GREAT SOUTHERN GRAMMAR

ATTENDANCE POLICY

EMBARK ON A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

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1 PURPOSE

Great Southern Grammar is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. School attendance is essential to ensure that educational outcomes for the students are met.

The School Education Act 1999 requires compulsory aged students, as defined in the Act, to attend school, or participate in an educational programme of a school, on the days on which the school is open for instruction unless an arrangement in writing has been entered into for a student. Although there is no legal requirement in the School Education Act 1999 for pre-and post-compulsory aged students to enrol in a school, there is an expectation that once enrolled students will attend on a regular basis, and positive attendance patterns should be fostered with all students by schools. (SEA, 1999).

2 SCOPE

This policy, as amended from time to time, applies to students who attend Great Southern Grammar School Incorporated (GSG).

3 DEFINITIONS

Parent	In relation to a child, means a per child who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child.
Students whose Whereabouts are Unknown List	A list, usually referred to as the SWU List, containing the names of children who are missing from schools and educational programs in Western Australia. This list is distributed by the Department to administrators in non-government schools and some other agencies by agreement.
School Education Act	Referred as 'the Act'. Legislation outlining legal obligations of schools, parents and students in relation to education.
Chronic Absenteeism	Persistent of habitual absence or lateness, high levels 20% or more over ten-week period.

4 ACRONYMS

SWU	Students whose Whereabouts are Unknown
ECC	Early Childhood Centre
DoE	Department of Education
DES	Department of Education Services

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy.

Heads of Subschool

Heads of Subschool will ensure that all students are accounted for with the assistance of Student Services Officer.

Teachers

Teachers will be able to account for the whereabouts of all students in their care.

6 POLICY STATEMENT

6.1 Principles

To provide students with the ability to achieve to the best of their ability and to create a clear, inclusive and attendance policy that promotes high expectations of student attendance.

6.2 Attendance

Attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community

- The School Education Act requires that a student must attend school or an educational programme run by the School in which they are enrolled on the days on which the School is open for instruction. Under Section 23 of the School Education Act it is the obligation of the parent or guardian to ensure the child attends the School or educational programme.
- The Principal has the authority to facilitate (in writing) a student's participation in the School's educational programme at a place other than the School. This may be for part of the school year.
- Student attendance includes the requirement for students to be on time for school and present during the school day. Sporadic attendance may negatively impact student progress.
- All children should be enrolled at school and attend school every day.
- Taking holidays in school time may have a detrimental effect on the student's education. Under the Act, holidays do not constitute a reasonable cause not to attend school and will be recorded as an unapproved absence.
- Medical Certificates are to be supplied if a student is absent more than three days due to illness.
- If a student's attendance rate falls below 90% over a ten-week period, the School will contact parents and develop strategies to improve attendance.
- The School will monitor, communicate and implement appropriate strategies to improve regular school attendance and to restore attendance if there are attendance issues.

6.3 Non-attendance at school or educational programme

- Students may only be excused from attending school or participating in the School's educational programme, for reason of temporary physical or mental incapacity or any other reasonable cause (for example, but not limited to: illness, bereavement, religious or cultural observance). Examples of unreasonable cause include, but are not limited to, appointments which may be made outside of school time such as hair appointments, special shopping trips etc. What constitutes a reasonable cause will be determined by the Principal, in alignment with the requirements of the School Education Act and Non-Government School Standards.

- It is the parent's/guardian's obligation to notify the Principal of the child's non-attendance or non-participation, as soon as practicable and within three school days from when the non-attendance started.
- The Principal may request a parent/guardian to supply a certificate from a registered medical practitioner to explain student absence.
- The School will document re-engagement strategies implemented when a student's absences are having an impact on the student's progress with the learning programme. These re-engagement strategies will be determined in consultation with the parent/guardian. Re-engagement strategies may be required for reasonable absences (for example, for medical reasons) or for unreasonable absences (for example, truanting or other persistent or habitual absences).
- Where there are doubtful reasons for non-attendance the matter may be referred the Transition and Retention team (Attendance Officers).
- A student may be excused from attendance or participation in an educational programme when the parent/guardian registers to be the home educator. The Principal must be informed in writing of the intention to register for home education as soon as practicable or within three school days.
- The Chief Health Officer has the authority to direct that a child who has not been immunised against a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease is not permitted to attend, or participate in the educational programme of the school, for a specified period; and the Chief Health Officer has the authority to direct the closure of whole, or a part, of the school for a specified period, to limit or prevent the spread of a vaccine preventable notifiable infectious disease
- The Principal will register a reportable incident with the Director General of Education (within 48 hours) any incident requiring a police or other emergency services response when a student appears to have been taken or removed, or goes missing and cannot be accounted for, from the school or from a school-related activity without proper authority.
- Where a parent chooses to remove a student during the school day, advance notice of the absence should be provided to the school (where possible) and a reason provided for the removal of the student. Students must not be removed from school without proper notification to the school.
- If a student needs to leave the school campus during the school day, advance notice must be provided to the school outlining the details of and reason for the absence. Students may not leave campus by themselves. The only exception to this is student drivers who satisfy all the following criteria: being those who have:

    - a reasonable cause and
    - provided advance notice and
    - been approved to leave campus and
    - authority from the school to drive and
    - parental permission.

No other student is to leave campus without a parent or guardian.

6.4 Data collection and documentation

The School will maintain and store accurate recording of the attendance of all students:

- Attendance records may be kept in electronic form but must be capable of being reproduced in written form.

- Attendance records (eg: attendance registers, class rolls) must be kept for a minimum period of seven (7) years.
- All schools are required to comply with requests from Australian Government reporting to Department of Education and Training and Department of Human Services, Western Australian Government reporting to Department of Education Services.
- Attendance is taken in the Junior School twice a day and Middle and Senior School every teaching period including Homeroom.

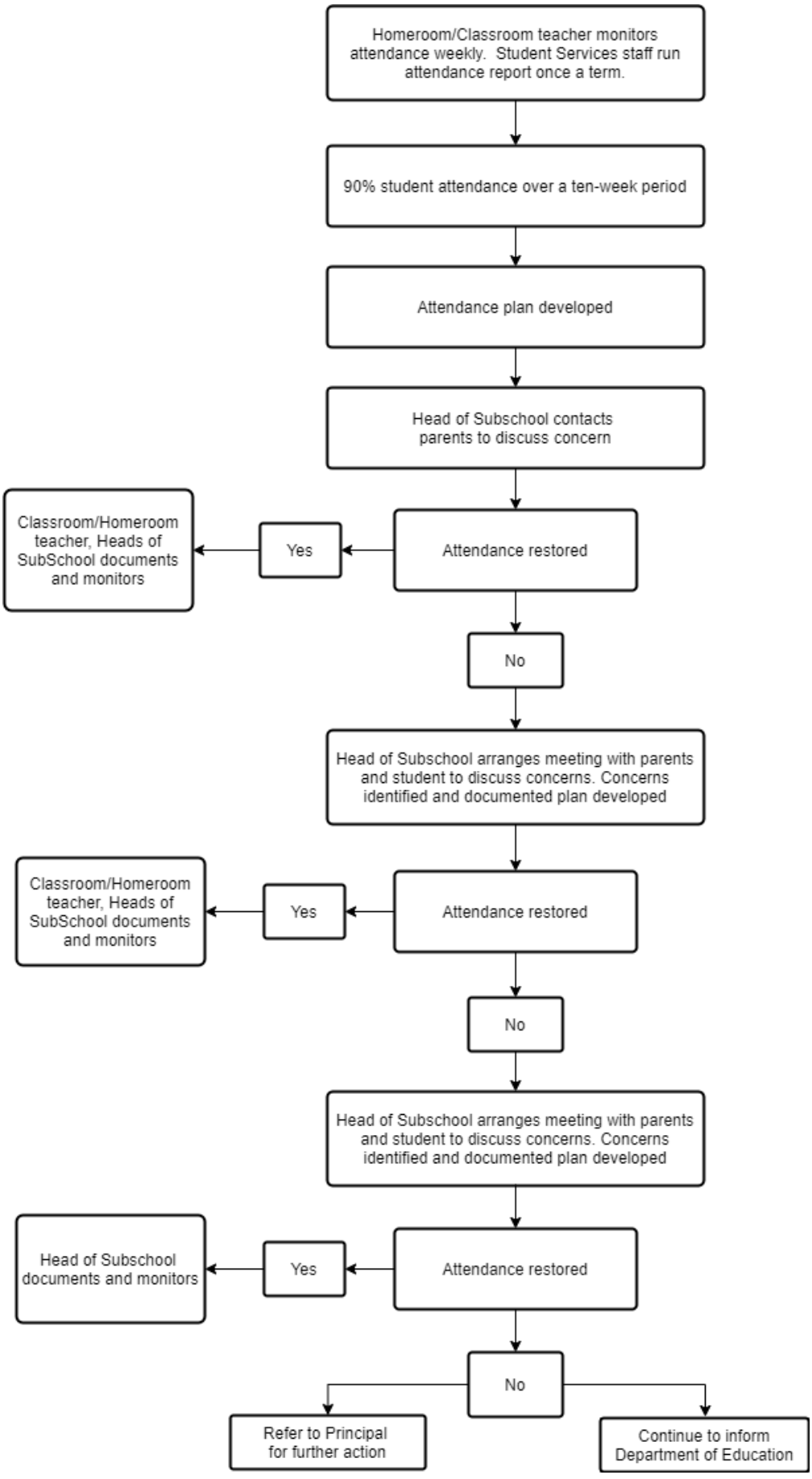
6.5 Students Whose Whereabouts Are Unknown

- If all attempts to locate a student have failed after fifteen (15) school days and the school has not received advice that the student has enrolled at another school, the Principal is to contact the Retention and Participation Team.

6.6 Exception from attending school

- All students must participate in full-time education, training or employment or a combination of these, until the end of the year the child reaches 17 years and 6 months or turns 18, whichever happens first. The Minister for Education may exempt a child of compulsory school age from the requirement to be enrolled.
- Parents seeking exemption for their child before the end of Year Ten (or before the end of the year in which the student reaches 15), usually for the purpose of entering full-time employment, traineeships or apprenticeships, should apply to the DoE using the Application for Exemption from School Enrolment form available on the DoE website. When a student reaches Years Eleven and Twelve and participates in employment, a traineeship or an apprenticeship, a Notice of Arrangement form must be completed, seeking the Minister's acknowledgement of the student's participation in one or more education, training or employment options. Completion of a Notice of Arrangement form satisfies a parent's legal obligation under the Act.

Flowchart of Attendance Monitoring



7 REFERENCE/COMPLIANCE

The following documents are associated with this policy:

7.1 Legislation

- *School Education Act 1999 (WA)*
- *School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)*
- *Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008 (WA)*
- *Request to place a student onto the Students whose Whereabouts are Unknown (SWU) List (Department of Education)*
- *WA Public Health Act (2016)*

7.2 Related Policies

- *Behaviour Management Policy*
- *Child Safety Policy*
- *Enrolment Policy*
- *Pastoral Care Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*

7.3 Internal Documents

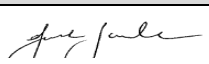
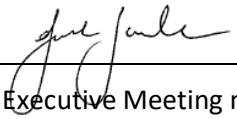
- *Attendance Procedures*
- *Assessment Guideline*

7.4 Other Resources

- *Nil*

8 DOCUMENT CONTROL

Approval

Date	By	Signature
01/06/2017	Mr Mark Sawle - Principal	
24/1/2019	Mr Mark Sawle - Principal	
11/08/2021	Executive	Executive Meeting minutes