

School Attendance Policy



Section
Number
Version
Page
Approved
Date
Review

Welfare

2
1 of
Executive
May 2020
June 2021

1. POLICY STATEMENT	2
2. BACKGROUND	2
3. SCOPE	3
4. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS	3
4.1 A student must on the days on which the school is open for instruction, either:	3
5. DEFINITIONS	3
5.1 APPROVAL PROCESS	3
5.2 AUTHORISED ABSENCE	3
5.3 AUTHORISED LEAVE	3
5.4 EXPLAINED BUT NOT AUTHORISED ABSENCE	3
5.5 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE	3
5.6 UNRESOLVED LATE	3
5.7 TRUANCY	4
6. DOCUMENTED PLANS	4
7. RESPONSIBILITIES	4
7.1 PARENT	4
7.2 TEACHERS, PASTORAL CARE TUTORS, HEADS OF YEAR	4
7.3 PRINCIPAL AND/OR NOMINEE (HEADS AND DEPUTY HEADS OF SCHOOL)	5
8. APPROACHES TO PROMOTE AND MONITOR ATTENDANCE	5
8.1 PROMOTION	5
8.2 STRATEGIES	5
9. INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR ATTENDANCE	5
10. CASE MANAGEMENT	6
11. RETENTION OF RECORDS	6
12. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD DUE TO SICKNESS OR INJURY	6
13. ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS WITH ILLNESS AND/OR HEALTH CONDITIONS	6
14. PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL DURING THE DAY	6
15. SEQTA SYMBOLS	7
16. MARKING ATTENDANCE	7
17. MIDDLE SCHOOL PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE	8
18. GUIDELINES FOR SEQTA ENTRIES	8
18.2 CLASSROOM TEACHERS	8
18.3 ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES	8
18.4 LATE TO SCHOOL	8
18.5 IF A STUDENT CONTINUES TO BE LATE	8
18.6 IF A STUDENT IS ABSENT FOR THREE (3) DAYS OR MORE	8
19. STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS	9
20. CORRESPONDING WITH PARENTS/CARERS (SEE SEQTA SYMBOLS)	9
21. CHECKING PUNCTUALITY ON SEQTA (SEE SEQTA SYMBOLS)	9

22.	SENIOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY FLOW CHART	10
23.	RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITY	10
23.1	FEDERAL	10
23.2	STATE	10
24.	OTHER RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES	10
25.	COMPLIANCE	11
ARE THESE STILL USED? ARE SEQTA PROFORMA CURRENT? ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.		
APPENDIX 1 - FIRST LETTER LESS THAN 90% ATTENDANCE		11
26.	FACTS ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	11
27.1	IS REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IMPORTANT?	11
27.2	WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL?	12
27.3	WHAT HELP CAN I GET IF MY CHILD REFUSES TO GO TO SCHOOL OR IS TRUANTING?	12
27.4	DO I HAVE TO SEND MY CHILD EVERY DAY?	12
27.5	DO I HAVE TO TELL THE SCHOOL IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN AWAY?	12
27.6	DID YOU KNOW?	12
27.	APPENDIX 2 - SECOND LETTER LESS THAN 90% ATTENDANCE	12
28.	APPENDIX 3 - ATTENDANCE PLAN	14
29.	ATTENDANCE ISSUES	15
30.	APPENDIX 4 - REQUEST TO ATTEND CASE CONFERENCE	16

St Mark's Anglican Community School would like to acknowledge information sourced from the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA), the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC) and Department of Education WA as guidelines in the production of this Policy and Procedure.

This policy should be read in conjunction with: [Staff Code of Conduct](#); [Student Code of Conduct](#); [Duty of Care: Students](#); [School Enrolment Policy](#); [Student Learning Intervention and Referral Process Guidelines](#); [Student Wellbeing Framework](#); [Students at Educational Risk](#); [Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting](#); [Student Wellbeing Framework](#); [ASC Enrolment and Attendance Policy and Procedure](#); [Federal and State Legislation \(see links\)](#)

1. POLICY STATEMENT

St Mark's monitors and manages attendance of all students enrolled at St Mark's, identifies students with attendance issues and implements appropriate measures to restore regular attendance to maximise the opportunities for all students to learn.

2. BACKGROUND

The aim is for all students to maintain a 90% plus attendance rate. A student who is enrolled at St Mark's Anglican Community School is required under The School Education Act 1999 to attend school on site or at an educational program of the School elsewhere as directed by the Principal.

The parents of a student enrolled at St Mark's are responsible under the Act for ensuring their child is attending daily, providing an acceptable explanation for any absence to the Principal or delegated staff member.

The Principal is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment which promotes engagement and participation, and for the management of regular attendance.

Consistent attendance and participation at school are essential factors in achieving social and academic learning outcomes. Schools that develop supportive learning environments and an engaging and relevant curriculum create conditions conducive to regular school attendance.

3. SCOPE

This applies to Staff, Students and Parents of St Mark's Anglican Community School. It also provides direction to parents about their responsibilities under [The School Education Act 1999](#).

4. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

4.1 A student must on the days on which the school is open for instruction, either:

- i. attend the school at which they are enrolled.
- ii. otherwise participate in an educational program of the school whether at the school or elsewhere.

4.2 Full fee-paying International students must also adhere to the School Attendance Policy.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 Approval Process

A Principal can approve or not approve any absence, based on the requirements of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, an individual School policy or on a case-by-case basis.

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides some examples of what a reasonable excuse is for the purposes of explaining a school absence and includes, amongst other considerations:

- a) Illnesses and accidents.
- b) Unforeseen and unexplained circumstances.
- c) If the absence was a result of complying with another law.
- d) The child is receiving distance education through a registered school.
- e) The child is undertaking approved education, training and/or employment.
- f) The child has been suspended or expelled.
- g) The child is attending or observing a religious event or obligation.

5.2 Authorised Absence

This is an absence where the reason provided by the parent is to be considered legitimate and is deemed acceptable by the Principal.

5.3 Authorised Leave

This is leave sanctioned by the Principal for any student who is representing the School, State or Nation at an approved sporting or cultural event. It is the parents' responsibility to apply for this leave at least three weeks prior to the absence. Teachers will endeavour to support the student's ongoing education and minimise the impact of the absence on marks or outcomes, particularly if the student meets the negotiated work submission requirements.

5.4 Explained but not Authorised Absence

This is absence that is taken at the discretion of the family, (e.g. holidays) thus there is a choice in the matter. It is not an accepted or endorsed absence and should therefore be avoided as a reason for absenteeism from school. Parents are responsible for the consequences of this absence. The timetable, learning programs and assessment schedule will proceed. Students will have course and assessment outlines for all school courses. The student will need to make arrangements for work to be collected and keep the absent student informed. Teachers may not be in the position to make arrangements to allow a student to meet assessment arrangements.

5.5 Unexplained Absence

If a student is to be absent on any given day, parents/guardians must notify the school as soon as possible via absentee@stmarks.wa.edu.au. Every absence must be accounted for.

5.6 Unresolved Late

If a student is more than 10 minutes late to period one with no parent contact.

5.7 Truancy

A student who truants, (absents themselves without authority) on a day or from class, has chosen to forego their educational opportunities and, as a consequence, a mark of zero or an outcome of “not demonstrated” will normally apply for school assessments. Parents will be notified of the truancy and it will be recorded as such on the School’s Attendance Register. Persistence truancy will result in a meeting with the Head of School to discuss more serious measures that will be in place for these students.

Where a member of the public notifies the school that a St Mark’s students has been sighted in public and may be truanting, the School will contact the parents and ask them to bring their child into school to discuss this with the Head of School.

6. DOCUMENTED PLANS

These plans are ways of catering for the individual education needs of individual or smaller groups of students with identified needs. They are primarily a teaching and learning planning document and identifies short to medium term education plans and are only used for a short term.

Documented Plans may be:

- a) Individual Education Plans (IEP).
- b) Individual Behaviour Plans.
- c) Attendance Plans ([Refer to Appendix 3](#)).
- d) [Risk Management Policies](#).

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Parent

The Education Act (1999) requires parents to:

- a) Ensure children attend school unless there is a good reason for being away.
- b) Email/inform the teacher (ELC and Junior School), or Pastoral Care Tutor (Middle and/or Senior Schools) or the Student Admin of the reason for the child’s absence. This can be done in person, by phone, by SMS, a note or email as soon as possible and within 3 days of the child being away.
- c) Provide a Medical Certificate to confirm child’s illness if there are 3 days or more absence.

The Act defines ‘parent’ as being the parent ‘at law’. In addition to the parent, a responsible adult may also provide an explanation for a student absence.

The School requires parents to provide a Medical Certificate if a student is absent when there are planned or timetabled assessments.

7.2 Teachers, Pastoral Care Tutors, Heads of Year

St Mark’s staff will:

- a) Complete the electronic Register: Period based Secondary, am and pm ELC and Junior School.
- b) Contact the parent directly or inform the Classroom Teacher, Pastoral Care Tutor or Head of Year via email if a student is absent for more than three days without a reason.
- c) Ensure that all correspondence regarding parent contact about absences is recorded in SEQTA, if not already done so by Reception Admin Assistants.
- d) Monitor student lateness; enter data in SEQTA; and send emails to parents requesting greater punctuality.
- e) Contact parents when a student’s attendance drops below 90%.
- f) Send reminder letters ([Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#))

Guidelines

- a) Legislation does not require parents to provide an explanation for the child’s absence in writing, therefore all explanations received via such methods as SMS,

phone call, email, or in person must be recorded in SEQTA.

- b) If parents provide a reason for the absence to the School, the appropriate Reception Admin Assistant will enter it into SEQTA and the teachers will be notified.

7.3 Principal and/or Nominee (Heads and Deputy Heads of School)

The Principal and/or nominee will:

- a) Monitor the attendance of all students with a focus on those in the 'at risk' range (i.e. <90%)
- b) Issue parents leaving the school with their children during school time permission to leave the school.
- c) Contact parents when a student's attendance issues have not improved. Refer to [Appendix 1](#).
- d) [Facts about Attendance](#).
- e) All written correspondence to parents should be sent on School letterhead or email. Once signed, copies of correspondence should be put in the student's file.

8. APPROACHES TO PROMOTE AND MONITOR ATTENDANCE

8.1 Promotion

- i Provide information regarding the importance of attendance to parents and students; disseminate in the school newsletter and at parent evenings at the start of the year.
- ii Record student attendance on SEQTA through teacher record keeping and absentee processes.
- iii Include a letter, or notes of a conversation, regarding attendance on every report of students whose attendance is under 90 %.

8.2 Strategies

These strategies are implemented to encourage regular attendance of all students.

Strategy	Process	By Whom
Phone calls/emails	Students who are away without a reported reason may be contacted to verify the reason for the absence.	Admin Assistant, Reception.
SMS	An SMS will be sent to parents whose child is away each day unless a reason has already been given.	Admin Assistant, Reception.
Email	To parents who have not provided a valid reason for a student's absence within 3 days of student's return to school from absence.	Admin Assistant, Reception.
Email	Monthly attendance rates sent to Heads of Year, noting students with less than 90% attendance.	Admin Assistants.
Letters	Attendance letters Appendix 1, 2, 3	Heads of Year, Deputy Head of School.

9. INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR ATTENDANCE

Pastoral Care Tutors/Class Teachers:

Pastoral Care Tutors/Class Teachers will make initial contact with parents for every student absent for 3 days consecutively, when no medical certificate or pre-approval is provided, or when they have any other concern regarding the student's pattern of attendance. This contact should be pastoral and supportive, exploring any concerns or issues that may be barriers to attendance. This communication will be documented in SEQTA under Parent Communication.

Pastoral Care Tutors/Class Teachers are to inform the relevant Head of Year/ Deputy Head of School regarding concerns for a student's attendance.

10. CASE MANAGEMENT

- a) The Head of Year/Deputy or Head of School will collect data tracking student's attendance. Any students below 90% attendance are considered at risk students.
- b) When attendance falls below 90% the Head of Year is to send a parent a letter of concern. ([Refer to Appendix 1](#))
- c) Deputy Head of School to discuss with the parents the "Barriers to Attendance" matrix.
- d) Any communication regarding attendance should be documented.
- e) When sending letters regarding attendance to Parents, they should be sent by email, and mailed, if needed sent by registered mail.

Please Note: If a student is away from school for an extended period of time due to long term illness and/or hospitalisation – referral/contact needs to be made with the School Hospital Services (either via HOS or School Psychologist)

- f) When a student is returning to school following an extended period of absence (2+ weeks) a case conference will be held with the Deputy Head of School and School Psychologist to plan for reintegration and to plan for support.

11. RETENTION OF RECORDS

Teachers will ensure all correspondence and planning regarding attendance is placed on Seqta.

The Principal or nominee will retain attendance records in accordance with the [School Education Regulations 2000](#).

Guidelines

Relevant documentation to retain includes:

- a) Absentee notes.
- b) Attendance records for each student in each year level for 7 years.
- c) Unsatisfactory student attendance records, including written notes and records of verbal explanations of absences, psychological reports, records of interviews with students and significant records relating to individual students until the student is 25 years of age (7 years after a mature (>18 years) student has left school).
- d) All written and emailed correspondence to parents should be kept on School letterhead paper. Once signed, copies of correspondence should be put in the student's attendance file/Seqta.

12. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD DUE TO SICKNESS OR INJURY

For less than a week, the student is responsible for arranging work from the class teacher. For more than a week, the parent or carer should contact the Head of Year for work. Students are encouraged to go on to SEQTA to check what work can be completed.

13. ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS WITH ILLNESS AND/OR HEALTH CONDITIONS

Where a student has a mental or physical illness and/or health care needs which may have an impact on their ability to attend the usual school site, the Principal or delegate will:

- a) Inform the parent of a student under the age of 18 and the student of the student's right to an educational program and actively engage the parent and the student in negotiating access to a relevant program.
- b) Arrange access to an educational program for a student who has a physical and/or mental health condition and/or health care needs and who cannot attend the regular site. This program targets students likely to be absent from school for more than 10 days who have a medical certificate.

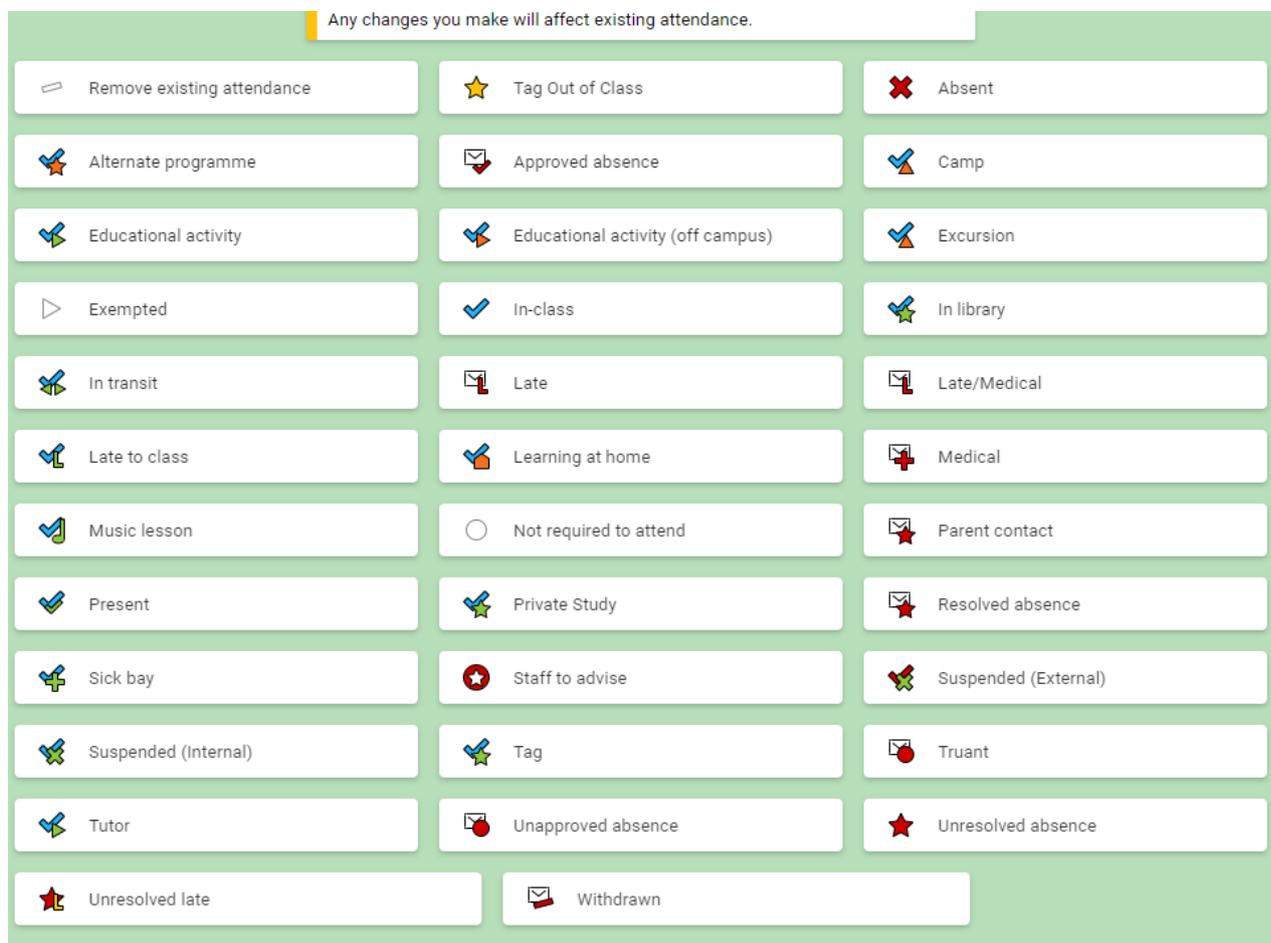
14. PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL DURING THE DAY

Students needing to leave the School during the day for dental/medical appointments must email or bring a note from parents/guardians authorising the absence. Permission to leave

School notes must remain with Student Reception. Students must sign out at Student Reception when leaving, and on returning to School, students must sign back in at Student Reception.

Students may not leave the School grounds at any time during the school day without permission from their parents and/or School.

15. SEQTA SYMBOLS



16. MARKING ATTENDANCE

Absent from class.

Period One teachers: If a student is more than 10 minutes late to class, please send them to Middle School/Senior School Reception to sign in.

Please email absentee@stmarks.wa.edu.au with any issues or discrepancies.

Student Services symbols and what they mean:

Unresolved late: student is more than 5 minutes late to period one with no parent contact.

To be used when a student is more than 5 minutes late to period without a reasonable excuse (e.g. an event which is a student's choice/fault: slept in, would not get out of bed, missed the bus)

To be used when a medical certificate for the absence has been received.

Principal has approved the absence.

Alternate program

Has tagged into library/SAC Has tagged out of class.

Truant.

Unapproved absence Unresolved absence.

-  Internal suspension
  External suspension
  Withdrawn.
-  Music Lesson
  Sick Bay.
-  Educational Activity
  Camp or Excursion.

17. MIDDLE SCHOOL PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE

This guide will ensure a consistent approach to punctuality and attendance in the Middle School. Many of the procedures associated with punctuality and attendance of Middle School students is managed by the Middle School Admin Assistant on a daily basis. When students fall outside of what is expected, or reasonable, Heads of Year and Pastoral Care Tutors and Homeroom Teachers will manage the situation to make sure that the student's attendance improves.

Weekly updates on attendance are provided by the Middle School Admin Assistant. It is expected that the Head of Year, Deputy Head of Year, Head of School check these and action as appropriate.

Some students will have special circumstances regarding punctuality, management of which relies on communication with the student and between staff members, parents, and the student.

If there is any concern, the Pastoral Care Tutor/Homeroom teacher and Head of Year should be informed.

18. GUIDELINES FOR SEQTA ENTRIES

18.2 Classroom Teachers

If a student is late to class:

- i If it is prior to 8.45am, allow the student into class and mark them as 'late to class' in SEQTA.
- ii If the student arrives after 8.45am, send them to Middle School Reception to sign in.

18.3 Administration Procedures

The following procedures will be in place:

- i If a parent has contacted the school and given an acceptable reason, the student will be marked as 'parent contact'.
- ii If the student does not have a reasonable excuse, or it is the student's fault for being late (e.g. slept in), they will be marked as 'unresolved late' until confirmed by a parent/carer.
- iii If the school does not receive any parent contact, the student will be marked as 'unresolved late'.

SEQTA text messages are sent mid-morning via Middle School Reception.

18.4 Late to School

"Dear Parent/Carer, {prefname} was late to school today, signing in at ****. Please email absentee@stmarks.wa.edu.au to acknowledge this late arrival.

If a parent does not make contact with the School on the day of the 'late' notification, then MS Reception will make contact the following day, or send an official email asking for resolution.

18.5 If a Student Continues to be Late

If a student's punctuality does not improve, the Head of Year will work with the Deputy Head of Middle School to develop an attendance plan.

The Head of Middle School and Deputy HoMS are responsible for determining the content of the attendance plan, which should reflect an understanding of the family's circumstances.

18.6 If a student is absent for Three (3) Days or More

If a student is absent from school for three days or more, Middle School Reception will contact the parents to request a medical certificate and will upload any relevant information on to the student's SIP and refer to appropriate Pastoral Care staff.

19. STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

Sometimes small things can help students to be able to get to school on time. It is important that we have a discussion with students to work out what issues might be affecting their ability to get out of bed and to school. A few different discussion points below may help to frame a conversation.

<i>Things to look out for</i>	<i>Questions to ask - some ideas</i>
Overall check in: Is everything going ok with you? Is there anything else happening in your life which might be affecting your ability to get to school?	How can we help? Would you like us to speak to your parents?
Routines: What is your normal routine in the mornings and evenings? How do you get to school?	Could we change these routine times? Is there an earlier bus to catch? Can you talk to your parents about a different way of getting to school, i.e. maybe get to school earlier and go to the library? What is your study/work/sport commitment schedule like?
Sleep Hygiene: How much sleep are you getting? What time do you get up/go to sleep? How much screen time do you have? Is your phone in your room when you're asleep? Are you sleeping well?	Students should be getting close to 8 hours sleep a night. Try to limit screen time before bed and in bedrooms. Can we think of a strategy to help you get out of bed?
Health and Wellbeing: How are you feeling? What do you do for your own wellbeing? (Meditation? Physical activity? Diet? Social life?)	Have you been checked by a doctor for your overall health? Could we add some self-care activities into your daily life?
Independent Students: How can you be independent in getting yourself to school on time? Why should you get to school on time? What positive experiences come because of it?	What could we change? Set small goals.

20. CORRESPONDING WITH PARENTS/CARERS ([See Seqta symbols](#))

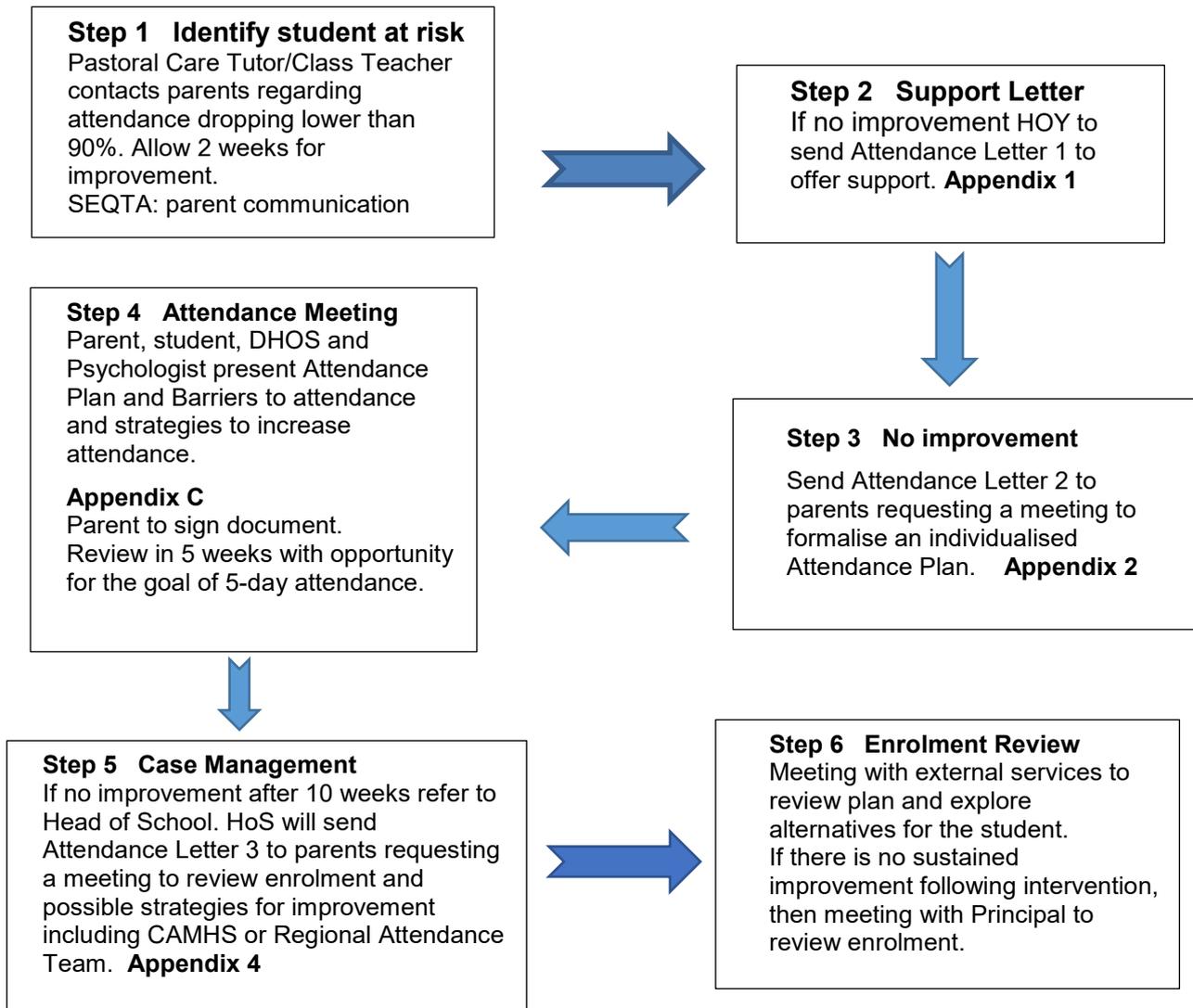
1. Click on the administration workspace.
2. Click on the correspondence button.
3. Along the top ribbon, click on 'email'.
4. Click on 'new template' to bring down the drop-down menu.
5. In the drop-down, choose the appropriate letter. NB they all begin with the word *punctuality*. PUNCTUALITY SS late 1st warning PCT. Please note: Do not change the templates.
6. In the bottom boxes, fill in the subject title for the email and you name as the signatory (the default reply will be to you).
7. Preview the letter and, if it is correct, press 'send'.

21. CHECKING PUNCTUALITY ON SEQTA ([See Seqta symbols](#))

1. Click on the administration workspace.
2. Click attendance.
3. Click on the 'reporting' tab at the top.
4. In the menu, click on 'attendance details'.
5. Change grouping to 'student'.
6. Choose the date range from the first day of term until today.
7. Leave the time range the same.
8. Click on 'attendance types' and choose: i) Late; ii) Late to class, iii) Unresolved late.

9. On the right, choose your students. Click the ... button.
10. Choose your Year Group; the school year; Sub-school; Year then click OK
11. OR, for a PCG class: Class; Year and Semester e.g. 2020S2; type you name; highlight your PCG class; click OK.
12. Click 'print'.
13. You will be notified when the document is ready.

22. SENIOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY FLOW CHART



23. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITY

23.1 Federal

- a) [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(DDA\)](#)
- b) [Including the Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Standards\)](#)
- c) [Privacy Act \(1988\)](#)

23.2 State

- a) [Equal Opportunity Act WA 1984 \(EOA\)](#)
- b) [Occupational Safety and Health Act 1997 \(OSH Act\)](#)
- c) [School Education Act 1999 \(Education Act\).](#)

24. OTHER RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

- a) [Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting.](#)
- b) [Duty of Care: Students.](#)

- c) [Inclusive Education Policy](#).
- d) [Student Wellbeing Framework](#).

25. COMPLIANCE

Standards for Non-Government Schools determined by the Minister for Education and Training in accordance with the [Section 159 of the School Education Act 1999](#).

Standard 8: The Enrolment and Attendance Procedures. Sections 8.2

APPENDIX 1 - FIRST LETTER Less Than 90% Attendance

Dear

Our records for Term [Insert Term Here], [Insert Year Here] indicate that your child's average attendance over the course of the term is [Insert number] %.

All children enrolled in school are expected to attend on a regular basis which is 90% or higher as determined by the Department of Education WA. As a parent or carer, it is your responsibility to support the development of regular patterns of school attendance for your child. This can be achieved by making sure your child attends school on all school days and is on time every day.

Going to school every day is not just important for your child's education – it is the law. It is important that you:

- a) Provide us with an explanation as soon as possible if your child is away.
- b) Arrange for a medical certificate to explain absences if we ask for one.
- c) Contact us if you are having difficulty getting your child to school.
- d) Where possible arrange doctor and dentist appointments out of school hours.
- e) Do not allow your child to stay at home for minor reasons.

As a School we are committed to improving the quality of education we deliver to every child. We need your child to attend school regularly unless they are unwell or there is another acceptable reason for the absence.

I appreciate that by receiving this letter you will have already provided good reasons for your child being away. This letter is a reminder about the importance of regular attendance. Even if the reasons are valid, missing too much school has an effect on your child's learning and we should work together to ensure your child catches up on lessons missed.

If your child is missing school without a good reason, we will monitor the situation closely. We may ask to meet with you to look at the reasons why your child is away, what help you might need and plan for improvement.

St Mark's set targets for school attendance. We have an expectation of regular attendance for all students and look forward to working together with you to meet these targets. A fact sheet about the importance of school attendance is overleaf for your information. If you have any questions or would like further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this.

Yours sincerely
Head of School or Deputy Head of School

26. FACTS ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

27.1 Is regular attendance at school important?

- a) Yes – from the first day of Kindy and Pre-Primary. If your child misses the basic skills in primary school, they can experience difficulties with learning.
- b) Regular attendance is essential to make sure learning is not disrupted and provides building blocks for the future.
- c) Schools help children to develop important social skills, such as friendship building, teamwork, communication skills and a healthy self-esteem.

27.2 What can I expect from the school?

- a) Monitoring of student attendance and reviews of progress.
- b) The school will follow up unexplained absences.
- c) Strategies to help you as a parent or carer encourage your child to go to school.

27.3 What help can I get if my child refuses to go to school or is truanting?

The school may offer a range of support options:

- a) Teacher working with the student or providing a mentor.
- b) Home visits to identify the problem and help work it through.
- c) Strategies to help you encourage your child to go to school.
- d) Develop an incentive program to encourage your child to attend school.
- e) Links with community agencies and help to contact other Department of Education officers for support.

27.4 Do I have to send my child every day?

Yes, all students are expected to attend school unless:

- a) The child is too sick to leave the house or has an infectious disease such as chicken pox, mumps or measles.
- b) The child has an injury preventing movement around school.
- c) The child is going with their parents or carers on a family holiday that cannot be arranged during school holidays. This should be discussed with the principal first.
- d) The principal is provided with any genuine and acceptable reason for the child being away.
- e) A medical or dental appointment could not be made out of school hours (whenever possible, appointments should be made out of school hours).

27.5 Do I have to tell the school if my child has been away?

Yes. On the day your child is away or on their return, you can write a note or talk to the teacher or school. You are also encouraged to contact the school in advance if your child is going to be away. If your child has seen a medical practitioner (e.g. doctor, dentist) a note or appointment card from the practitioner will help explain the absence.

27.6 Did you know?

- a) Missing one day a week of school from Year 1 to Year 11 is the same as missing two years and one term of schooling.
- b) Frequent absences make it difficult for teachers who have to continually re-teach information and skills.
- c) Being half an hour late to school each day from Year 1 to Year 10 is equivalent to missing one year and one-and-a-half terms of schooling.
- d) Patterns of attendance/absence are set up in the early years of schooling.
- e) Poor attendance makes it difficult for students to form good relationships with their peers.

27. Appendix 2 - SECOND LETTER Less Than 90% ATTENDANCE

Dear

Our records indicate that your child's average attendance over the course of the term has not improved since our last letter and is still less than 90%. Your child's actual attendance for Term [Insert Term Here] is [insert number] %.

All children enrolled in school are expected to attend on a regular basis. As a parent or carer, it is your responsibility to support the development of regular patterns of school attendance for your child. This can be achieved by making sure your child attends school on all school days and is on time every day.

As a school we are committed to improving the quality of education we deliver to every child. We need your child to attend school regularly unless they are unwell or there is another acceptable reason for the absence.

At present, your child is missing a lot of school and we are monitoring the situation closely.

We would like to meet with you to look at the reasons why your child is away, what help you might need and plan for improvement.

We have an expectation of regular attendance for all students and look forward to working together with you to meet these targets. Please contact [Admin Assistant] to arrange for a meeting to discuss our concerns.

Yours sincerely
Deputy Head of School

28. APPENDIX 3 - Attendance Plan

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE PLAN MEETING

Student: _____

Date: _____

Present: _____

If attendance reaches 90% students return to normal school expectations with the aim of

Objectives:

Background:

--

Discussion pointers:

--

Agreed strategies and resources:

What	By Whom	By When

Review Date:

Parent signature: _____

Case Manager: _____

29. ATTENDANCE ISSUES

ATTENDANCE ISSUES	
Barriers to Good Attendance	Possible Solutions to try
Families Holidaying during the School Year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage families to recognise the importance of good attendance by putting information in newsletters that discuss the impact of missing school. • Staple attendance letters to underperforming report results that might encourage less holidays in future. • Shows a correlation between attendance and student results • Establish an expectation of writing to the Principal for permission.
Fly In Fly Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage families with information in newsletters that discuss the impact of missing school. • Staple attendance letters to underperforming report results that might encourage less days off in future
Punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent upon school context. If you are just happy they have arrived, record the data with a minimum of fuss and then individually case manage. • If you embarrass a consistently late child they may just decide that if they are late, it's better not to come at all. • Have good overall processes in place to record lateness. SMS reports generated give a good overall pattern of lateness • Send home an addition letter asking for explanation of late note. • Establish an in-class reward for being on-time
Dysfunctional / Disorganised Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the informal meeting stage try to ascertain the barriers to attendance. • Suggest Positive, Parent Programs • Offer external support programs • Publish strategies to help parents to get students to school (include in a brochure and staple to attendance – see samples)
Disengaged Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMS Strategies • Innovative Curriculum • Consider alternative program • Partial re-entry to establish good routine • Attendance incentives • Opportunities for success • Complete an attendance solution matrix to help get to the core issues.
Systemic Support for Prosecution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy in place. Be proactive. Prosecution will be supported if the attendance flow chart has been correctly followed. • Send letters in the process by registered mail so that a parent can't say they haven't been notified. There are a variety of good resources • The policy says all reasonable and practicable steps need to be taken to support. • Involve the school psych at the ground level.
Processes not supported by staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies to ensure staff 'buy in.' • Lock down data entry as core business. • Share data with staff, have them involved in setting targets. • Collaboration planning time partially devoted to discussing attendance reports. • Have staff contact parents after 3 days unexplained absence from a nice pastoral care. • Train staff in how to make these calls. • Engender notion of attendance being a whole school issue, not just administrative
Student Anxiety/Mental Illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Case Management with the School Psych involved at the ground level. • Complete an attendance solution matrix to help get to the core issues. • School Psych involvement is essential.

30. APPENDIX 4 - REQUEST TO ATTEND CASE CONFERENCE

Dear

All children enrolled in school are expected to attend on a regular basis. As a parent or carer, it is your responsibility to support the development of regular patterns of school attendance for your child. This can be achieved by making sure your child attends school on all school days and is on time every day.

We have previously written to you on two separate occasions regarding school attendance and this is now our third correspondence. Going to school every day is not just important for your child's education – it is the law. As your child has been absent without an acceptable explanation or an alternative program of study negotiated, I would like to arrange a meeting with you to discuss how this situation can be improved. This is also an opportunity for you to talk about any issues that might be preventing your child from attending school regularly.

I have arranged a meeting at ** on **. Please go to Parent reception when you arrive, and I will come to meet you.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you would prefer to meet at another time or if you would like to bring along someone to help or support you.

If for any reason you are unable to attend could you, please contact the school to arrange an alternative date and time. It is important that we work together to improve **'s attendance.

You can contact me at School by calling 94031300.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Version Management

Version	Date	Changes Made	Author of Changes
1	April 2018	Registration document	AP (PC)
2	May 2020	Review, Update, Formatting, policy links	HoMS, Principal, EA
3	June 2020	Incorporated MS process	HoMS
4	Feb 2021	Minor grammar, punctuation, and style updates	EA

Authorised By:	Principal
Effective Date:	May 2020
Last Amendment Date:	June 2020
Review Date:	July 2021
Policy Custodian: (Contact for queries about this policy)	HoMS, HoSS, Principal