

# Attendance Improvement Policy and Procedure

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

Appendices included:

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

## 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 programs
- 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 program
- The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement of attendance rests with the Parent/Caregiver.
- The primary responsibility for monitoring and following up daily attendance rests with the House 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 for these patterns to be reversed.

## AIM

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

- 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 the Social Work Duty Line to report non-attenders and action their advice
- Engage community support agencies as required to engage students.

## INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Woodville High School uses 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 supporting students to develop greater understanding of the curriculum and leads to successful outcomes
- The consistent contacting of families using our text messaging system and SEQTA contact for absences each day
- The contacting of families in writing for students who have unexplained absences of 3 or more days actioned by our Wellbeing Hub Receptionist
- Newsletter articles about issues relating to attendance
- Discussions between the House 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, Wellbeing leaders, Youth Worker, AET, ACEO and ASETO, BSSO and PSW<sup>1</sup>
- Home visits by the appropriate staff member in the company of another support worker e.g. Wellbeing Leaders, Youth Worker 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. This may include part-time study, VET and other training courses
- Training for staff about issues impacting on attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> AET is Aboriginal Education Teacher

ACEO is Aboriginal Community Education Officer

ASETO is Aboriginal School Education Transition Officer

PSW is Pastoral Support Worker

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### School Staff

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

### Wellbeing and Engagement Team

- Work with caregivers and government agencies to support the learner's regular attendance in the educational program
- Refer all students under compulsion with ongoing (more than 9 days) unsatisfactory attendance to the Social Work Duty Line
- 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 Social Work Duty Line
- Make mandatory notifications, as appropriate, and document and store records of referrals as per DfE guidelines.

### Caregivers

- Caregivers 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 program is offered and to comply with the education program 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 for the educational program and for all associated lessons and activities
- Engage appropriately in the education program negotiated
- Let staff (House Group teacher and lesson teacher) know of any reasons why they cannot attend.
- Bring a written note on paper, send email or text message to explain absences the next day they attend following an absence.

## PROCEDURES:

1. All student attendance is marked using the electronic SEQTA system
  - 1.1 The roll is marked using SEQTA in the House Grouping period every morning in line with DfE Absence Codes. SEQTA transfers daily attendance data to SEQTA every 24 hours.
  - 1.2 The SEQTA record of reasons for a student's absences.
  - 1.3 House Group teachers to check the daily attendance for students who are absent the previous days 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 House Group teacher. Early leavers sign out at the Finance/First Aid office with a note from home countersigned by their House Group teacher.
  - 1.5 Each fortnight of term, House Group teachers will be asked to check a summary printout of the SEQTA record of attendance for accuracy and seek to have the record updated. Allocated House 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 SEQTA data for continual non-attendees are produced and discussed at scheduled Student Services and House Leaders Meetings to plan appropriate responses. This can include further phone calls home, letters home, home visits and referral to the DfE Attendance Officer by the Senior Leader Student Services.
  - 1.7 House Leaders will support House Group teachers to maintain a copy of all documentation (in SEQTA) relating to the regular (at least every 10 school days) follow up of chronic and habitual non-attendees who are placed on a "Z" code. Records of contacts for these individual students are to be recorded in SEQTA by the House Group teacher.

- 1.8 House Group teacher to change codes in SEQTA 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. SEQTA and the MGM Text Messaging Service
  - 2.1 The text messaging service and SEQTA 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 House 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 10 am every day
  - 2.5 Parent/Caregivers are encouraged to ring or text the school of known student absences prior to 10 am. are encouraged to respond by phone or text to the sent MGM text messages.
  - 2.6 If no previous text or phone call is recorded Parent/Caregivers are asked to write a note for absence note on paper for senior students to be shown to House Group teacher the following day. House Group teacher to change absence code in SEQTA accordingly.
3. There is to be a record of communication relating to unexplained absences in SEQTA
  - 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 House 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 SEQTA system.
  - 3.3 Identified students at risk of non-attendance will be followed up (usually a phone call home) by the House Group teacher and/or House Leaders and/or Executive House Leaders. These steps are to be recorded in SEQTA.
4. The Wellbeing and Engagement Team
  - 4.1 The Senior Leader: Wellbeing and Engagement 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 House Leaders meeting and at the Student Services meetings attended by Senior Leaders, Executive Heads of House, Counsellors, the Special Needs Coordinator, AET, ASETO, ACEO, BSSOs and FLO Coordinator.
  - 4.2 SEQTA and text messaging reports are used to update information about student irregular attendance patterns. These are discussed at House Leaders 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/
  - 5.2 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 House Group teacher with at least a month's notice so the application can be processed prior to the absence. The House 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 House Group teacher is to contact home and document outcome in SEQTA.
  - 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 SEQTA.
  - 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 programs, 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 may be offered entry into FLO.
  - 6.1 Students in FLO are based totally off campus

- 6.2 FLO enrolled students must follow the general expectations of all Woodville High School students, including school tone expectations and attendance at all courses and off-site appointments.
- 6.3 Students engage positively with their case managers, community learning agencies, FLO staff, and school staff.
- 6.4 Students choose a learning program 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 SEQTA 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 SEQTA.
- 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 SEQTA 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-attendeers of FLO students are produced weekly and discussed at scheduled FLO meetings with case managers to plan appropriate responses.

#### FOLLOW UP ACTION FOR UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	KEY PERSONNEL	DOCUMENTATION
Three consecutive days unexplained absence or irregular attendance pattern.  (3 days unexplained)	Record attendance in SEQTA	House Group Teacher	Record attendance note in SEQTA
	Letter posted and email sent to family	Wellbeing Hub Receptionist (WHR)	Home contact attempt note in SEQTA
	Attendance monitored daily	House Group teacher	SEQTA record
	If contact made, student supported by House Group teacher (refer to counsellor and other support staff if appropriate)	House Group teacher and counsellor (if referred)	SEQTA notes
Further three days unexplained absence.  (6 days unexplained total)	SEQTA record noted	House Group teacher	Record noted in SEQTA
	Telephone call, 6-day letter, email	House Group teacher /WHR	

			Home contact noted in SEQTA
	Attendance monitored daily	House Group teacher / WHR	SEQTA notes

Further three days unexplained absence.  (9 Days Unexplained Total)	Record attendance note in SEQTA House Leaders alerted	House Group teacher	Record noted in SEQTA
	Call to Social Work Duty Line	House Leaders	Referral noted in SEQTA
	Parents / caregivers visited	Student Services Team Youth Worker, leader)	Home contact noted in SEQTA
	Code SEQTA changed to Z code if student does not return	WHR and Assistant Principal Student services	SEQTA and SEQTA codes changed and monitored
	Home contact made and a case management plan developed	House Leaders and Student Services Team members	Case plan
	Attendance monitored Daily	House Group teacher	Record noted in SEQTA

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	KEY PERSONNEL	DOCUMENTATION
Unexplained absence / unsatisfactory attendance continues	SEQTA roll record noted	Middle or Senior Years Manager	Referral noted in SEQTA
	Social Work Duty Hotline re called	Middle or Senior Years Manager	SEQTA Notes
	Student Support team involved	Executive Heads of House Wellbeing Leaders BSSOs Aboriginal Education Team. Psychologist and Youth Worker	Notes in SEQTA
	Family conference and case plan developed	Inclusion and Truancy Officer	Case plan
	If a student is in Care, Behaviour Coach may be included.	Senior Leader Student Services	Referral letter and case plan

	Attendance monitored daily	House Group teacher – reporting to House Leaders	SEQTA
	Student counselled	Counsellor	SEQTA
If Student is not sighted for 4 school weeks	Mandatory Notification	Executive Heads of House	SEQTA and discussed at Student Services Meeting

#### Flexible Learning Options Students (FLO)

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	KEY PERSONNEL	DOCUMENTATION
Unexplained absence/ unsatisfactory attendance at school and FLO initiated programs	FLO SSO rings student and notifies school FLO coordinator	FLO SSO	SEQTA
	FLO coordinator discusses attendance issue with student, caregiver and agency case manager	School based FLO coordinator	Notification recorded ED171, SEQTA printout of attendance
	Case management approach to Re-engagement of student in school and FLO programs initiated by FLO coordinator	Caregivers, FLO SSO, School based FLO coordinator, agency case managers	Case notes
	If absences continue and the student is under age of compulsion a referral is made to the Social Work Duty Line.	FLO Manager	Printed copy of referral kept in student file and student services case notes

#### Student Absences from Lessons

ATTENDANCE	RESPONSE	KEY PERSONNEL	DOCUMENTATION
Unexplained absence/ unsatisfactory attendance in subject.	Subject teachers to accurately mark SEQTA class roll every lesson	Subject teacher	Record noted in SEQTA.
	Subject teacher to check student's daily absences in SEQTA to determine reason for Student absence. If a student has truanted, 2 after school study sessions are booked in SEQTA.	Subject teacher	Referral sticker given and record noted in SEQTA.
	Subject teacher to inform home., House Group Teachers and House Leaders of continuing pattern of truancy.	Subject teacher.	House Leaders Case notes in SEQTA

	After-school study given if appropriate and sticker placed in School Diary	Subject teacher.	Record noted and entered in SEQTA.
	Alert appropriate school support staff if ongoing truancy.	House Leaders Senior Leader, Counsellors, Special Needs Coordinator, AET, ASETO, ACEO, BSSOs, The FLO Manager and ICAN Groups	House Leaders and counsellor notes
	Student may be placed on Daily attendance Check Card	House Leaders	House Leaders files and case plan
	House Leaders to investigate and bring information to Student Services meetings	House Leaders Student Services team	Case notes and SEQTA record
	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 SEQTA record.

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

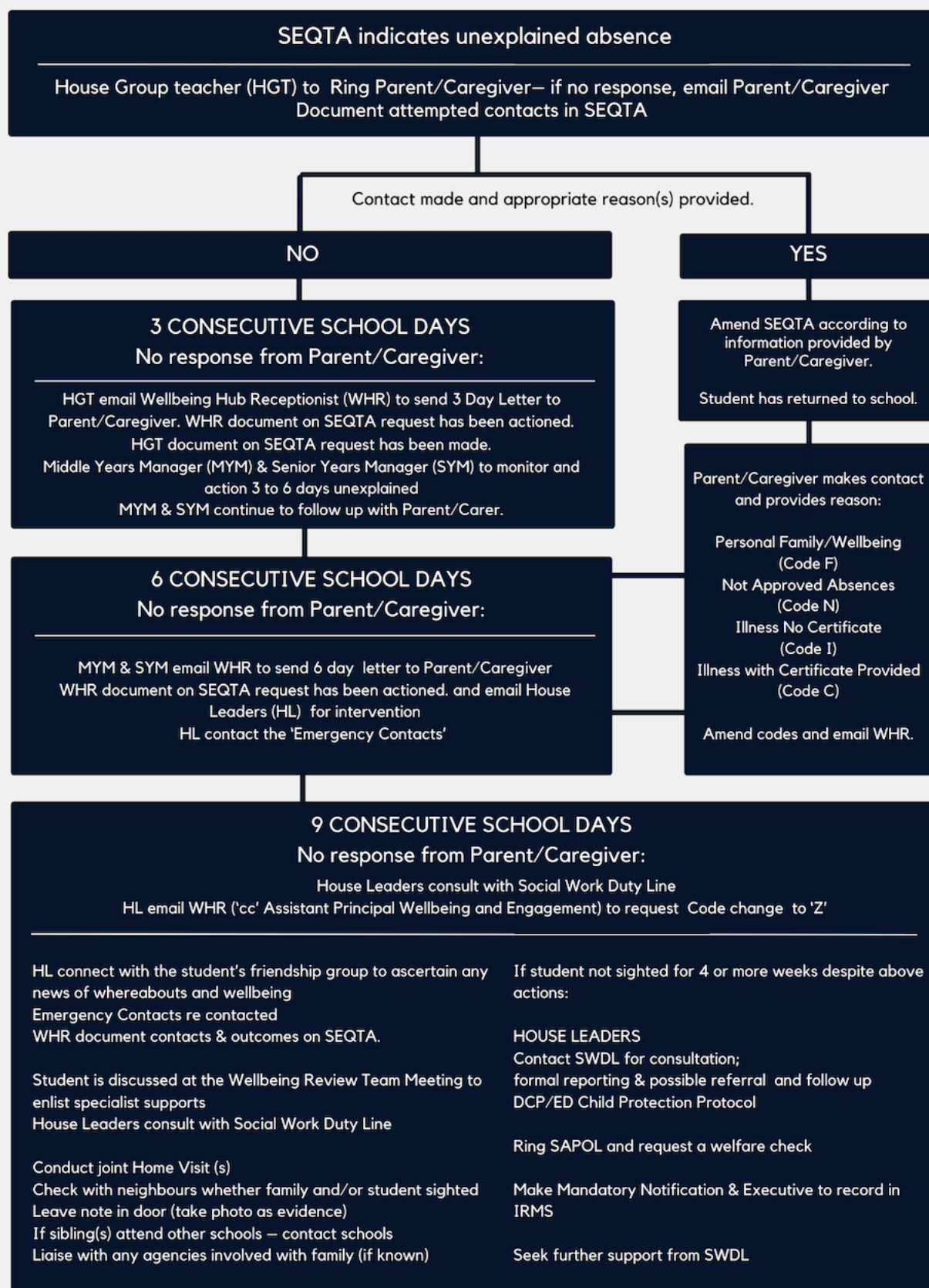
APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION	RESPONSE	KEY PERSONNEL	DOCUMENTATION
<p>Application is made directly to the Principal by the caregiver of the student on the grounds of:</p> <p>Family Holiday or Travel.</p> <p>Medical or health reasons.</p> <p>Home education.</p> <p>Full time employment -16 years or older.</p> <p>Conditional exemption that is negotiated on individual needs eg. Part Time attendance, Disability, Behaviour requiring the need for time out of school.</p>	Exemption is granted	<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>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 The House Group teacher is notified, and an "E" is recorded in the roll folder.</p> <p>Students aged 16 do not require an exemption if they can provide</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.		House Group teachers to ensure correct code is entered in the roll book for the length of the exemption.	<p>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>Students 16 years old must be working more than 25 hours.</p>
Application is made for an exemption	Application is refused	Principal or Central Delegate	Students must attend school and engage in an appropriately developed program.

# Attendance

To be read in conjunction with our Attendance Policy





Woodville  
High School

DIVERSITY • INTEGRITY • RESILIENCE

Date: .....=

### UNEXPLAINED STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Dear Parent/ Caregiver: .....=

According to our records: .....

Of: .....= - House Group

has been absent from school without an explanation.

Date/s: .....

Please contact: HOUSE LEADERS EMAIL (.....-House Leader) at your earliest convenience to provide an explanation for the absence. If you were unaware of the absences please also contact the House Leader so that your child can be supported in their attendance and engagement in their school programme.

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

We look forward to your reply.

Sandro Bracci

Assistant Principal  
Student Services

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