearest appropriate government school is at least 56 kilometres by the shortest practicable route, as advised by the department's Transport Unit.
- The distance between the student's residence and the nearest appropriate government school by the shortest practicable route is at least 16 kilometres and the distance between the student's residence and the nearest available transport service to that school is at least 5 kilometres by the shortest practicable route.
- The student does not have reasonable access to an appropriate government school for at least 20 school days in a year because of adverse travel conditions (e.g. impassable roads) or other circumstances beyond the family's control.

government school

A government school established by the Minister to deliver primary or secondary education (including senior secondary schools, special purpose schools or specialised education options).

guardian

A person who has legal guardianship or custody of a child.

Where a child in care is placed under the guardianship of the Chief Executive by court order, the Chief Executive is the lawful guardian of the child or young person. The DCP case worker is responsible for making sure a child or young person is enrolled in school. For more information see the Department for Child Protection (DCP).

healthcare professional

Includes:

- medical practitioners
- psychologists
- social workers holding qualifications or accreditation approved by the Chief Executive by notice in the gazette.

home education

A child or young person enrolled at school but exempted from attending school and whose education will be conducted by 1 or both parents from a home base. A child must be registered and approved for home education with the department.

in loco parentis

A person acting in a parental style relationship with a child, where the person has intended to place themselves in the position of a parent toward a child and has assumed the same duty and authority as a parent with respect to the nurturing, control and protection of a child. A person in loco parentis may include a person:

- in a de facto relationship with a child's biological parent where they have assumed responsibility for the child.
- who has taken over care of a child after the death of both biological parents, or where there has been a family breakdown and the child is estranged from both biological parents
- in an informal fostering arrangement.

This person does not have to assume any or all financial responsibility for a child to satisfy this definition.

living in South Australia

The student's primary place of residence (physical home) is located within South Australia.

parent

For the purposes of this policy, means a person who is a child or young person's:

- biological parent, adoptive parent or other person recognised as a parent if the child was conceived following a fertilisation procedure or under a surrogacy arrangement
- guardian
- person standing in loco parentis.

This does not include a person who has had their legal custody, guardianship or responsibility for the child

removed by a Court, Act or Law. As an example, a biological parent who has had their custody, guardianship or parental responsibility for the child removed by a parenting order made under Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) is not a person responsible for the child.

physical condition

A condition that impacts a person's mobility, physical capacity, stamina, or dexterity. This can include but not limited to: brain or spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, respiratory disorders, epilepsy, hearing and visual impairments.

psychological condition

A condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, mood, and behaviour, which may be short term or ongoing. This can affect a person's ability to relate to others and affect their day-to-day function.

qualification

Means a SACE or at least a Certificate 2 (or equivalent qualification), under an approved learning program. A student over the age of 16 years of age, who has achieved a qualification under an approved learning program, is considered as having completed their schooling.

reasonable effort

Means the efforts that any reasonable person would use to comply with the obligation to provide a child or young person the opportunity to engage in learning.

SACE

South Australia Certificate of Education. Includes SACE achieved through modified subjects at Stage 1 and Stage 2 for students with identified intellectual disabilities.

school-based students

Students who are attending Open Access College (alternative placement) but continue to also attend at their enrolled school.

Supporting information

Data dictionary (PDF 1 MB)

Behaviour support plan for students

Related legislation

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)

Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Disability Standards for Education 2005

Education and Children's Services Act 2019 (SA)

Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 (SA)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

South Australian Public Health Act 2011 (SA)

South Australian Skills Act 2008 (SA)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990

Related policies

Admission procedure (staff login required)

Adult education enrolment policy (PDF 627KB)

Behaviour support policy (PDF 647KB)

Duty of care to children and young people policy (staff login required)

Exemption from school procedure (staff login required)

School and preschool enrolment policy (PDF 286KB)

Suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students procedure (PDF 742KB)

Transfer procedure (staff login required)

Vocational education and training policy (staff login required)

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