



**Department of  
Education**

## **CONFIGURATION OF THE SCHOOL DAY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**VERSION: 2.3 FINAL**

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## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

The hours of instruction provided to students are informed by the needs of the local school community and meet the requirements of legislation and industrial agreements.

## 2 BACKGROUND

The Director General determines the days in each year on which schools are to be open for educational instruction of students and publishes this in the *Government Gazette* at least three years prior to the beginning of that year. All dates are also published on the Department of Education's (the Department's) Term Dates website.

The minimum hours of instruction for students do not equate to the minimum hours of face-to-face contact time for teachers. The minimum hours of instruction for students, exclusive of recess or lunch times, are set by the *School Education Regulations 2000*.

Due to enrolments across different phases of schooling, many schools may be required to conform to two or more sets of these required hours of instruction.

## 3 SCOPE

This policy applies to Directors Schools and principals in public schools.

## 4 PROCEDURES

### 4.1 DETERMINING THE CONFIGURATION OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Principals must:

- consult with the school council, other schools in the local area and wider school community on the configuration of the school day; and
- confirm that the configuration of the school day:
  - is in the best interests of students and considers such matters as the geographical and cultural nature of the school community; and
  - takes account of duty of care responsibilities; and
  - conforms to the minimum hours of instruction for the day and week, which are as follows:
    - Kindergarten program (s. 24) - subject to Regulation 27, a child enrolled at a public school in a kindergarten program is to be provided at least 11 hours instruction during each week in which the school is open for instruction.
    - Pre-primary program (s. 25) - subject to Regulation 27, a child enrolled at a public school in a pre-primary program is to be provided:
      - at least 25 hours and 50 minutes instruction during each week in which the school is open for instruction; and
      - at least 4 hours and 10 minutes instruction during each day in which the school is open for instruction.

- Primary program (s. 26) - subject to Regulation 27, a child enrolled at a public school in a primary program is to be provided:
  - at least 25 hours and 50 minutes instruction during each week in which the school is open for instruction; and
  - at least 4 hours and 10 minutes instruction during each day in which the school is open for instruction.
- Lower Secondary program - subject to Regulation 27, a child enrolled at a public school in a secondary program is to be provided:
  - at least 25 hours and 50 minutes instruction during each week in which the school is open for instruction; and
  - at least 4 hours and 10 minutes instruction during each day in which the school is open for instruction.
- Senior Secondary program (Years 11-12) - the hours of instruction for senior school students in Years 11 and 12 are flexible and the principal should determine the appropriate hours with reference to the specific child's education program and the Objects of the *School Education Act 1999*.

#### **Guidelines**

*The hours of instruction for Kindergarten will change to 15 hours in some districts in 2010 and will change to 15 hours for all districts by 2013 as part of the Australian Government's universal access program.*

Teachers must undertake, outside of official student instruction hours, duties such as:

- staff meetings and other school meetings;
- parent interviews and parent report meetings; and
- supervision of students.

#### **Guidelines**

*Matters for consultation may include:*

- *start and finish times;*
- *the start, finish and duration of recess and lunch breaks for students; and*
- *the programming of staff meetings if they involve a change in the schedule for students.*

*Form class in secondary schools can be an additional time on top of the required 25 hours and 50 minutes if the school wishes to have a form time.*

## 4.2 ALTERING THE CONFIGURATION OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Principals must:

- consult with the School Council and wider community on any alterations to the configuration of the school day;
- gain the approval of the School Council and Director Schools to alter the configuration of the school day;
- schedule opening and closing times within the times indicated on the 40 km per hour school zone signs; and
- give parents reasonable notice of any change in the configuration of the school day.

**Guidelines**

*When considering altering school opening and closing times the principal should be cognisant of duty of care and risk management. This assessment might include:*

- *consultation with Western Australian Police regarding the impact on the rostering of crossing attendants and any increase in the cost of this service;*
- *review of bus transport and bus warden arrangements;*
- *arrangements for the supervision of students until the normal school closure time, if students do not leave the school premises; and*
- *impact on local businesses and facilities.*

## 4.3 TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THE CONFIGURATION OF THE SCHOOL DAY

### 4.3.1 REPORTING TO PARENTS

Principals must:

- gain the approval of the Director Schools to suspend the school timetable to conduct 'reporting to parents' sessions;
- conduct 'reporting to parents' sessions that require the suspension of the school timetable no more than twice in a school year and for no more than half of any school day; and
- make adequate provision for students who remain at the school while the school timetable is suspended.

**Guidelines**

*Schools can seek approval to suspend the school timetable for up to two half days per year for the purpose of reporting student progress.*

### 4.3.2 SUSPENSION OF SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Principals must gain the approval of the Director Schools to suspend the whole of school timetable in lieu of official out-of-school activities.

Following the Director Schools' approval, principals will manage the process for the modification of the configuration of the school day for the purpose of official out-of-school activities.

**Guidelines**

*The provision to suspend the school timetable does not apply to evening concerts held by schools, for example end of year concerts and Carols by Candlelight.*

*It is not necessary to gain permission to run sports carnivals during a normal school day.*

## 4.4 TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF A SCHOOL

### 4.4.1 HEALTH OR SAFETY CONCERNS

Principals must refer to the *Emergency and Critical Incident Management in Public Schools* policy in circumstances where there are health or safety concerns that may result in the temporary closure of the whole or a particular part of the school premises.

**Guidelines**

*Refer to section 6.3.2 and Appendix C of the Emergency Management and Critical Incident Management in Public Schools policy.*

#### 4.4.2 RELOCATING TO NEW PREMISES

Principals must gain the approval of the Director Schools to close the school for the purpose of relocating to new premises.

Following the Director Schools' approval, principals will manage the process for the closure of schools for the purpose of relocating to new premises.

**Guidelines**

*Principals can apply to close the school if it is being relocated to new premises. This is generally for one day and students do not attend while school staff relocate teaching materials and resources to the new school facilities. This option only applies to replacement schools and not to new schools.*

#### 4.4.3 SPECIFIC EVENTS

Principals must gain the approval of the Director Schools to close the school for educational instruction of students for certain specific events.

Following the Director Schools' approval, principals will manage the process for the closure of schools for certain specific events.

**Guidelines**

*Examples of specific events referred to above are agricultural shows, field days or important local functions.*

*Schools located within country districts can be closed for educational instruction of students for one day each year in respect of an agricultural show, field day or important local function, if it is likely that the event will be attended by a majority of the students of the school.*

### 5 RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

*School Education Act 1999*

*School Education Act Employees' (Teachers and Administrators) General Agreement 2008*

*School Education Regulations 2000*

### 6 CONTACT INFORMATION

Policy manager: Director, Public Schools Planning  
Policy contact officer: Manager, Schooling Planning  
T: (08) 9264 4322

Public Schools Term Dates website:

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/future-term-dates>

## History of changes

<b>Effective date</b>	<b>Last update date</b>	<b>Policy version no.</b>	<b>TRIM no.</b>	<b>Notes</b>
5 November 2009	15 December 2014	2.1	D14/0546624	Minor changes to reflect Year 7 move to a secondary setting D14/0522947.
5 November 2009	21 August 2018	2.2	D18/0333541	Minor changes to include reference to Public Schools D18/015165 and updated legislation links D18/0207680.
5 November 2009	26 February 2020	2.3	D20/0094101	Minor changes to contact information D20/0094086