



# ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT POLICY

Describes the procedures to improve attendance and the responsibilities of all staff.

Appendices included:

- Follow up action plan
- Procedures for applying for an exemption
- Sample letters to parents re unexplained absence

<b>Ratification or Endorsement Dates</b>	
<b>Executive</b>	<b>August 2017</b>
<b>Curriculum leaders</b>	
<b>Staff</b>	

<b>Policy writer/reviewer name</b>	<b>Sandro Bracci and Leanda Herring</b>
<b>Replaces Policy</b>	<b>Attendance Improvement Policy 2017</b>
<b>Next review date</b>	<b>2019</b>



**ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT POLICY***July 1 2017***UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES**

- Attendance by all students at all lessons is a priority for Woodville High School, because success in learning is linked to regular attendance and appropriate participation in educational programmes.
- Students who have poor patterns of attendance are at risk of not achieving their educational, social or psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations.
- Students 16 years and below must attend school, and students aged between 16-17 years must participate in full-time school or in an approved learning programme.
- The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement of attendance rests with the caregiver.
- The primary responsibility for monitoring and following up daily attendance rests with the Home Group teachers.
- The primary responsibility for monitoring attendance at lessons rests with the subject teacher.
- All students are expected to attend school unless genuinely ill or serious family circumstances prevent it.
- Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial in order for these patterns to be reversed.

**AIM**

In accordance with DECD expectations, Woodville High School has a framework which aims to maximise the attendance for all students. Woodville High School aims to:

- Set benchmarks of attendance as part of its site improvement plan in line with DECD guidelines.
- Attendance rate benchmarks for 2018 are Year 8 - 90%, Year 9 - 90%, Year 10 - 90%, Year 11 - 90%, and Year 12 - 90%.
- Follow up all unexplained student absence and extended patterns of family related non-attendance.
- Counsel students and their families about the impact of attendance on achievement.
- Draw upon Inner-West Partnership support for chronic non-attenders.

**INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

Woodville High School will strive to use early intervention strategies and communication with caregivers as keys to improving attendance. These are:

- The provision of an engaging curriculum and differentiated learning activities (including explicit learning goals and attainment levels for units of work) that supports all learners.
- Explicit teaching of literacy and vocabulary supports students to develop greater understanding of the curriculum and leads to successful outcomes.
- The consistent contacting of families using the a text messaging system (MGM or Daymap) for absences each day.
- The contacting of families in writing for students who have unexplained absences of 3 or more days actioned by Home Group teacher via e-mail to the EDSAS secretary and the appropriate Year Level Manager and Executive Member.
- Newsletter articles about issues relating to attendance.
- Discussions between the Home Group teachers and families about the need for regular attendance.
- The provision of in-school support from the School Leadership Team, the Student Services Team which includes, student counsellors, student mentors, AET, ACEO and ASETO, BSSO and PSW.<sup>11</sup>
- Home visits by the appropriate staff member in the company of another support worker e.g. counsellors, AET, ACETO and ASERTO and BSSOs and our Interagency Attendance Officer.
- Involvement of the Interagency Attendance Officer and Aboriginal Inclusion Officer for known chronic non-attenders.
- The provision of a more inclusive curriculum pathway for the student through negotiation with the family and the counselling team. This may include part-time study, VET and other training courses.
- Training for staff about issues impacting on attendance.

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<sup>11</sup> AET is Aboriginal Education Teacher

ACEO is Aboriginal Community Education Officer

ASET0 is Aboriginal School Education Transition Officer

PSW is Pastoral Support Worker

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### School Staff

- Provide a relevant and differentiated learning programme that seeks to engage all students and offers opportunities for success, thus encouraging regular attendance.
- Record absences in Daymap according to DECD requirements.
- Contribute to the analysis of attendance trends at the scheduled year level meetings and the development and implementation of the Attendance Improvement Plan.
- Implement school procedures, including caregiver notification, to follow up non-attendance.

### Student Services Team

- Work with caregivers and government agencies to support the learner's regular attendance in the educational programme.
- Refer all students under compulsion with unsatisfactory attendance to DECD Attendance Officer (Form ED171).
- Discuss with the principal, counsellors and our Wellbeing Practitioner any suspicions of neglect and/or abuse that may require a mandatory notification.
- Liaise with the student, the family, any involved agencies, and the Student Attendance Officer once a referral is made.
- Make mandatory notifications, as appropriate, and document and store records of referrals as per DECD guidelines.

### Caregivers

- Caregivers to provide information to the school that will assist planning for the student's learning; for example, medical conditions, developmental milestones, and family issues.
- Enable their child to attend punctually and regularly on every day the education programme is offered and to comply with the education programme being offered.
- Provide an explanation to the school whenever their child is absent.
- Respond to the MGM text message in the morning if absence is unavoidable.
- Apply to the Principal for an exemption whenever the child is removed from the school for an extended period e.g. an interstate or overseas holiday or culturally significant events. (Appendix A).
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.

### Students

- Attend all scheduled lessons.
- Be punctual in arriving at school or the educational programme and for all associated lessons and activities.
- Engage appropriately in the education programme negotiated.
- Let staff (Home Group teacher and lesson teacher) know of any reasons why they cannot attend.
- Bring a written note in the Pathways Planner to explain absences the next day they attend following an absence.

## PROCEDURES:

1. **All student attendance is marked using the electronic Daymap system**
  - 1.1 The roll is marked using Daymap in the Home Group period every morning in line with DECD Absence Codes. Daymap transfers daily attendance data to EDSAS every 24 hours.
  - 1.2 The Daymap role is the record of reasons for students absences.
  - 1.3 Home Group teachers to check the daily attendance for students who are absent the previous Home Group for consistency of absence throughout the day.
  - 1.4 Late arrival students sign in at the Finance/First Aid office. A note of explanation from a parent is expected and is to be checked by the Home Group teacher. Early leavers sign out at the Finance/First Aid office with a note from home countersigned by their Home Group teacher.
  - 1.5 Each fortnight of term, Home Group teachers will be asked to check a summary printout of the EDSAS record of attendance for accuracy and seek to have the record updated. Allocated Home Group teachers will sign this updated printout as the official record of attendance for their students at the end of each term.
  - 1.6 School generated absence reports, based on Daymap data for continual non-attendeess are produced and discussed at scheduled Student Services and Year Level Meetings to plan appropriate responses. This can include further phone calls home, letters home, home visits and referral to the DECD Attendance Officer by the Senior Leader Student Services.
  - 1.7 Year Level Managers will support Home Group teachers to maintain a copy of all documentation (in Daymap) relating to the regular (at least every 10 school days) follow up of chronic and habitual non-attendeess who are placed on a "Z" code. Record of contacts for these individual students are to be recorded in Daymap by the Home Group teacher.
  - 1.8 Home Group teacher to change codes in Daymap based on contact written, electronic or verbal from caregivers when students return to school. All medical certificates are to be photocopied and put in the class folder issued at

the beginning of the year. Student attendance records can be called as legal documents in any Court action. They must be accurate and up to date.

## 2. Daymap and the MGM Text Messaging Service

- 2.1 The text messaging service and Daymap are to be explained to all caregivers at enrolment, acquaintance nights, and via newsletter articles.
- 2.2 Parent/Caregivers to nominate the mobile telephone number they wish messages to be sent to.
- 2.3 Home Group teachers will be reminded to regularly check during pathways, (twice a term) that the mobile numbers are current.
- 2.4 Text messages for unexplained absences are sent at 11.15 am every day.
- 2.5 Parent/Caregivers are encouraged to ring or text the school of known student absences prior to 11.15 am.
- 2.6 Parent/Caregivers are encouraged to respond by phone or text to the sent MGM text messages.
- 2.7 If no previous text or phone call is recorded Parent/Caregivers are asked to write a note for absence in the Pathways Planner to be shown to Home Group teacher the following day. Home Group teacher to change absence code in Daymap accordingly.

## 3. There is to be a record of communication relating to unexplained absences in Daymap

- 3.1 It is expected that teachers follow the responses as outlined in the Action Plan (Appendix B). All school staff need to be active in following up student non-attendance.
- 3.2 Home Group teachers and support staff, as per the Action Plan (Appendix B) should keep documentation of the steps taken in response to student absence. This documentation is to be recorded in the notes section of the Daymap system.
- 3.3 Identified students at risk of non-attendance will be followed up (usually a phone call home) by the Home Group teacher and/or Year Level Manager and/or Senior Leaders. These steps are to be recorded in Daymap.

## 4. The Student Services Team

- 4.1 The Senior Leader: Student Services will arrange for a summary of student absences to be emailed to each member of the student services team regularly. These are discussed and follow up action is determined at the scheduled year level meeting and at the student services meetings attended by Senior Leaders, Year Level Managers, Counsellors, the Special Needs Coordinator, AET, ASETO, ACEO, BSSOs and FLO Coordinator.
- 4.2 Daymap and text messaging reports are used to update information about student irregular attendance patterns. These are discussed at year level meetings and student services meetings.
- 4.3 Follow up any students that have obvious attendance issues as per the Action Plan (Appendix B) when necessary.

## 5. Attendance requirements published to students

- 5.1 Attendance requirements for students and the expectations the school has in relation to parents/caregivers informing of such absences will be updated annually and published in the student enrolment handbooks/ newsletter/ Pathways Planner.
- 5.2 Extended absence from school of any extended periods of time for family holidays, or other reasons require an application for exemption from school. It is expected that families inform the Home Group teacher with at least a month's notice so the application can be processed prior to the absence. The Home Group teacher should refer the request for exemption through the relevant member of the Executive Team to the Principal (this is for students under the age of compulsion) (Appendix A).
- 5.3 If a student is late to school, they must sign in at the Finance/First Aid office. If there is an unacceptable reason for the lateness, or repeated lateness occurs the Home Group teacher is to contact home and document outcome in daymap.
- 5.4 Students needing to leave the school during school times must sign out at the Finance/First Aid office. The time of leaving/returning is recorded electronically in Daymap.
- 5.5 Students who truant from school or classes will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the school (Own Cloud Policies and Procedures folder).

## 6. Attendance expectations for Students Involved in Alternative Learning Programmes, such as Flexible Learning Options (FLO)

Once identified by the Student Services and the Executive Team as at risk of not succeeding in mainstream schooling, students are offered entry into FLO.

- 6.1 Students might be based totally off campus or they may access some Woodville High School subjects (in 2017, 100% off campus).
- 6.2 FLO enrolled students must follow the general expectations of all Woodville High School students,

including school tone expectations.

- 6.3 Students engage positively with their case managers, community learning agencies, FLO staff, and school staff.
- 6.4 Students choose a learning programme that is in keeping with their own interests/abilities (many students will be engaged in community learning only, while some may have a combination).
- 6.5 Students attend any timetabled school lessons after signing in at the Finance/First Aid office; and they must sign out when leaving school.
- 6.6 Students may attend the recess or lunch break immediately before any scheduled lesson (after signing in), or after a lesson (then sign out) – this privilege is extended in return for meeting school expectations.
- 6.7 Students are not to be in school during any period when they do not have timetabled lessons, except to sign in or out immediately before/after the lesson, or to attend scheduled appointments.
- 6.8 Students attending school only for a scheduled appointment must report to the FLO SSO in the Finance/First Aid office and/or the FLO Manager.
- 6.9 A list of FLO students and their lesson commitments at school is kept with the FLO SSO in Finance/First Aid and on the Daymap system.
- 6.10 A summary of daily absences for FLO is available from the FLO SSO in Finance/First Aid.
- 6.11 Late arrival students sign in at the Finance/First Aid office and this is recorded in Daymap.
- 6.12 A note of explanation from a caregiver is expected and is to be checked by the FLO SSO.
- 6.13 Early leavers sign out at the Finance/First Aid office with a note from home.
- 6.14 Each week the FLO Coordinator, FLO SSO and the case managers will be asked to check a summary printout of the EDSAS record of attendance for accuracy and seek to have the record updated. The FLO coordinator will sign this updated printout as the official record of attendance.
- 6.15 School generated absence reports for continual non-attendees of FLO students are produced weekly and discussed at scheduled FLO meetings with case managers to plan appropriate responses.

## FOLLOW UP ACTION PLAN FOR UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

(Appendix A)

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	WHO	DOCUMENTATION
Three consecutive days unexplained absence or irregular attendance pattern.	1. Phone call to Parent/Caregiver. Daymap codes changed if contact made and legitimate reason given. Email to EDSAS Manager requesting 3-day letter posted if unsuccessful in making contact	Home group teacher makes note in Daymap.	Home contact attempt and response recorded ion daymap.
	2. Attendance monitored weekly	Home group teacher	Attendance recorded
	3. Student supported by home group teacher (refer to counsellor if necessary)	Home group teacher and counsellor (if referred)	Homegroup teacher and Counsellor notes.
Further three days unexplained absence	1. Phone call to Parent/Caregiver. Daymap codes changed if contact made and legitimate reason given. Email to EDSAS Manager requesting 6-day letter posted if unsuccessful in making contact	Home group teacher makes note in Daymap.	Home contact attempt and response recorded ion daymap.
	2. Attendance monitored weekly	Home group teacher	Attendance recorded
	3. If student returns student supported by home group teacher (refer to counsellor if necessary)	Home group teacher and counsellor (if referred)	Home group teacher and Counsellor notes.
Further three days unexplained absence	1. Attendance Daymap record noted. Email to EDSAS Secretary asking for student to made a Z code. Year Level managers alerted	Home group teacher	Record noted in Daymap.
	3. Parents / caregivers advised	Home group teacher or year level manager	Home contact noted in the log
	4. Home contact made or phoned and a case management plan developed	year level manager and appropriate support staff	Case plan
	5. Attendance monitored weekly	Home group teacher	Attendance roll record
	6. Student supported to reengage	Student Services team	Anecdotal notes on case plan
Unexplained absence / unsatisfactory attendance continues	1. Attendance roll record and referral made to Year Level Manager	Home group teacher	Record noted in Daymap
	2. Record of conversation with Interagency Attendance Officer.	Senior Leader Student Services	ED171, EDSAS printout of attendance
	3. Student Support team involved	Senior Leader, year level manager, counsellor	Case Management notes (see case plan)
	4. Family conference and case plan developed	DECD Attendance Officer or, counsellor, year level coordinator could be involved	Case plan

	5. Attendance monitored weekly	Home group teacher – reporting to year level manager	Attendance roll records
	6. Student counselled	Support Staff /Counsellor	Anecdotal notes

Unexplained absence/ unsatisfactory attendance continues	1. Attendance roll record noted and referral made	Class teacher with the year level coordinator	Record noted in attendance roll folder
	2. DECD Student Attendance Coordinator will be notified. Behaviour Coach may be included if student is also experiencing a behaviour support	Senior Leader Student Services	Case Plan
	3. Mandatory notification made if student is unsighted for 20 days	Student Attendance Officer (DECD)	

### Flexible Learning Options Students (FLO)

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	WHO	DOCUMENTATION
Unexplained absence/ unsatisfactory attendance at school and FLO initiated programmes	1) FLO SSO rings student and notifies school FLO coordinator	FLO SSO	
	2. FLO coordinator discusses attendance issue with student, caregiver and agency case manager	School based FLO coordinator	Notification recorded ED171, EDSAS printout of attendance
	3) Case management approach to Re-engagement of student in school and FLO programmes initiated by FLO coordinator	Caregivers, FLO SSO, School based FLO coordinator, agency case managers	Case notes
	4) If absences continue and student is under age of compulsion a referral is made to District Attendance Officer	Counsellors through student services meetings	Printed copy of referral kept in student file and student services case notes

## Student Absences from Lessons

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	WHO	DOCUMENTATION
Unexplained absence/ unsatisfactory attendance in subject.	1) Subject teachers to accurately mark daymap class roll every lesson	Subject teacher	Record noted in Daymap
	2. Subject teacher to check student's daily absences in daymap to determine reason for Student absence. If student has tranted ,2 after school study sessions are booked in Daymap. Sticker put in pathways Planner	Subject teacher	Referral sticker given and record noted in Daymap
	3) Subject teacher to inform home group teacher and year level manager of continuing pattern of truancy.	Subject teacher.	Year Level manager Case notes in Daymap
	After-school study given if appropriate and sticker placed in Pathways Planner.	Subject teacher.	Record noted and it entered in Daymap.
	Alert appropriate school support staff if ongoing truancy.	Year level manager Senior Leader, Counsellors, Special Needs Coordinator, AET, ASETO, ACEO, BSSOs, The Flo Manager and ICAN mentors	YLM and counsellor notes
	Student may be placed on Daily attendance Check Card	YLM	YLM files and case plan
	4) Year level manager to investigate and bring information to Student Services meetings	Year level manager Student Services team	Case notes and Daymap record
	5) Student Services team to suggest further action as appropriate: May include; Change of subject, referral, and counsellor intervention, BSSOs, Aboriginal Education Team	Student Services team	Case notes and Daymap record.



### Procedures for Applying for Exemption from school (Appendix B)

Application for Exemption	RESPONSE	WHO	DOCUMENTATION
<p>Application is made directly to the Principal by the caregiver of the student on the grounds of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family Holiday or Travel</li> <li>Medical or health reasons</li> <li>Home education</li> <li>Full time employment -16 years or older</li> <li>Conditional exemption that is negotiated on individual needs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eg. Part Time attendance, Disability, Behaviour requiring the need for time out of school.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Except in the case of extreme emergencies applications should be made at least 2 weeks prior to the exemption beginning to allow school time to put appropriate support actions in place.</p>	<p>Exemption is granted</p>	<p>Principal for less than 1 month temporary exemptions.</p> <p>Permanent Exemptions (employment, TAFE, Apprenticeships) and temporary that is longer than 1 month must be lodged with the Central Delegate for approval.</p> <p>Home group teachers to ensure correct code is entered in roll book for the length of the exemption.</p>	<p>Exemption form (ED 175) is kept in the student's file along with supporting documentation.</p> <p>If request is approved student will receive an exemption certificate for exemptions longer than 1 month Home group teacher is notified and an "E" is recorded in role folder.</p> <p>Students aged 16 do not require an exemption if they can provide documented evidence that they are attending TAFE and/or doing an apprenticeship or traineeship.</p> <p>Students 15-16 can apply for permanent exemption if undertaking full time employment of more than 30 hours.</p> <p>16 year olds must be working more than 25 hours.</p>
<p>Application is made for an exemption</p>	<p>Application is refused</p>	<p>Principal or Central Delegate</p>	<p>Student must attend school and engage in appropriately developed program.</p>



**Woodville High School**

*Diversity • Creativity • Success*

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11 Actil Avenue Woodville  
South Australia 5011  
Principal: Ms Meredith Edwards

Date: .....

**UNEXPLAINED STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Dear Caregiver:

According to our records .....

of .....(home group),

has been absent from school on the following day/s without an explanation.

Date/s : .....

.....

Please contact ..... ( teacher) at your earliest convenience to provide an explanation for the absence. If you were unaware of the absences please also contact the teacher so that your son/daughter can be supported in their attendance and engagement in the school programme.

Thank you for your work in partnership with the school to support improved student attendance.

Thank you in anticipation of your reply.

Signed: .....

Teacher

Meredith Edwards

Principal

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