Attendance and Non-attendance Procedures

Reviewed: 2025

Mel Maria Catholic Primary School believes there is a need to engage students and establish positive attendance behaviours in the early years of schooling; to support student attendance at transition points and to raise parent and community awareness of the fact that, where academic achievement is concerned, everyday counts. There is a mutual obligation of schools, parents, and communities to develop strategies that link directly to the local causes of student absence.

Sources of Authority: CEWA Community Policy
Executive Directive – Student Safety, Wellbeing and Behaviour

Scope

- This procedure applies to all members of the Mel Maria Catholic Primary School community.

Principles

1. The likelihood of successful learning is strongly linked to regular attendance and appropriate participation in educational programmes.
2. Non-attendance at school can occur for a range of reasons including sickness, family reasons or truancy.
3. Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial so that patterns can be reversed. Indications of risk include frequent lateness, missing lessons, learning difficulties, social or emotional issues, illness, or family issues.
4. Parents are required to contact the school about reasons for an explained absence.
5. Students are required as a condition of enrolment to attend all school major events (eg. Sports Carnivals, excursions) as well as, academic activities associated with a year group (Retreats, NAPLAN).
6. Teachers are not required to provide work for students on holidays during the term time.

Attendance Procedures

2.0 Student Attendance Procedure

https://cewaedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Handbook/SitePages/Attendance-Directives.aspx

Each school is required to keep accurate attendance records for all its students. This includes taking attendance. Attendance must be recorded by teaching staff at least:

- twice per day for primary and specialist schools

Although all school staff are vital in supporting regular student attendance, the principal is responsible for:

- Keeping accurate attendance records for every child enrolled in the school; these can be stored electronically but must be able to be reproduced in written form.
- Maintaining records for the appropriate period of time under the School Education Regulations 2000.
- Managing alternate attendance arrangements.
- Implementing plans and strategies to encourage regular attendance.

2.1 Records must include:

- If the student was physically present or not.
- If the student was attending a different approved activity (the teacher running that activity must also record attendance).
- Any reasons given for an absence.
- If the reason for the absence is reasonable (see examples).
- A flag for unexplained absences (removed if a reason is given later).
- Information about any unsatisfactory attendance at school or classes.
- A mark for half-day attendance if the student is present for at least two hours of instruction.

2.2 Authorised absence (EXPLAINED) – A principal can record an absence as 'Authorised' if there has been a reasonable explanation for a student's absence.

A reasonable excuse for the purposes of explaining a school absence can include:

- Medical or dental appointments.
- Bereavement or attendance at a funeral, including Sorry Business.
- Illnesses and accidents.
- Unforeseen and unexplained circumstances.
- Compliance with another law that results in the child's absence.
- The child is receiving distance education through a registered school.
- The child is undertaking approved education, training and/or employment.
- The child has been suspended.
- The child is attending or observing a religious event, culture observance or obligation.

2.3 Unauthorised absence (UNEXPLAINED) – A principal can record an absence as 'Unauthorised' when there has been no reasonable explanation provided for the absence.

If a reason is given to the principal and it is not approved, then the school will notify the parent/carer in writing.

In general, it is expected that these absences would not be excused:

- The parent did not seek approval beforehand, or in accordance with school procedure.
- The student was absent due to leisure or social activities without approval.
- The conditions of an authorised absence were not met (for example, a student absence learning plan during a family holiday was not completed).
- The parent has provided no explanation for the absences.

2.4 Principals - should make sure attendance data is regularly monitored and analysed to look for attendance patterns. Patterns of absences can be across the school, a class or at the individual student level. Having accurate data, including the reasons for absences, is important for:

- Developing improvement strategies for students.
- Reporting for funding requirements.
- Using as evidence when there are attendance concerns.

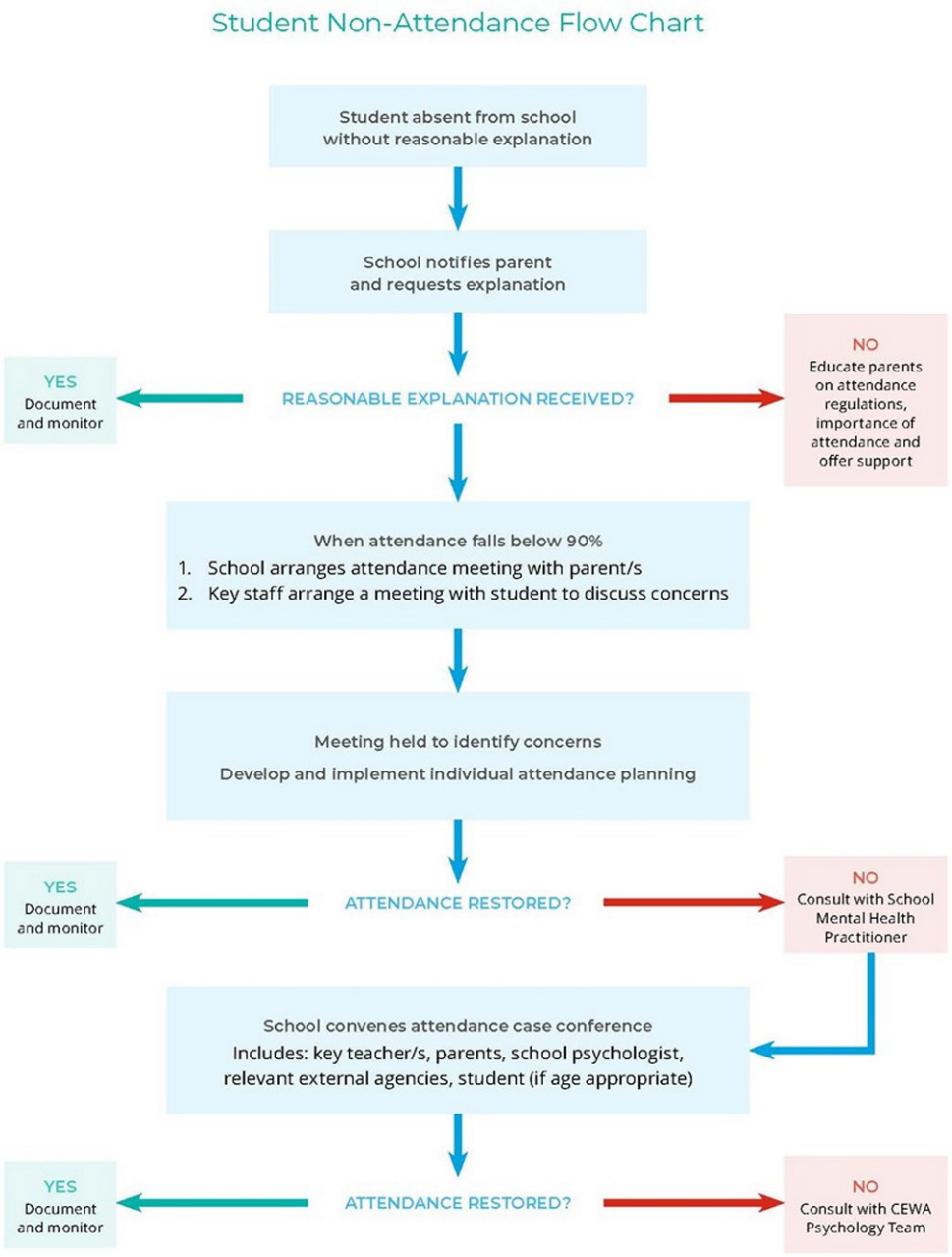
2.5 Parents/Guardians responsibility

Parents/guardians must enrol a child of compulsory age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.

Parents/guardians must provide an explanation for any absence their child has and work in partnership with the school to support attendance.

The parent/guardian of the student is required to:

- Ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction, unless complying with an arrangement under section 24.
- Provide an explanation for any absence their child has within three days.



3.0 The Student Non-Attendance Flow Chart guides the school's procedures in addressing absenteeism. The procedures on the following pages adhere to the Student Non-Attendance Flow Chart.

4.0 Day to Day Attendance Procedures

4.1 Accepted forms of resolved non-attendance.

The following methods of non-attendance reasoning will be accepted:

- Direct contact from a parent or legal guardian, via telephone call the school (08 6330 0500 or 08 6330 0550)
- An email sent either to the class teacher or school administration.

4.2 Children Arriving to School Late

- Students who arrive to school past 8:40am must be signed in at the front office through the Passtab iPad.
- If a child is not present when the morning roll is taken in SEQTA the child will be marked as absent.
- When a child signs in as late the roll shall be amended to reflect the late arrival as 'late'.

4.3 Children Leaving School Grounds Early

- Parents or guardians who require their child/children to leave school earlier than the end of the school day (3:00pm) must record this early departure through the front office via the Passtab iPad.
- Early Childhood students may be collected from class, Years 1 – 6 students are to be called to the office.
- This early departure must also be recorded through SEQTA and identified as Medical, Resolved or Educational Activity Offsite.
- In special circumstances, negotiations between administration staff and parents may occur to permit student release and the signing out of a student. In the case where a parent is unable to come into the office personally, a member of admin staff will sign the student out of school in the appropriate way and accompany the student out of the office to the parent.

4.4 Absentee – School's Responsibility

- Classroom teacher to take the roll on an AM (by 9:00am latest) and PM (12:00pm) basis.
- School to contact parents of absent student when prior notification has not been advised via SMS on SEQTA.
- Record number of absent days (or half days) on individual student semester reports.
- It is not the school's responsibility to provide extra curriculum for student absenteeism due to recreational activities or extended leave.

4.5 Absentee – Parent Responsibility

- All students are expected to be present at school for the entirety of each term.
- Avoid recreational activities within school time to avoid missed curriculum.
- Provide the school of notification on the day of student's absence as early as is practically possible through either the absentee phone line or email.
- Provide written notification of any intended absenteeism in advance.
- Provide written notification of absence on the return of the student.

5.0 Process for Reengaging Students

When a child's attendance drops below 90% (deemed as educational risk) without professional medical reason or authorised extended leave, procedures are as follows:

- Indicated Educational Risk – 80-89% attendance
- Moderate Educational Risk – 60–79% attendance

- Severe Educational Risk - <60% attendance

5.1 Indicated Educational Risk – 80-89% attendance

- When a student's attendance falls into the Indicated category of 80-89%, the classroom teacher is responsible for contacting (and documenting) the parents to advise them that their child's attendance at school is below 90%.

- The classroom teacher is to monitor the attendance of that student.

5.2 Moderate Educational Risk – 60-79% attendance.

- When a student's attendance falls into the Moderate category of 60-79%, the classroom teacher is to inform the Leadership Team.
- The Leadership Team will contact the parents to advise them of their child's attendance.
- A meeting will be requested to discuss ways the school can provide support and assistance to ensure the student is attending school on a regular basis.
- An action plan is to be developed and signed by the classroom teacher, parents, and Leadership Team member.
- The Leadership Team will liaise with any of the following, pending each cases requirements, the Class Teacher, School Counsellor, Psychologist or School Improvement Officer.

5.3 Severe Educational Risk – below 60% attendance.

- When a student's attendance falls into the Severe category of below 60%, the classroom teacher is to inform Leadership Team who will contact the parents to advise them that their child's attendance at school is the category of Severe Educational Risk.
- Another meeting will be requested to discuss the action plan and any recommendations from CEWA Psych services or other involved agencies.
- Continue to engage with CEWA Psychologist for any further recommendations.
- Continue to monitor.

CEWA Student Attendance Executive Directive
https://cewaedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Handbook/SitePages/Attendance-Directives.aspx

CEWA Student Attendance Guidelines
https://cewaedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Handbook/Shared%20Documents/Student%20Safety%20Wellbeing%20Behaviour%20Resources/2020.11_Student%20Attendance%20Guidelines.pdf

CEWA Student Attendance Guidelines
https://cewaedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Handbook/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FHandbook%2FShared%20Documents%2FStudent%20Safety%20Wellbeing%20Behaviour%20Resources%2FFinal%202021%2E06%5FStudent%20Attendance%20Resources%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FHandbook%2FShared%20Documents

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