

Attendance and Lateness Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction
- ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Greenvale Secondary College has in place to.
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

Scope

This policy applies to all students at Greenvale Secondary College.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's School Attendance Guidelines. It does not replace or change the obligations of Greenvale Secondary College, parents, and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the [School Attendance Guidelines](#).

Definition

Parent – includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parental responsibility under the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

Policy

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks.

School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Greenvale Secondary College during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Greenvale Secondary College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Greenvale Secondary College for particular activities.

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

Greenvale Secondary College believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

Our school will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time, and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Greenvale Secondary College parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Greenvale Secondary College about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments, and other activities outside of school hours.

Supporting and Promoting Attendance

Greenvale Secondary College's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by offering programs such as breakfast club, homework club, wellbeing support, attendance officer support and coordinator support which are designed to support attendance.

Recording Attendance

Greenvale Secondary College must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Greenvale Secondary College's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each lesson/period using CASES21/eCASES/or compatible third-party software.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Recording Absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify of absences by:

- Logging into Compass and authorising an absence
- Contact the College directly

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Greenvale Secondary College will notify parents by SMS/push notification message email/telephone/other method of notification. Greenvale Secondary College will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school, where possible, on the day of the unexplained absence.

Greenvale Secondary College will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education Training Reform Act 2006 and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Greenvale Secondary College considers that the parent has provided a reasonable excuse for their child's absence the absence will be marked as 'excused absence'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as 'unexcused absence'.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes and support the student's return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

Managing Non-attendance and Supporting Student Engagement

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, Greenvale Secondary College will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing an Attendance Student Support Group
- implementing a Return to School Plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan

- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from relevant student wellbeing staff

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, will endeavour to provide this support when it is required.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Greenvale Secondary College decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the North-western Victoria Regional Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
 - measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
 - the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

Truancy

If a student is found to be truant or a school refuser, the roll will be marked accordingly, and the same process followed around communication with parents or guardians. Truancy is an unapproved absence and counts towards a student's absence percentage. Adequate support will be put into place, and consequences or follow up as per the attendance policy will be implemented.

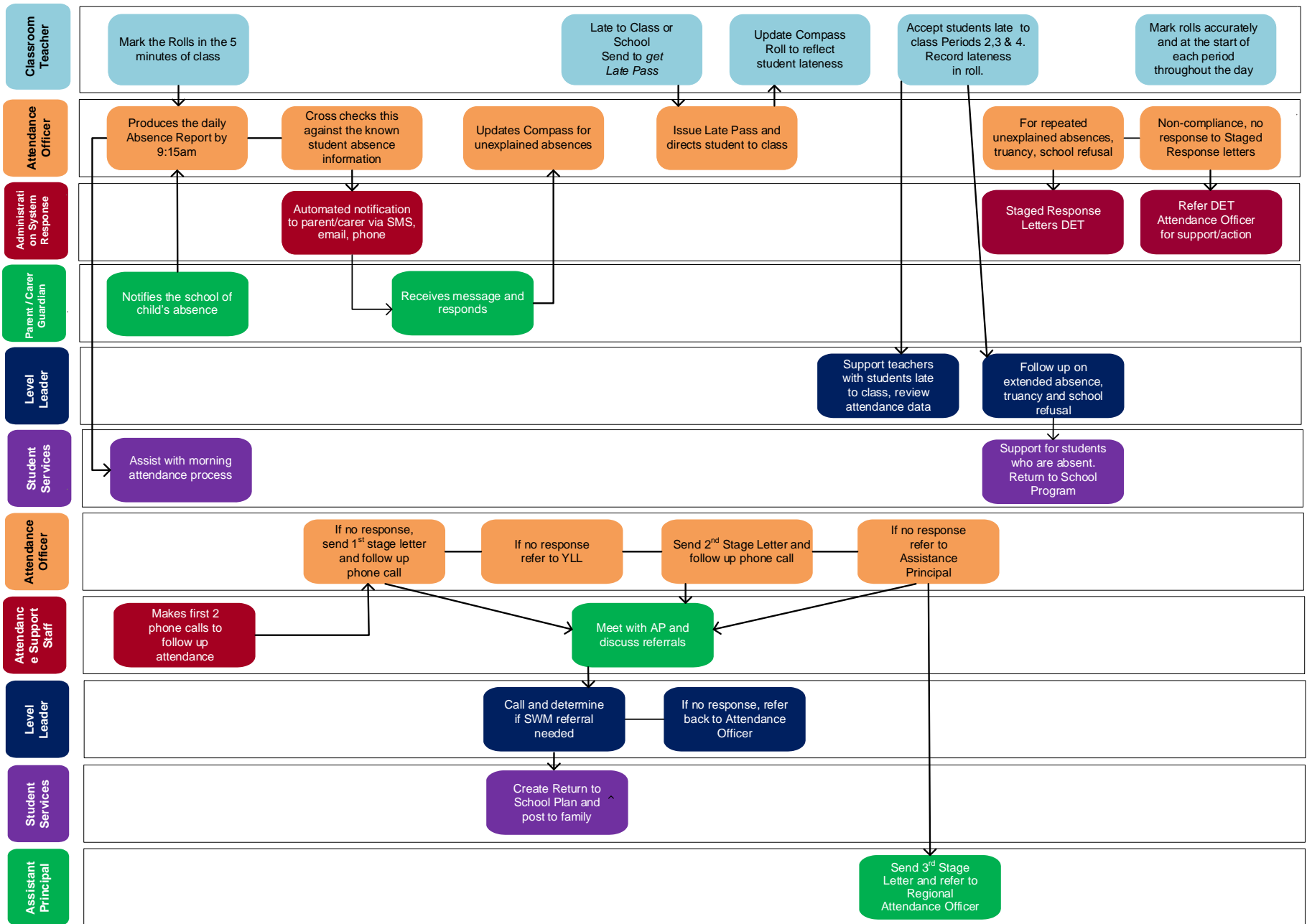
Information and Resources

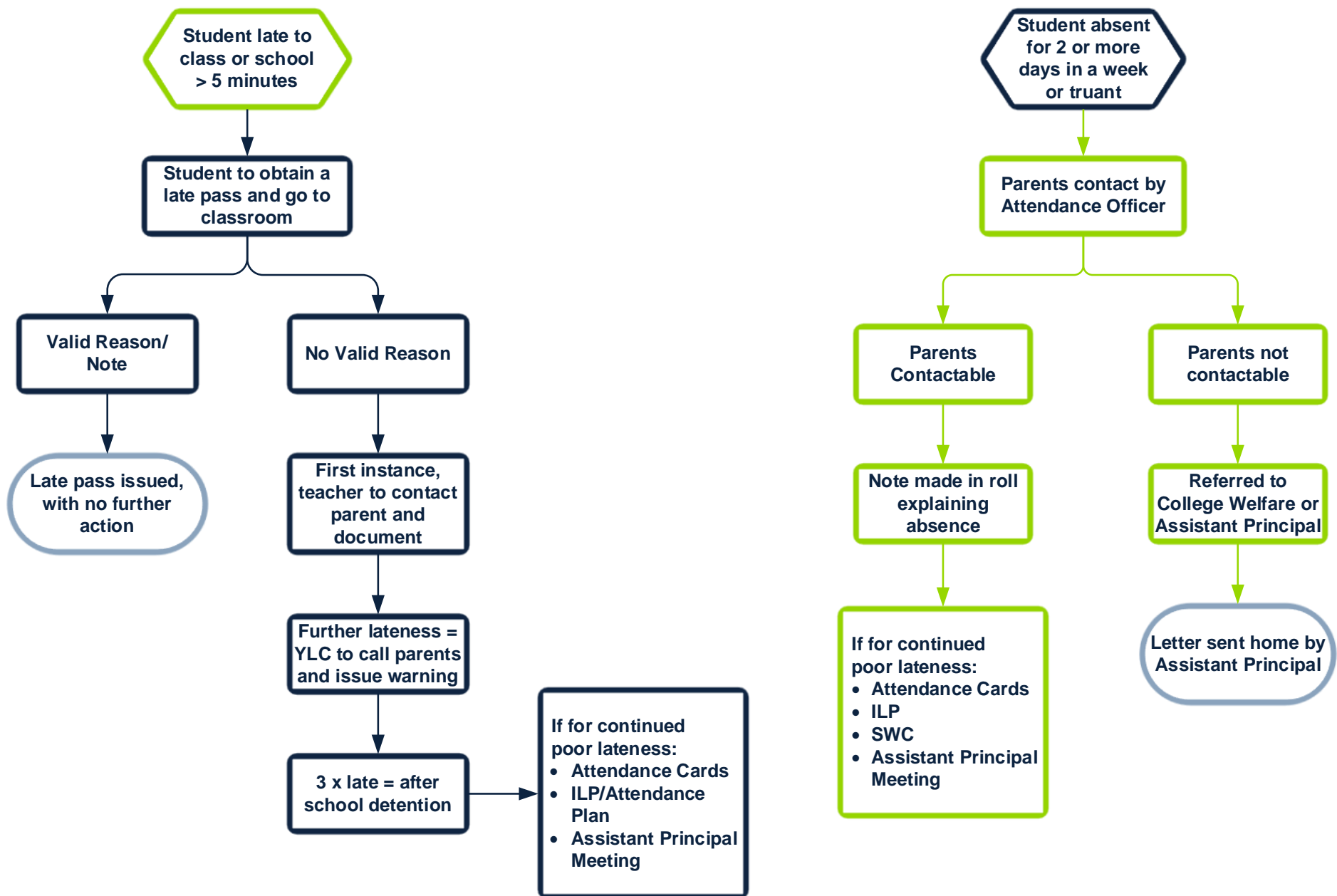
- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)
- [School intranet](#)

Implementation and Process

ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Teacher	Attendance Officer	Student Progress Leader	Level Leaders	Support Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Check that class rolls are correct in Compass □ Mark class roll in Compass □ Make Chronicle entries for any known issues regarding student non-attendance □ Record any teacher-parent/ family contact in Chronicle □ Report ongoing non-attendance □ Monitor Compass/Chronicle updates and provide necessary support to connect or re-engage with student □ Work collaboratively to develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan, and/or an Individual Education Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Check school absence register (phone/email) each morning and update student attendance in Compass □ Use accurate attendance codes to record absences □ Manage attendance updates in Compass and CASES21 □ Capture and distribute daily attendance data □ Oversee 'risk register' □ Oversee documentation of all attempted and implemented intervention strategies aimed at restoring a student's attendance □ Identify and resolve unmarked rolls □ Send SMS daily □ Generate absence letters (DET) □ Identify students with unexplained absences □ Contact families where to ascertain reason for student absence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Access relevant year level attendance each week □ Contact families where to ascertain reason for student absence □ If contact cannot be made with the parent, attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s □ Explore any factors preventing attendance or participation □ Update Compass attendance □ Record Chronicle entries to share student attendance status with staff □ Intervene and provide targeted responses for individual students/families □ Generate under 90% attendance reports □ Contribute to 'risk register' for unresolved attendance issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Provide attendance updates in assemblies □ Monitor and analyse school attendance records regularly □ Discuss student attendance records in staff meetings □ Utilise Student Support Services or external community services where appropriate □ Coordinate further investigation for student's absence if required □ Coordinate with Wellbeing Team, Return to School Plans and modification of learning outcomes where required □ Manage issues such as truancy, bullying etc, in accordance with school policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Liaise with team for student attendance □ Develop cases for all students in 'risk register' □ Coordinate support services for all students to maintain full attendance □ Coordinate on-site SSGs to resolve attendance issues □ Utilise DET/SSSO support to engage with families and provide support beyond school capability □ Coordinate Return to School Plans □ Manage issues such as Child Protection, Family First, State Schools Relief, Out-of-homecare, Koorie students, CALD, refugee, abuse, anxiety and depression, students with disabilities, etc.





Staged Response to Non-attendance

STAGE 1 – Unexplained/unauthorised absence

- Phone contact made with parent/guardian/or emergency contact by Attendance Officer
- [Generate CASES21 absence letter/email or use the template provided](#)
- Record actions on Compass
- Is this student part of an identified vulnerable cohort that is targeted for specialised intervention? If so, refer to cohort-specific staged response. (There may be some cohorts that the school will have initiated specialised interventions for as per school's strategic plan)

STAGE 2 – three - five days unexplained absences

- Phone contact made with parent/guardian and/or emergency contact by Attendance Officer
- Stage 2 letter/email home by Attendance Officer
- Use informal contacts to investigate situation
- Record actions on Compass
- Communicate concerns to the School Services Manager and Head of School

STAGE 3 – five days or more of unexplained absences

- Phone calls as per level one and two
- Increase offer of, or re-offer, support
- Stage 3 letter/email to parent/guardian regarding absences including parent information flyer. The letter to be signed and sent by the by Head of School and Attendance Officer.
- Request secondary consultation or direct intervention from SSS staff/ Koorie Engagement and Support officer, Vic Police Community Liaison Officer, Pathways and Transitions worker/Careers Teacher
- Liaise with existing family service / seek support for family
- Record actions on Compass

STAGE 4 – ongoing unexplained absences

- Phone calls as per previous levels
- Increase offer of, or re-offer, support
- Stage 4 Letter/email to parent/guardian regarding continued unexplained / unauthorised absences formally requesting presence at an Attendance SSG. To be signed and sent by Assistant Principal.
- Hold Attendance SSG: establish causes of non-attendance, develop Student Absence Learning Plan and/or Attendance Improvement Plan or Return to School Plan to support attendance as per DET Attendance Guidelines and advice. See: [Improving Attendance](#)
- Letter to be sent registered post
- Present the case to Sub School Team Meeting for discussion
- Allocate case management responsibility to a staff member e.g., Wellbeing Leader, Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal
- Request secondary consultation or direct intervention from SSS staff/ Koorie Engagement and Support officer, Vic Police Community Liaison Officer, Pathways and Transitions worker/Careers Teacher
- Referral to external agency e.g., Youth Connections/ CYMS/CAMHS/Child FIRST
- Explore Flexible Learning Options/Re-engagement programs at a school level or in the community. Consider an individual tailored program.
- Initiate individual Check In/Check Out system
- Liaise with existing family service/Seek support for family
- Allocate a mentor
- Continue to support the student's education with the development of a Student Absence Learning Plan
- Excusing non-attendance due to school refusal - *"In general, it is expected that principals would excuse absences for.....school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes"* [CASES21 Administration User Guide - Attendance, Chapter 3](#)
- Record actions on Compass.

STAGE 5 – unresolved on-going non-attendance

- Stage 5 letter/email to parent/guardian summarising all intervention and support offered. To be signed and sent by Principal. Parents required to respond within 7 days.
- Letter to be sent registered post
- Continue with secondary consultations/phone calls
- Record actions on Compass

STAGE 6 – Referral to School Attendance Officer

- **A principal does not have to make a referral for all absences that meet the criteria but may continue to manage the absences at a school level**
- Send the Stage 6 letter/email from the Principal advising parents that the matter has been escalated to the School Attendance Officer
- Referring a student attendance matter to a School Attendance Officer may be appropriate where the principal determines that:
 - Intervention strategies have been unable to secure parental engagement and improvement in school attendance (or engagement in another educational program); and
 - Requiring the parent to respond to the notice will convey the seriousness of the matter and is likely to elicit an improvement in attendance
- Principals should be certain they have evidence to demonstrate the parent has not been meeting their responsibilities under the Act. This will be important in the event the School Attendance Notice leads to an Infringement Notice being sent to the parent and the parent wishes to appeal the decision or elect to have the matter heard in court.
- Principal Class to contact DET Regional Office – Wellbeing and Engagement Team for policy and process advice and secondary consultation
- Principal completes appropriate referral documentation and forward to the regional office. See: [Referral to a School Attendance Officer](#)
- Continue to monitor attendance as per school's requirements
- Record actions on Compass

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Student Wellbeing & Engagement Team every 4 years.

Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated Annually

Date	Description of update	To be reviewed	Approved by
22 September 2021	Initial publication		
16 Nov 2021	School Council	16 Nov 2025	School Council